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ABSTRACT

This study is an ethnographic analysis of the relationship between female employers and female domestics in the Philippines focusing on how it maintains and reproduces the intersecting class and gender relations of power that brought the two women together. It also explores relationality - how the privileging of one group of women is related to the exploitation of another.

Data for analysis was based on interviews with 25 female employer-female domestic dyads in a city in the Philippines in 1989. The questions for the semi-structured interviews were focused on four major research questions: 1.) What kinds of female employer-female domestic relationship exist between the women in this city?; 2.) What makes one female employer-female domestic relationship similar to and different from another?; 3.) What is unique about the Philippine case in terms of this employer-employee relationship?; and 4.) How is the intersectionality of class and gender relations articulated in the female employer-female domestic relationship?

The analysis reveals the existence of 4 types of female employer-female domestic relationships. The dynamics of dependency, fictive kinship, proprietary, and deference are expressed

in somewhat different ways. But in all case these ways indicate an asymmetric power relationship. The analysis suggests that these employers and domestics exhibit some level of agency, empowerment and solidarity in their daily interactions. However these are undermined by intersecting forces of class and gender relations in Philippine society. In particular “comandrazgo”, a system of patronage well-entrenched in Philippines society since the Spanish era, inhibits empowerment among domestics and female solidarity across class lines.

**Class and Gender in the Philippines:
Ethnographic Interviews with Female Employer-Female Domestic Dyads**

By

Emelda Tabao Driscoll

**Doctoral Dissertation
In
Sociology**

**Syracuse University
May 15, 2011**

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Acknowledgement

This has been quite a journey. Along the way I have had the good fortune of being in the presence of people who, with their talents and the gift of their time, have made a significant difference in the development of this dissertation and in my life as a sociologist.

I begin with the 50 Filipino women, whose stories of their lives as employers and domestics from the mundane to the extraordinary will always be a source of inspiration for me and hopefully for the men and women who will read this paper. To these women I say thank you and offer my sincere apology for intruding into your lives.

To my professors and fellow graduate students at the Sociology Department and the Health Studies Program of Syracuse University specially Nancy Mudrick, Susan Borker, Claire Rudolph, Julia Loughlin, Barry Glassner, Dale Tussing, Judy Long, Martha Wojtowijh, Cheryl Carpenter, Vigdis Mathisen, Gina Petonito, Maggie Abraham, and Takako Tsuruki –for being a part of a broad learning experience that was more than just academic work, I express my deep gratitude.

A million thanks to both my dissertation advisor, Susan Borker for your patient guidance and sage advice throughout the entire dissertation process and to Marj Devault for sharing your many insights into class and gender issues.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter I – INTRODUCTION1-43

Introduction

Socio-economic Conditions in the Philippines

Background of the Study

Methodology

Exploration and Interpretation: From the Symbolic

Interactionist Perspective

The Researcher: A Reflexive Analysis

Insider/Outsider Issues

Power Differentials Between Researcher and Researched

Ethical Issues (Informed Consent, Confidentiality)

Tension Between Social Activism and Scholarly Pursuit

The Research Act: In the Field and On the Desk

A-Selection of Site

B-Selection of Participants

C-Access to Employers

D-Access to Domestic

E-The Interview

F-Major Research Questions and Guide Questions

G-Analyses of Field Note and Interviews

Research and Theory: Housework, Domestic Service

Chapter II- HISTORY OF DOMESTIC SERVICE.....44-51

Ancient Civilizations (Greece, Rome, India, China, Muslim World)

Latin American Societies

India, the Arab Countries and Africa

In the United States

In the Philippines

Conclusion

Chapter III- CLASS AND GENDER IN THE PHILIPPINES.....52-74

Position of Women in the Philippines

Class and Gender Relations in the Philippines: A Historical Survey

Pre-Hispanic Philippines

Spanish Colonization

Early 20th Century (American Occupation)

The Present

Chapter IV-THE WOMEN AND THE RELATIONSHIPS.....75-106

Introduction

Terms Used for Domestic

The Relationships

The Sergeant and the Surugon

The Supervisor and the Kabulig

The Queen and the Maid

The Uniformed Maid

The Uniform: Status and Segregation

The Uniform as Cleansing Tool

The Uniform: Badge of Status for Domestic

Trust Between Queen and Maid

The Mentor and Her Ward

Conclusion and Reflections

Chapter V-THE WORK SITUATION.....107-142

Introduction

The Hiring and Firing Situation

Recruitment and Entry

Dismissal from the Household

Work Load and Work Schedule

Compensation

Meals and Eating Arrangement

Quarters and Use of Space

Free time and Vacation

Conclusion and Reflections

Chapter VI-“LIKE ONE OF THE FAMILY”.....143-164

(Maternalism and Paternalism)

Introduction

Like One of the Family

Family Analogy in Albay

Comparison with other Countries

Compandrazgo

Paternalism

Maternalism

Conclusion and Reflection

Chapter VII-“LIKE A SPECIAL COMMODITY”.....165-192

(Domestic as Property)

Introduction

The Invisibility of the Domestic

Domestic as Commodity and as Disposable Property

Physical and Verbal Abuse

Power Over Domestics’ Personal Lives

Conclusion and Reflection

Chapter VIII-DEPENDENCY.....193-215

Introduction

Domestic’s Dependency (Consequences and Coping Strategies)

Negative Resignation and Positive Acceptance

Deferential Behavior

Humor and Criticism

Psychology

Solidarity among Domestics

Flight

Employer’s Dependency

Reasons for Dependency

Control and Manipulation	
Conclusion and Reflection	
Chapter IX-DEFERENCE.....	216-236
Introduction	
Domestic as Deferential Worker	
Deferential Behavior	
Deference in Structure of Communication	
Pattern of Questioning	
Domestic as Confidante	
Deference in Language	
Spatial Deference	
Work Area	
Sleeping Arrangement and Quarters	
Eating Arrangement	
Deferential Behavior of Female Employer	
Conclusion and Reflections	
Chapter X-CONCLUSION.....	237-252
Limitations of the Study	
Discussion of Major Findings	
Reflexibility Revisited	
Concluding Statements	
APPENDICES	253-273
Appendix A – The Women	

Appendix B – Demographic Profiles

BIBLIOGRAPHY.....283-290
CURRICULUM VITAE291

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this dissertation I explore how class and gender relations impact women's lives. However, instead of viewing these two forces as separate and independent of each other, I look at how they intersect and how their intersectionality affects women. At the same time I investigate relationality – i.e. how the privileging of one group of women is related to the exploitation of another less fortunate group. Specifically I look at class and gender relations in the Philippines focusing primarily on the relationship between women from the more privileged classes and the women from the poor. The resulting discussion, observations, reflections and conclusions come from interviews I conducted with 25 Filipino female employer-female domestic dyads in 1989. Although these interviews were from two decades ago on a limited sample of Filipino women, their experiences have implications for and resonate with the lives of women at a global perspective and at different periods in time.

The relationship between the Filipino female domestic and her Filipino female employer does not develop in a vacuum. It is affected by the world they interact in. Therefore I begin with a survey of the social conditions in the Philippines at the time I talked with these women in 1989 and what the society is like today 2 decades later. It is also important to examine global migration especially the migration of women from Third World countries to richer economies, paying closer attention to the burgeoning

number of Filipino women who leave their families behind to work as domestics in other countries.

Socio-economic Conditions in the Philippines

In 1989 the Philippines was a highly polarized society. The country and its people were struggling with the effects of 20 years of martial law under the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos. The People's Revolution in February of 1986 that toppled Marcos and ushered in the presidency of Corazon Aquino gave the Filipino people a new hope for better social conditions and a higher quality of life. However, despite all the rhetoric that came with her ascendancy through the People's Power, the majority of the Filipino people sadly had to wake up to the reality of their poverty and deprivation juxtaposed to the wealth and power of the privileged. The small elite that was in place before 1986 still owned and controlled the country's economy and continued to wield power and influence over the underprivileged with impunity.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s the per capita income in the Philippines was the equivalent of \$200 a year. The economic crisis continued to be increasingly acute since the early 1970s. Wages were a little more than the equivalent of US\$3 a day with a majority of skilled and semi-skilled workers desperately finding it hard to support their children. Thirty percent (30%) to 40% of the population were either underemployed or without work. According to the FIES (National Family Income and Expenditure Survey) of the NSO (National Statistics Office) of the Philippines no less than 70% of the families in this group (unemployed/underemployed) lived well below the poverty line (NSO, 2001)

The National Statistics Office (NSO) of the Philippines reports that the population of the Philippines which was 59,502,200 in 1989 reached 76, 498,735 in 2000 (NSO, 2001). In 2006 the government set the official poverty line at P42 per day per person. Less than the equivalent of \$1, this allows 1 person 1 kilo of rice and 1 chicken egg for 1 day. If this threshold is raised to P86 per day, then it doubles the number of Filipinos classified as poor (Africa, 2010).

As the household real income fell by an average of 20% across all surveyed household between 2000 and 2006, the growing inequality between the rich and the poor continued to widen. According to the IBON Foundation, an independent Filipino research organization established in 1978, the net worth of the 20 richest Filipino families was P801 billion (US\$15.6 billion). This is equivalent to the combined family incomes for the year of the poorest 10.4 million families. This data translates to P77,019 for every family for 365 days or P201.01 per day per family. At the Philippine average of 6 persons in a family this would give P35 per day per person, which is below the P42 poverty line set by the government. In October 2001, POPCOM (Population Commission) of the Philippines reported that 30.6 million Filipinos or 40 % of the 2000 population of 76.5 million lived well below the poverty line (POPCOM, 2001).

Ironically what Ferdinand Marcos said in a speech years before he declared Martial Law and began his 20-year dictatorship, describes what the Philippines is today – 2010. He stated that the Philippines is “a nation divided against itself- divided between urban and rural, rich and poor, majorities and minorities, privileged and underprivileged.” Filipino society today consists of on one side, the politically and economically powerful elite and on the other, the masses – the rural peasantry and urban poor.

Filipino Domestic Workers and Global Migration

Poverty, underemployment, and unemployment have led to an increase in rural to urban migration as well as emigration with an increasing number of college educated Filipinos leaving to find work as service workers in richer economies. At the beginning the majority of migrants were male and mostly male heads of households. Today however, the trend has shifted as more and more women find better pay working as domestics in other countries. The migration in 2010 was a negative migration of -1.29 migrants per 1,000 or 116,100 Filipinos per year going out to work as mostly service workers in receiving countries. By 2010 around 4 million Filipinos mostly women were in Saudi Arabia, Canada, Malaysia, Japan, Australia, Italy, Hong-Kong, Qatar, the United Kingdom, and the United States as workers mostly in the service sector (World Bank Migration and Remittances Brief 13). These workers, dubbed as heroes by the government, have sent yearly remittances that reached a total of US\$21,311,000,000 in 2010.

At the national level, NEDA (National Economic Development Authority) reported that 81.5% of laborers in domestic service in 1985 were women. In a study done by Engracia and Herrin (Engracia and Herrin, 1983), they found out that 90% of female domestics are rural to urban migrants. A more recent survey (Labor Force Survey, October 2006) estimated that of the 33.8 million Filipinos in the labor force (10 years and over) 624,000 or 1.8 % are domestic helpers. Of this number, 579,000 are female (or 9 out of 10).

The gap between these poor rural women and wealthy urban women has widened over the decades. While middle class and upper class women enter public life and the

professions and value their ability to balance their careers and their responsibility for housework, they are able to hire poor rural women to relieve them of household drudgery.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Women in the Philippines as is true with women in different parts of the world do not experience the effects of gender relations and gender hierarchies in a universal way. Their experience is differentiated along class lines. For example, although women are expected to do the housework, those from the more privileged classes, with their access to valuable resources, are able to pass on their burden to poor women for whom doing housework for other women is their only means of survival for themselves and their families. The dynamics of dependency, deference, propriety, and fictive kinship that are present in whatever kind of relationship exists between female employers and their female domestics, maintain and reproduce gender hierarchies as well as the class inequalities that mitigate every woman's experience of her subordination.

Using qualitative methodologies and ethnographic interview techniques, I listen to the personal accounts by 25 female employer-female domestic dyads in the Philippines, of their experiences as employers and domestics. Examining how these women interact with each other and the meanings they give their interactions as employer and domestic, is an excellent opportunity to study different kinds of female employer-female domestic relationships. While there are other relationships of domination and subordination, it is in this work relationship between two females, involving a gendered activity such as housework, where class relations and gender relations interact to reinforce the

subordination of women by men because of their gender, and the domination of a woman by another woman because of their class positions.

My interest in studying female employer-female domestic dyads, stems from the view that the relationship between these two women is a microcosm of the class and gender relations in Philippine society. Historically, domestic servitude and the relations between female employers and female domestics date back to Pre-Hispanic Philippines. At that time domestic servants were both male and female, but in the Philippines today, domestic servants are overwhelmingly female.

Although the interviews for this dissertation were done only with Filipino women, the analysis brings the experiences of female employers and female domestics from its particular geographical and historical context (i.e. the Philippines in the 1980s) to the global discourse on the intersectionality of class and gender systems of power and of the relationality in the lives of women with particular attention to how the privileging of one group of women is related to the deprivation of another.

FRAMEWORK AND OBJECTIVES

It has been 20 years since I did the ethnographic interviews in July and August of 1989 with 25 female employer-female domestic dyads in the Philippines. My objective at that time was to explore class and gender inequalities in the lives of female domestics and female employers as they deal with housework – a gendered work that most societies in the world consider as primarily the responsibility of women. This goal has not changed. Initially however, my analysis was rather simplistic - I intended to listen to the interviews and in the process find evidences of female subordination using a framework

informed by my readings of three perspectives - Marxist, radical feminist and socialist feminist (Millet, 1969; Firestone, 1971).

Although alternative paradigms were beginning to take root in feminist studies in the 1980s (Rollins, 1985; Romero, 1988; Smith, 1987; DeVault, 1991), in the beginning of this research I was neither ready to split with the established ways of analyzing subordination nor to confront my own discomfort with analyses that ran counter to my own experiences as a woman from the Third World. However, it soon became apparent as I proceeded with my research that using any or all of these perspectives puts my analysis in danger of being based on binary solutions to questions about class and gender relations in the lives of women. Feminism and feminists, myself included, need to go beyond this myopic focus on women as the oppressed and men the oppressors or the poor as totally powerless and the rich holding all the power cards with no grey areas in between. The issue of women and oppression is much too complex for an either-or explanation.

This study does not view women as victims but as empowered women who chart their own lives with agency. Its framework does not only allow the women I have interviewed to speak out about their own lives but also allows me, the researcher, to situate my own position as a social scientist from the Third World through a reflexive analysis of my own life experiences. The differences between women within and from different societies are not viewed as threats but as possible starting points for identifying commonalities and opportunities for solidarity.

The framework I use is informed by current feminist discourse on women and oppression that goes beyond an analysis of class and gender as separate systems of power

that have independent influences on women's lives. It explores instead how class and gender operate as intersecting and interdependent forces in the lives of poverty-stricken women in relation to the lives of women from the more privileged classes in society.

Current feminist discourse needs to accept that the experiences of women in the United States and Europe do not necessarily reflect those of women from other societies. Feminists before the turn of the century had a tendency to see women from the rest of the world especially from poor and underdeveloped economies as the Other - a homogenous group that needed rescuing from the hegemony of patriarchy and capitalism (Mohanty, 2003). Third World women were lumped into one monolithic group of poor and ignorant women who lived lives of subordination by men in tradition bound societies but were not even aware of their oppression (Mohanty, 2002). White feminists do not hesitate to speak for women of color and women from the Third World and tell us how we should think or view our lives (Collins, 2000). Even with the best of intentions, an injustice is done when one group of women appropriates the rights of another group to define themselves.

From where I stood, a female social scientist from the Third World living as a minority woman in a First World society, I became more and more dissatisfied with how some feminists in the United States and Europe define the situation of women in Third World societies. In addition, I also saw that any research about women and housework at this point in time must be informed by the globalization of housework services that is fueled by poverty and the burgeoning migration of women from the Third World who work as domestics for women in richer economies in order to meet the basic needs of the families they had left behind (Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2002).

Given how my analysis for this research has evolved over the years, I use what Mohanty stated in the Introduction of her book, Feminism Without Borders, to say that this dissertation is “a product of two decades of engagement with feminist issues” in my academic endeavor as well as my personal life. I came to the United States to study for a PhD in Sociology. However, during the process of doing a dissertation I married a white American, became a stay at home mom for my 2 daughters, and subsequently re-entered the labor force as a teacher by day in an elementary school attached to a traditional religious institution run by men, and as an adjunct sociology faculty by night in a local community college.

Some of my experiences over the years resonate with the issues that my research addresses. These experiences have made me see the importance of incorporating a global perspective on a study on female employers and female domestics. One particular incident comes to mind. While I was a stay-at-home mother for my young daughter I used to take her to the art galleries. One afternoon while I was pushing her stroller through the Smithsonian Galleries I met some Asian women who, after the usual introductions, asked me how much I was being paid for my services as a nanny. It took me only a second to realize that they had defined me as a domestic who left the Philippines to take care of another woman’s baby in the United States.

I was uncomfortable with this definition. I considered women who migrate to other countries to work as maids as just too money-hungry at the expense of the welfare of their families. However, the literature I have read for this dissertation has made me cognizant of the socio-economic issues that have pushed these women to leave their own children behind while attending to the needs of other people’s children.

The globalization of domestic service and the working conditions of the women who migrate to become domestics in foreign lands is an issue that informs this dissertation. What happens to the families of Third World women who migrate to richer economies to work as domestics so they could remit much needed dollars home to the families they had left behind? What kind of relationship does the migrant female domestic have with her female employer? What about her relationship with her own children and her spouse? How does she cope with whatever oppressive working conditions she encounters? Although this dissertation does not focus on finding answers to these questions, it is important to understand that the working conditions of female domestics and their relationship with their female employers in a particular social context is ultimately connected to and affected by what is happening at the global level.

Finally, my struggles as a minority woman from the Third World living in a First World society, has given me the opportunity to see that the road towards global female solidarity can better be traversed if feminist discourse incorporates the experiences of Third World women through the eyes of Third World women themselves. Women in First World societies must listen to Third World women as they speak for themselves and define their own lives in their own words.

Today in Albay (the fictitious name I use to refer to the study site) as was true when I interviewed the female domestic and their female employers in 1989, women who migrate to the urban areas end up working for women of the middle and upper classes. As a domestic servant, the migrant woman shares in or replaces the domestic labor of other women in the household. Her occupation is an extension of "women's work" and the labor arrangement she enters into is a relationship of domination- the domestic is rural and of the

lower classes while the employer is urban and belongs to the more privileged elite in Philippine society.

Race as a Non-Issue in this Research

Although research in the west especially in the United States and South Africa indicate the significance of race as a factor in domestic service, this research does not look at race. Among Filipinos there is no clear racial delineation between employers and domestics. Employers are either of Chinese, Spanish, Hindu-Malayan, American, or a mixture of any of these racial groups. But so are the domestics. However, in a future study it would be interesting to see if domestics categorize themselves as more Chinese or more Spanish than others and if employers actually see their domestics as looking more Chinese or Malayan than others. A future research would then explore if domestics who the employers see as more Chinese than others are treated any differently than those who look more Spanish or Malayan. As a corollary, research could be done on how employers who consider themselves more Spanish treat their domestics better or worse than those who categories themselves as more Chinese or more Malayan than other Filipinos.

THE RESEARCH ACT

Women's Voices and Symbolic Interaction

My approach to this research is grounded on the belief that in studying the relationship between female domestics and female employers, the women themselves are the expert witnesses of their own lives. What they say about their relationship and the

words they use in describing their daily interaction are central to my analysis. Their voices should be heard. It is important in my position as researcher that in telling these women's lives, I do not silence their voices or obscure them with my own.

I explore the relationship between the female employer and the female domestic from the perspective of symbolic interactionism. Symbolic interactionism is a term first used by Herbert Blumer for a methodological position whose foundations were laid down by George Herbert Mead (Blumer, 1969). It is based on three premises that have significant implications for my approach to studying the relationship between female employers and female domestics. First, according to Blumer, "human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them. The second premise states that meaning arises in the process of interaction between people. In my study I focus on the interaction between the female domestic and the female employer. Their actions and their interpretations of each other's actions are important factors in their conception of their relationship.

"Symbolic interactionism sees meanings as social products, as creations that are formed in and through the defining activities of people as they interact" (Blumer, 1969). Meaning is formed in the context of social interaction and is derived by the person from that interaction. The use of meanings by a person occurs through a process of interpretation.

This process of interpretation involves what Blumer calls a process of self-interaction. The female domestic assesses the situation. She evaluates her position as the domestic and in the process of self-evaluation and self-interaction she then acts according to her assessment of what she can and cannot do and what is best for her present position.

She sees the action of her employer; interprets the action and assesses how she must act. She decides whether to continue to act the same way or revise her behavior accordingly.

The female employer and the female domestic have agency in their social interactions. They are social actors who constantly assess and interpret the action of the other before deciding how to act. In interacting with one another each one takes account of what the other is doing or is about to do. Then they direct their own conduct in the situation based on their interpretation of what the other indicates to them. “The actions of others enter to set what one plans to do, may oppose or prevent such plans, may require a revision of such plans, and may demand a very different set of such plans. One has to fit one’s own line of activity in some manner to the actions of others” (Blumer, 1969).

Symbolic interactionism allows me to interpret my own relations with the women I encounter during the fieldwork. I look at how the women act towards me as the researcher. I am aware of the power differentials between me (the researcher) and the women I study (the researched). I take into account the power I have in interpreting, writing, and communicating to others the descriptions the women have shared with me about their interactions with each other.

This power asymmetry could blind me to how these women conceptualize their relationship. Since I have the power to decide what to include and what to exclude from their accounts of their relationship, I could be imputing to them knowledge of the character of their relationship that they are not even aware of; that they are not saying at all. However, from the methodological perspective of symbolic interactionism, I see these women as social actors who derive meanings from their interaction with each other and with me. Their accounts and their descriptions of their daily interactions are central

to my analysis; my goal is to explore their relationship as they see it. I cannot really get as close as I would like to be to these women and their relationship. But by listening to their accounts and by consciously making an effort to be true to these women's descriptions of their interactions, I would be able to get as near as I can to the realities of their lives.

My purpose in doing ethnographic interviews with 25 female employer- female domestic dyads in the Philippines was to see and understand the meanings they give to the realities in their lives and how they go about constructing and reconstructing their relationship on a daily basis. In listening to the voices of these women, my substantive goal is to understand how the daily interaction between the female employer and the female domestic, as they deal with the housework, maintains and perpetuates class and gender inequalities.

I use reflexive analyses in considering the meanings of my own experiences as a member of the employer class and in understanding the power relationship I, as a researcher, have with the researched, the women I have chosen to study. Throughout the data gathering, data analysis and the writing phases of this project, I am guided by the tradition of qualitative research and the techniques for doing, interpreting and writing ethnographies.

The Researcher: A Reflexive Analysis

I begin this section with this quote (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 1995)

No field researcher can be a completely neutral, detached observer, outside and independent of the observed phenomena. Rather, as the ethnographer engages in the lives and concerns of those studied, his perspective 'is intertwined

with the phenomenon which does not have objective characteristics independent of the observer's perspective and method'.(Mishler,1979)

I started this study aware of my biases and subjectivities. I know that my position is not that of a disinterested, detached observer. It is important in the pursuit of new knowledge that the researcher looks at her "self" in relation to all aspects of the research process: her view of research, her relation to the culture and to the people she is studying. Reflexive analysis involves me, the researcher, reflecting on how I carried out the research and how the process of going about the methods I use, qualitative or quantitative, as well as my role as researcher determine the results. With reflexive analysis, I should go beyond looking at my findings and conclusions as naturally emerging from the data and data collection, but as framed and derived from the choices I make as the key player with power over the research process (Alvesson, M. and Skoldberg,K. , 2000). Using reflexive analysis, I also address my position as the researcher. I look at myself and my relationships with the women and Albay society from where I stand.

It is difficult to avoid subjectivity in this research, especially for a researcher who is a child of the culture she is studying. However, a careful monitoring of my subjectivities through reflexive analysis allows me to peel off layer after layer till I am able, from where I stand as both a native of the culture and as a researcher, to write the story of the lives of the female employers and the female domestics from their own scripts.

Insider/Outsider Issues

I begin with my position as an outsider and as an insider to the people and the place that I study. What makes me an insider? Am I an outsider? Did I become an outsider to the women I interviewed? How did my insider or my outsider positions impact my relationships with these women? How did these positions impact the study?

First, I consider the advantages of being an insider. I was born in Albay. I am a native, an insider. I know the language and its nuances. I am cognizant of the power, social, and economic structure of Albay. I know its history. I have known the geography, climate, weather and topography of the place since I was a child. I know the people. I understand how the community functions as only a native can – including minutiae that would have been lost to a total stranger just coming in from the cold. Most important of all, as an insider I had easy access to the women I wanted to study.

Being a native does not always translate to being a complete insider. In my relationships with the community and all its subgroups I experienced shifts in my position. I was an insider to one group and an outsider to another. In the next few paragraphs I discuss my insider and my outsider positions among the employers and among the domestics.

I grew up an insider in the employer class. I am a member of the privileged class. I had the power and the advantages that come with privilege. I did not consider access to either employers or domestics a problem. I had the right connections. They gave me easy access to all the employers I needed to interview. I also knew that just one word from the employers, and I had the group of domestics in my hand.

Even before I went home to do the fieldwork I had contacted some employers by phone. These women were childhood friends, friends of my parents, parents of friends,

relatives, or relatives of friends. There was no doubt that the ease with which I got my employers was made possible by my insider position. A researcher from another country would not have the same access I had and may not have the same group of employers I got.

There were some drawbacks to being an insider to the employer class. I concentrated on almost an exclusive group of women as my employer interviewees for the very reason that as a member I had easy access. These women were mostly from the upper class and upper middle class in Albay.

For the purpose of my analysis, I view class in terms of relations with other classes. My criteria include social standing, membership in elite organization, job type or business, educational level, income, and sources of income. I considered upper class the women whose families were members of the elite exclusive organizations in Albay, whose incomes did not come only from their day jobs but had additional earnings from inherited farmlands or family owned businesses, and whose families were the political and economic powers in Albay. These women also held jobs as presidents of universities, college professors, doctors with their own clinics, and division or department heads in government agencies. Based on these criteria, the employers came from the upper and the upper-middle classes of Albay.

In the beginning of my analysis I viewed the fact that I was focusing only on the upper and the upper-middle class women as a weakness in my source of data, but I soon realized that this made the class divide between the employers and the domestics very well-defined.

What of my insider position among the employers? This shifted. During the interviews the employers asked me several times what exactly was I going to do with the results of the interviews? I had informed them before I started the interviews that this was the data collection phase for my dissertation in sociology. This did not stop them from asking me the same question several times during the interview. I do not think that this was because they thought the domestics could do anything about their position. Nor do I think that they were ashamed of or even conscious of how badly they treated their domestics. I had been away from Albay for a while. Were these employers a little apprehensive about what my purpose was in coming back? Was I now viewed as an outsider with ideas that may challenge the status quo? These are legitimate concerns. Whatever the reason for their question, I can only say that I perceived a shift in their view of me as a complete insider. I was not totally the insider they used to know and be comfortable with. Although not completely a stranger, I had lived somewhere else - beyond the boundaries of Albay. This may have had a potential impact on the candor with which they answered my questions.

I also experienced shifts in my own perception of my position among the employers. The employers' perception was not totally without merit. I had become an outsider. I had left Albay to do graduate work in sociology and had been exposed both in the academic courses and my interactions with the professors, my friends and classmates, to alternative ideas and views about relationships between groups within a society. Before I came to the United States, I do not remember entertaining thoughts about how exploited domestics were. This was quite ironic considering that as a student I worked with priests and nuns doing activist work with farmers to do teach-ins to awaken them

about their rights and their freedoms. I do not recall viewing domestics as a group I would do teach-ins with so they could rise up to demand better treatment from their employers. My own family had domestics. Like their employers, I did not even think about them at all.

Growing up I looked at domestics and domestic service from an outsider perspective. Now I question why employers consider it their birthright to treat domestics as objects to be used and abused. My position as insider or outsider shifted not only among the employers but also within myself.

This fluidity of position as outsider and insider is the topic of Nancy Naples' article "A Feminist Revisiting of the Insider/Outsider Debate: The Outsider Phenomenon in Rural Iowa". In this article she talks of the insider and outsider positions as not fixed or static. I quote.....

"...The bipolar construction of insider/outsider also sets up a false separation that neglects the interactive processes through which insiderness and outsiderness are constructed. Outsiderness and insiderness are not fixed or static positions, rather they are ever-shifting and permeable social locations that are differentially experienced and expressed by community members."

I can see Naples' contention about the fluidity of the insider and outsider position, in my own insiderness and outsiderness among the female employers and female domestics in Albay. My position is never fixed.

I turn now to my position among the domestics. The domestics associated me with the employer class from the very first day of my fieldwork. As soon as they saw me with their employers, I had no doubt in my mind of their immediate perception of my affiliation. During my interviews with their employers, the domestics were around

attending to us. I was automatically an outsider to the group of female domestics I interviewed. They heard me reminiscing with their employers about old times. For my interview with them, they were instructed beforehand by their employers to stop whatever they were doing, serve me “merienda” (Filipino equivalent of tea time), be cooperative, and be polite to me. My outsider position in terms of the group of domestics will be discussed in more depth in the next section on the issue of power differentials.

Power Differentials Between the Researcher and the Researched

In her article on the outsider/insider phenomenon, Nancy Naples contends that researchers must pay attention on the issue of power in ethnographic encounters. In her article, Naples attributes this idea to Shulamit Reinharz (1992), stating that:

A feminist approach to fieldwork includes a sensitivity to issues of power and control in the research process for a self reflexive practice.

The feminist approach enjoins the researcher to be sensitive to issues of power and control. As the researcher, I have control over most of the research process. As the researcher I am aware of the power differentials between the women and me.

I begin with my interactions with the domestics. I do not believe that the domestics trusted me at all. If some did, they did so with reservations. They saw me as their employer’s friend and therefore I was not one of them. They were aware that I come from the privileged class. The domestics were not oblivious to the social distance between us; more significantly, they understood the power I had over them. They were being interviewed because they were commanded to do so by their employers. The instructions they got from their employers communicated this fact very clearly to them. There is no doubt in my mind that some if not all of them were apprehensive that

whatever they said to me would go back to their employers and they, the domestics would have to pay the consequences for any negative comments about their employers.

The situation I describe above impacted my interaction with the domestics. This also affected my confidence in the veracity and truth of their responses. Did this impede my ability to learn from them and my ability to write about their lived experiences?

Were their responses forced from them out of fear that if they did not cooperate they will have to suffer the consequences of their actions? Were they afraid that I could make their lives miserable? Did they just tell me what they thought I wanted to hear? This is a very significant consideration. If I cannot trust their accounts then my research cannot go on.

I do not believe that I am the only researcher who has had to struggle with this issue. I know that if the researcher does not acknowledge the social distance that results in problems of trust between the researcher and the researched, it can have adverse effects on how to communicate to the outside world and what to write about the experiences of the researched.

We cannot deny that power differentials between the researcher and the researched exist. However, in considering the power of the researcher over the researched, there must be a level of acceptance and confidence that a researcher needs to have on the agency of the researched to talk truthfully and confidently about their experiences. Otherwise what is the point then of doing ethnographic interviews?

In my interviews with both domestics and employers my first goal was to let them talk freely about their day to day routines and experiences as either employer or domestic. After I explained to them that I was interested in understanding how it is to be an employer or to be a domestic, I simply asked each one to relate to me what they did

from the time they woke up to the time they went to bed. This worked in all the 50 interviews. This led to 1 or 2-hour interviews where I can say from observing the interviewee's facial expressions and body language, that both employers and domestics became more candid as the conversation went along. Did I take advantage of the power differentials between me and the interviewees? Yes. Although I listened to everything each woman had to say about her experiences, I probed and prodded and made the conversation move on to topics I wanted to cover. I had enough power, control and interview skills to make this happen. However, the power and control I had over the research process brings in ethical issues that I need to address.

Ethical Issues

Section 12 of the Ethical Standards set forth by the ASA(American Sociological Association) state that:

Informed consent is a basic ethical tenet of scientific research on human populations. Sociologists do not involve a human being as a subject in research without the informed consent of the subject or the subject's legal authorized representative except as otherwise specified in this Code. Sociologists recognize the possibility of undue influence or subtle pressures on subjects that may derive from researchers' expertise or authority, and they take this into account in designing informed consent procedures.

These guidelines from the American Sociological Association clearly state that informed consent is paramount in any research on human populations. Based on this guideline I should have obtained the informed consent of the female domestics before interviewing any one of them. Each of the domestics ought to have had a say on whether

she wanted to answer my questions or not. But I did not ask permission from any of them. When the employer named a domestic to be interviewed I proceeded to do the interview. There were reasons that I kept in mind to justify interviewing domestics without their informed consent. I discuss in the next few paragraphs. I state them not to excuse my own actions but to show how a social scientist can be oblivious to the effects of her fieldwork behavior on the subjects of her study.

Based on the working situation of the female domestic and the power of the employer over what a domestic can and cannot do it would be impossible to get a completely free consent because of the nature of her employment. Their situation was what it was whether I interviewed them or not. The very nature of the interview set-up is in itself a data point saying something about the nature of their employment- i.e. that they really do not have a lot of choices in regards to their employment as soon as they became domestics. Since domestics are in a subservient position, their informed consent would have been impossible. To keep their jobs domestics must do what their employers told them to do.

What would have happened if I did ask permission from the domestic? If she says yes, then the interview goes on as planned. If she says no, then I would have to go back to the employer to inform her of her domestic's refusal to be interviewed. A probable result of this would be that the domestic who refused would embarrass her employer and incur the latter's anger since her refusal would be equivalent to disobeying her employer's command. The domestic could get fired or could lose whatever meager privileges she received and be treated worse than before the interview.

In this scenario asking permission from the domestic could do more harm than good in terms of the domestic's relationship with her employer. Section 12.01 b Scope of Informed Consent, from the Ethical Standards of the ASA states:

Despite the paramount importance of consent sociologists may seek waiver of this standard when (1) the research involves no more than minimal risk for research participants, and (2) the research could not practicably be carried out where informed consent is to be required.

There was minimal risk to the domestics because of measures I took with the information they shared with me. In the research write-up I used fictitious names and their responses were never at any time divulged to any of the employers. These measures protected them from any retaliation from their employers.

Furthermore since the research design needed pairs of female employers and female domestics, obtaining consent from the domestics would have made it more difficult to get the necessary dyads. The section quoted above clearly allows for the waiver of consent when it would prove difficult to proceed with the research otherwise.

Throughout my fieldwork I kept telling myself that the reasons I outlined in the preceding paragraphs are enough justification for not actively seeking the domestics' consent before I interviewed them. Why was I not comfortable with the situation? I am a person who does not like to be coerced into doing something that I do not want to do. In my dealings with my family, my colleagues, friends and most people I interact with I have always prided myself in being respectful of another person's free will and rights as a fully human person. So now I ask myself, why did I not follow through with this belief when I interacted with the domestics? Why did I proceed knowing that I was becoming a central player in a series of coercive interviews?

I did something unethical and I did not even think about it. I ask myself why. My answer to this question is important for myself and other social scientists intending to go to the field to interact with human subjects. Researchers dealing with human populations should not forget that no amount of data is more important than preserving the dignity of the person whose life we intrude into when we begin the fieldwork.

While I was busy chasing data I forgot the very women whose lives are at the center of my research. Why? I grew up in the society that I am studying. I grew up in that world and I am very much the same fabric as the employer class. Although there are several advantages to being a native, there are issues that can blind the researcher to aspects of the culture that might be more lucid to a non-native. Since I grew up socialized to the concept that domestics are there to serve and obey their employers it never occurred to me to question the obedience shown by the domestics when they were named by their employers to be the designated interviewee. Obedience was a characteristic that employers looked for in a domestic. Therefore in my mind the domestic who willingly answered my questions was just behaving like the domestics that I interacted with as I was growing up. People of the servant class are there to serve and whether they want to or not is something that was never an issue for the employer and her family. But being a native does not excuse my actions in any way. This is an important consideration for researchers who are about to observe and analyze the society they grew up in.

Secondly, when I went back to Albay to do interviews, I assumed the persona of the researcher - the social scientist prepared to interact with the subjects of my research. There is danger in this especially when we see the interview as a specialized interaction

and forget that the people we are talking to are human beings and not passive subjects of our research. For when we do so then we are guilty of blurring the line between subject and object. When I did not see the necessity of obtaining the informed consent of the domestics before I interviewed them, I then treated them as objects. Their existence was predicated on their usefulness to me as a researcher. The need to respect their humanness was not at the top of the list.

When I chose to study domestics and employers to see how the privileging of one group of women is related to the exploitation of another, I was not fully aware that the researcher can actually contribute to that exploitation. While digging into the literature on domestic service I had begun to see the exploitation that female domestics are subjected to in the households of their female employers. I was appalled at how badly female employers treated their female domestics. I promised myself that I am not going to be a party to their exploitation ever again. Little did I know that my actions would contribute once again to their exploitation. For when I did not bother with seeking their informed consent I was robbing them of their free will and their dignity as human beings. I was exploiting these women to satisfy my research needs. Researchers must keep in mind that no matter what the ASA says about waivers and the need for data to advance the cause of social research, there are far more important issues we must bear in mind than just the need to carry out a research design and get data. At the top of the list is the need to see every human subject as fully human and to use whatever resources we have at our disposal to respect their dignity as human beings. In this aspect, I failed. I cannot undo the coercive interviews I forced on 25 female domestics in Albay. I owe them my sincere apologies. I hope that in sharing this failing in this research other social scientists

may fully understand that informed consent must be paramount in fieldwork especially if it involves individuals who are disenfranchised and powerless.

Tension Between Social Activism and Scholarly Pursuit

There is in the mind of most social science researchers a strong temptation to view their research as not only a process of exploration, interpretation and communication, but also as a medium with which to effect change. I thought I would be able to alleviate the miserable working conditions of the domestics. I also entertained the idea of convincing the female employers to stop the exploitation of female domestics. This resulted in a tension between social activism and scholarly pursuit. In the next few paragraphs I address this issue in terms of my relationships with the employers and with the domestics.

Although I cannot change the wages the employers pay to their domestics or change the working conditions domestics experience daily in the private confines of their employer's household, the stories of the domestics and their employers are powerful tools with which I could inform the on-going discourse about the subordination of women and about how this subordination is differentiated by class relations.

I look at my relationship with the employers. These employers are my friends. I did not want to betray their trust or destroy my life long friendship with them. Did my analyses get compromised because of a desire to paint a portrait of employers who were kinder and gentler to their female domestics? Or have I been more critical of the employers in my analyses and in my writing because of my prior knowledge about them? The perspective of symbolic interactionism and the techniques for writing ethnographies

gave me the methodological tools to get as close as I can to telling these women's lives without distorting them with my subjectivities.

As I proceeded with the interviews I became more aware of the plight of the domestics. However, much as I might wish to engage this problem, at that point I neither had the power nor the time to do so. I went back to Albay with a concept of domestic service and the division of labor in the household that was different from what I had been socialized to. This made me more critical of my friends' (the employers) treatment of their domestics. I entertained the idea that somehow I could talk to them about my concerns. This did not happen. First, I did not want to break lifelong friendships. Secondly, I went home to do fieldwork, not to do social work. I was also aware of how powerless I was to change their views. These employers and I grew up in Albay and were socialized to a sense of entitlement by virtue of our class membership. No matter how educated they were and how much I considered them good people, they were, as I was, socialized to view domestics as there to serve the employer class and to cater to our every need.

A professor of mine who is very familiar with this project once said that I should not be so naïve as to think that I could change the script of a lifetime. Her words resonated with my behavior and my expectations while in my parents' household. When I went back to Albay for my fieldwork I had my 9-month old daughter with me. So, while I was lamenting the exploitation of female domestics by their employers, I expected my mother's domestics to get my baby's bath ready, prepare her bottles, make our bed, wash and iron our clothes and do all the other domestic services I was used to

before I left the Philippines. I could not change my own “script”, so how did I ever think I could change my friends’?

Another issue that I dealt with was how open I was to listening to everything employers and domestics had to say. As I started reviewing the tapes and the transcripts of the interviews, I questioned whether or not I had fallen victim to selective listening. Did I listen only to parts of the interview that reaffirmed my beliefs? Was my reading of the employers’ and the domestics’ account of their lives filtered by a need to show that the relationship between employer and domestic is indeed one of domination and exploitation?

A part of my methodological goal was to try to overcome selective listening and to get as close as I can to how the employers and domestics interpret their relationship. Taking a cue from Blumer, I took the view that the female employer and the female domestic have agency over their social interactions. They are social actors that constantly assess and interpret the action of the other before deciding how to act.

I acknowledge that I can never know the lives of these women as only they can. But, by embracing the traditions of qualitative methodology, by looking at the women and their relationships from the perspective of symbolic interactionism and by monitoring my own subjectivities through reflexive analysis, I, as the researcher can come closer to that knowing as I possibly can. This process of knowing begins with the research act itself; the process of gathering the data for analysis and interpretation.

In the Field and on the Desk

In this section I discuss every step I took, from the selection of site, to entry and gaining access to the employers and domestics, to writing of ethnographic field notes, to the final writing about relationships between the female employers and the female domestics.

A-Selection of Site

There are many reasons for choosing this city which I refer to as Albay throughout this dissertation. First, I grew up in Albay, so I had no handicap in terms of the language used for the interviews and had no major problems with entry and access to the participants. Secondly, by Philippine standards it is an average city. It is an urban metropole in the central provinces of the country and is surrounded by sugar, rice, and coconut plantations, and oil (coconut) refineries and factories owned by either old moneyed clans of Spanish origins or by multinational corporations. The surrounding rural villages rank among the most economically depressed in the country. One feature of the city that is common among urban metro-poles in developing societies, and is interesting for the research, is the juxtaposition of the Spanish style mansion of the rich side by side the cardboard and tin makeshift lean-to's of the poor.

B-Selection of Participants

Twenty-five (25) pairs of female domestics and their female employers were interviewed for this study, which gave me a total of 50 women interviewees.

First, I located the female employers coming from the upper class. From my initial research and survey of the current social climate in the city I found out that the elite in the city had until the time of my study maintained their exclusive upper crust organization. The name of the organization, which I will not mention using the local dialect to protect the participants, roughly translated, means "the happy people". One annual activity that "the happy people" undertakes every Christmas is the Debutante Ball which from reliable

information functions primarily as some kind of a marriage bureau among the rich, the ultimate aim of which is to keep the money and the prestige within the membership.

I made preliminary connections with a member of this organization by overseas phone. She agreed to talk to me about her life experiences and also to introduce me to other ladies of the club. Access to this initial participant was made easy for she happens to be a childhood friend. Location of the other upper class women proceeded in this manner.

Selection of the upper-middle class women was initiated by conversations with the wife of a male elementary school teacher who is in the state college where I used to work. From my past interactions with them I remembered that wives of elementary and high school teachers, of government workers in the ranks and of accountants do have their own social activities. Therefore for this set of women I followed the informant route, one woman introducing me or pointing me out to the next participant; only those with domestics were selected for the in-depth interviews. At the end of my fieldwork I realized that I actually interviewed women from only the upper class and the upper middle class. This was in fact beneficial to my research. With 25 women who were from the most privileged classes and 25 from the lowest classes, I got a well-defined class divide between the female employers and the female domestics.

The female domestics were selected through their employers. I asked the employers for permission to interview their domestics and I went with their decision. Where there were multiple domestics in the household, the employer chose the domestic she allowed me to have access to.

C-Access to Employers

Setting up interviews with the female employers was very much easier than I had anticipated. They all lived in the same city, and all the residences or places of work were easily accessible.

For the career women, I either phoned them or visited them in their office, and told them why I came home, what my research was about and why it was important for my study to interview them. When I asked them for an interview I easily got permission for a taped interview. Sometimes the interview took place right then and there, but most often I got invited to have lunch or supper or a light snack at their residence and then had the interview.

Access to the upper class women was gained by interviewing first one member of their circle, who then proceeded to call her friends to tell them what I came for, and to ask them to help me with my research. She even went to the extent of accompanying me to the residences of her friends to help set up interviews at a later time. All of the women in this group were either friends of mine or mothers of friends or former classmates. They knew me before and so were willing to help me out.

D-Access to the Domestics

Most domestics in the Philippines are live-in. These women are on call 24 hours a day. The live-out ones are mostly laundrywomen or cooks. They chose to be in this arrangement because they either are married with husbands and children to attend to on their off duty time or had aging parents who needed care. I did not know whether the female domestics would be willing to take time off from their work or from that little time they had for their families to talk to me.

I did not know how the female employers would react to my asking their domestics to take one to two hours off their work just so they would be able to tell me about their life as a domestic. Also, I was not sure whether the female employer trusted her female domestic enough to be candid about how she was treated by her employers, or if she would trust me enough to allow me to listen to her domestics talking about their employer. I also was not sure that the domestic would trust me not to betray her confidence by reporting

back what she said about her employer. However not one of the female employers said no to my request for interviews with the female domestics she had focused on during our interview. In fact each one agreed to give the domestic as much time off as I needed to be able to complete the interview.

E-The Interviews

I conducted taped semi-structured ethnographic interviews for 2 months with 25 female employers and 25 female domestics for an average of 2 hours each.

I left the field after about 2 months with fifty (50) interview tapes and transcripts, and field notes that included observations and preliminary insights and analyses.

The objective of the in-depth interview process used in this study was to draw from the women context-rich and detailed information that was used for qualitative analysis. It is an open process but at the same time focused. It was basically a guided conversation between me as the researcher and the female employer or female domestic being interviewed. While in a more structured interview the researcher tries to elicit choices among various alternatives to preformed questions, the in-depth interview tries to discover the participant's experiences from her own perspectives and defined by her own choices and sets of alternatives (Lofland, 1971).

Each interview, although open and casual, was focused through a set of guide questions. For this purpose I developed a set of open ended questions with probes for the domestics and another set for the employers. I translated both sets of guide questions to the local dialect. I did not ask the questions one after the other during the interview. What I did was to set it before me to keep our interview focused. Although I conversed primarily in the dialect with all the domestics, I waited for the employers to make a choice on what language they wanted to use. Some employers talked entirely in English, some in Pilipino

(Philippine national language) and English and others in a combination of the dialect, English and Pilipino.

Each participant was interviewed initially for a length of no less than an hour but no more than two hours. Subsequent interviews and informal conversations either face to face or over the phone were done for clarification and probes to some issues raised but unanticipated. Each interview was taped but permission to tape was requested first before the start of the conversation. It was held in a place that afforded both the participant and me some degree of privacy, and which was mutually agreeable to both of us.

Before each interview I saw to it that the woman knew exactly what I was interested in and that she will be guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity. This brings to the fore ethical problems that usually accompany in-depth interviewing. I anticipated that at certain times I would feel I would be betraying the woman's confidence and trust. Therefore in writing up the findings I used a variety of ways to protect the identities of these women. Although everything else is real, throughout this paper, the women have been identified with fictitious names. In cases where some demographic information would reveal the woman's identity easily to someone from the study area (ex: occupation of the husband), I tried to replace it with something similar that afforded enough identity coverage without affecting the analysis.

Each interview was semi-structured. For both employers and domestics I began with this statement: I am interested in what a typical day is like in your life as a domestic (as a wife/mother/ or career woman) from the time you wake up in the morning to the time you go to bed at night. Given this opener, all of the 50 women gave me very detailed descriptions of their daily routine. Many of them went so far as to tell me the exact time and length of each activity. They also differentiated between their activities from Monday to Friday and during the weekends.

I experienced some anxiety over how the employers and domestics would react to a taped interview. First I was not really sure that either the employers or the female domestics would agree to a taped interview. I would have found this very difficult otherwise because most of the interviews were for 1 hour or more. Since that interview process was semi- unstructured then I would have lost a lot of what my interviewees said if I took notes while interviewing or afterwards. I was also concerned that the interviewee would feel uncomfortable if for every statement she made I would be busy writing down her response right in front of her. I also felt it would slow down my ability to cope with problems if the respondents were not very articulate or open in their responses. Also looking down to write responses I suspected would curtail my ability to observe the gestures and facial expressions that go with each utterance.

This concern I had on taping the interview proved to be unnecessary because not one of my interviewees ever said no to taping the interview. In fact, among the employers, especially the academics, I noticed that after permission was sought and granted it put a structure to the interview. The action of switching on the tape recorder became a cue for the employer that the interview had officially begun. It made them focus on the purpose of my visit. This was especially important in situations where the interview took place at the employer's residence. Since most of my interviewees were either friends or friends of family and knew that I was doing the project for my doctoral degree in America, there was always a meal or a snack that I got invited to partake of first, and which was followed by a short period of reminiscing about activities or things we did before I left the Philippines. Although I used these preliminaries to establish rapport as well as background information, my primary purpose was the interview, and taking my tape recorder out of my bag and putting it on the table became the unspoken signal for the interview proper to commence.

The female domestics did not seem bothered by the tape either. In fact it was quite

obvious that far from being scared or intimidated by the presence of the tape recorder, they were actually elated with the idea of someone coming to talk to them and having the responses taped. The taped interview was a novelty and the time spent with me was a welcome respite from their daily routine.

E-Guide Questions

I had guide questions and topics to keep each conversation focused on female domestic-female employer relationships. But the women responded so well to my opening statement that they gave the answers to the guide questions even without my asking them. Except for one or two rather shy female domestics, I found the women very articulate and open about their lives so that most of the time I just needed one or two probes either for clarification about their statements or when I needed more information about a certain topic or aspect of their lives.

The questions I asked during the interviews with the female employers and female domestics were geared towards finding answers to 4 major research questions, which are as follows:

- 1.) What kinds of female employer-female domestic relationship exist between the women in Albay?
- 2.) What makes one female employer-female domestic relationship similar to and different from another?
- 3.) What is unique about the Philippine case in terms of employer-domestic relationship?
- 4.) How is the intersectionality of class and gender relations articulated in the female employer-female domestic relationship?

The questions for the employers included the following: Why do you have domestics in your home? What would your day be like without them? Who would do the chores in your household if there were no domestics? How do you rate yourself as an

employer? Describe your domestics. Describe yourself as an employer. If you were present during my interview with your domestic how do you think would she describe you as an employer? How did you recruit your domestics? What are your strategies for keeping your domestics? What would make you dismiss a domestic? Would you want to be a domestic? Do you think your domestic can get into other jobs besides domestic service? If the roles were reversed would you want to be a domestic in your own household? Suppose you have a grown-up child who tells you that he or she is dating a domestic or a son or daughter of one how would you react? If you were to write a biography of your domestic what would it include? Would your domestic be able to do the same thing for you and your family?

The guide questions I prepared for the domestics were parallel to the list I made for the employers. It included: Describe to me a typical day in your life. Do you like being a domestic? How are domestics treated by employers? How does your employer treat you? Who do you answer to in this household? If you had the opportunity what would you rather be doing now? How did you join your employer's household? Do you want to be a domestic all your life? Do you see yourself as a domestic all your life? Describe yourself as a domestic. If you were present when I asked your employer to describe you what do you think she would say? If the roles were reversed would you follow what your employer does in dealing with you and the rest of her domestics?

F- Analyses of Field Notes and Interviews

While in the field, I took down notes and observations before, during and after the interviews, and I regularly read and reread my notes so I could connect the voices in the tapes with facial expressions I wrote about during my interactions with the women and my notes and observation of the places I conducted the interviews in.

My initial task was to transcribe the interviews verbatim. I tried as much as I could to show in the transcript the interviewee's hesitations, pauses, the sounds of anger or crying or sighs, the emphatic remarks, the whispers, the laughter and other emotions each woman conveyed. I listened to the taped interviews and read my field notes over and over again looking for meanings, initial patterns and categories that were coming out of the words of the employers and the domestics.

Some interviews were done in English, some in a mixture of English, Pilipino, and the dialect and some entirely in the dialect. I did not translate the interviews to English so I could minimize loss of meaning in the process of translation. I translated to English only the quotes that I used in the final stages of writing the ethnographies. I listened to each taped interview many times and read the transcripts of each interview to be sure that I translated the quote I used, from the dialect to English as close as possible to the meanings the domestic or the employer wanted to convey about their lives. This proved to be a very fruitful technique for listening to the voices of these women and for the women to speak for themselves.

I read the transcripts in two ways. First, I went through all the employers followed by all the domestics. Then I read the transcripts by dyad. Each time I listened to the tapes or read the transcripts I took down notes to help me discover meanings and insights about the lives of these women.

The volume Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes by Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw was my constant guide as I listened to, interpreted, analyzed and wrote about the themes in the ethnographic interviews from the perspective of symbolic interactionism and reflexive analysis. However, I also needed the theoretical tools necessary in analyzing the character of the different female employer-female domestic relationships I have the opportunity to study. To guide me in my analysis I look at existing research and theory on housework, domestic service, and class and gender relations.

Housework , Domestic Service : Research and Theory

Housework

From the publication in 1897 by Lucy Maynard Salmon of her seminal study “Domestic Service”, to contemporary studies done in the US, Latin America, Europe, South Africa, the Philippines, India and other parts of Asia we learn how significant the concepts of housework and domestic service are to theoretical or political discourse on the exploitation of women.

Housework is gendered work. Although at some point in their lives both men and women may have done housework, the activities we consider as housework are strongly associated with women. Like Oakley (1974), most of us think of housework as inclusive of daily tasks that need to be done for the physical maintenance of the household. Such tasks include, according to Oakley, cleaning, shopping, cooking, washing up, washing, and ironing. Other writers point to the emotional and social dimensions of housework, citing that the daily work that women do not only serves the physical maintenance of the household but also “involves connecting household members with the larger society and the day-to-day production of family life itself” (DeVault, 1986).

Feminists have long recognized that society’s continued acceptance of housework as the primary responsibility of women contributes significantly to the domestic exploitation of women. In the United States feminist scholars in the 1970s sought a materialist theory that would relate women’s domestic exploitation to capitalism. One group of scholars like Secombe, and Safiotti, argued that housework reproduced the conditions for capitalism while others, such as Heidi Hartmann, saw housework as

basically a capitalist mode of production with human labor as a commodity. An outgrowth of this debate is the argument set forth by scholars like Annette Kuhn and Michele Barrett, among others, challenging the validity of a materialist analysis of housework. According to these writers, the theory that implies that women's subordination in domestic labor would disappear once capitalism is replaced by another system does not explain why in all societies and at all times, women, whatever the mode of production, have always been left with the responsibility for housework.

Domestic Service and the Employer-Domestic Relationship

Since the 1980s the relationship between the female domestic and her female employers has increasingly become the subject of research and studies by social scientists. One question that arises is whether a type of female bonding develops between these two women. Do these women have a business relationship? Is the relationship exploitative? Given her superior position, does the female employer exploit her female domestic? Researchers and writers, both social scientists and feminists, have explored these questions over the years.

Domestic service highlights how class, race, and patriarchal relations are reinforced through the daily interaction between female employers and female domestics (Tinsman, 1992).

Gender, race-ethnicity, and class are not natural or biological categories which are unchanging over time and across cultures. Rather, these categories are socially constructed: they arise and are transformed in history, and themselves transform history.
(Amott and Matthaei, 1977)

Faye Dudden, in her historical analysis of the transformation from help to domestics in America, argued that domestic service cemented the lines between the middle and the working class. In late 19th century United States, domestic servitude was designated as the occupation of the poor whereas the ability to have domestic servants rested with the middle class.

David Katzman, in his book “Seven Days a Week: Women and Domestic Service in Industrializing America”, looked at regional differences in the relationship between female employers and female domestics. He saw that in the Northern United States during the late 19th century to the early 20th century, the “cult of domesticity” that encouraged the mistress of the house to be more involved with supervising her maid, resulted in daily conflict between the two women.

In the United States, southern states saw a different type of relationship between maid and mistress. Domestics were more in control over their work and working conditions. Womanhood in the south was not based on the cult of domesticity that the north espoused. Middle class white female employers generally exhibited disdain for involvement in household chores in whatever capacity. Susan Strasser, writing on the history of American housework in her book, “Never Done”, also stressed class relations and domestic servitude.

In the late part of the 20th century, studies focused more and more on the relationship between female domestics and their female employers. Judith Rollins, in her study of the relationship between black female domestics and their white female employers (1982), looked at how the dynamics of the mistress-maid relationship are an important part of what makes domestic service a significant instrument in maintaining

social inequalities. Mary Romero in her study of Chicana women (“Maid in the USA”), and Evelyn Nakano Glenn in her work on Japanese American women in California, also focused on how class (and race) relations are reinforced by the daily interaction between female employers and female domestics.

Studies done in South Africa by Jacklyn Cock, and by Whisson and Weil also look at how housework and domestic service highlights class and race relations. Whisson and Weil call the interaction between the white mistress and the black domestic a “microcosm of the race problem.”

Latin American studies by Margo Smith and Grace Young in Peru, Julia Filet-Abreu de Souza in Brazil, Emily Nett in Ecuador, Sandra Lauderdale Graham in Rio de Janeiro, Rubbo and Taussig in Southwest Colombia, and Leslie Gill in Bolivia, explore issues of class conflict and socialization in the daily negotiation between the middleclass mistress and the working-class maid. In these studies, accounts of oppressive working conditions and cruel treatment of the servant by the mistress underscore the class conflict that is reinforced on a daily basis. Middle class privilege comes at a price – the exploitation of the poor.

Although there is much more to be done in terms of studies of domestic service in Asia, especially in the Philippines, there is an increasing interest on women who migrate to work as domestic servants in other countries. Nicole Constable, in her study of Filipina Workers in Hongkong, examines the oppressive conditions of Filipino helpers and how they cope and devise ways to improve their situation (Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2002). Tellis-Nayak, in his study of domestic service in India, looked at power and solidarity in the relationship between employer and domestic. Two studies

that look at the relationship between employer and domestics in the Philippines are those by Dumont in 1995 in Bohol, and by Arnado in 2002 in a city in the southern part of the country. In both studies the focus is on how the relationship between mistress and maid highlights class and gender relations

In the chapters that follow, I analyze the situation of the female employers and female domestics in the Philippines in the light of existing analyses cited in this section. I reiterate that I am not looking to validate any particular theory, radical, Marxist or socialist feminist. Rather, I take a more empirical look at how class and gender relations are articulated in the relationship between the two women and how their relationship perpetuates the very class and gender inequalities that brought them together.

CHAPTER II

HISTORY OF DOMESTIC SERVICE

In societies where there is a wide gap between the rich and the poor, domestic servants have always catered to the needs of the elite. In his study of “Slavery as An Industrial System”, Dr. N.H. Nieboer traced domestic slavery back to primitive societies. According to Nieboer, in any hunting and fishing tribe which enjoyed a high level of prosperity, the slaves were assigned to do only women’s work. But in groups where women themselves were treated as slaves, domestic work was done by women.

In this chapter I look at the history of domestic service in different societies in the world including those in ancient civilizations such as Greece, Rome, India, China, and the Muslim World. Next I examine domestic service in Latin America, contemporary Arab societies and in Africa and South Africa. Then I trace the history of domestic service in the United States. I close with the history of domestic service in the Philippines.

A-Ancient Civilizations (Greece, Rome, India, China, Muslim World)

In the ancient civilizations of Greece and Rome, domestic work was done by household slaves who were mostly female domestics who were acquired by the ruling elite for the purpose of relieving their own women of the drudgery of housework.

Aben Mehta in his study of the Domestic Servant Class, found that in the Muslim world, from the earliest century to the present, household slaves/domestics freed the women of the harem to enjoy the luxurious life of wealth and privilege.

R.H Barrow, in his book “Slavery in the Roman Empire”, (quoted by Mehta in “The Domestic Servant Class”) talks about the number of domestic staff in the Roman household. The list includes stewards, valets, cooks, butlers, bath attendants, anointers, courtiers, litter bearers, secretaries, slaves in charge of brooches, silver drinking vessels, and perfume nurses, tutors, musicians, and dancers. In some exceptional cases, a household would have from 300 to 400 domestic servants and slaves. No respectable Roman would go out or go on a journey without the presence of a retinue of domestic servants and slaves. The servants and slaves in these households were exposed to extremely cruel treatment that included flogging, mutilation, and branding by their masters. However, according to Barrow (as quoted in Mehta), the domestics, whether they were treated well or not, because of years of living in close association with his master’s family, found their lives bonded up with their employers’ and often became attached by ties of affection.

In China, during the earliest centuries, a system of “slave girl” called Mui Tsai (meaning “little sister”) existed. These were actually unwanted children sold by destitute parents to be the domestic servants of the upper classes. These girls, who spent their lives in domestic service, were often subjected to extreme cruelty from their masters (Gaw, 1988).

In the earliest centuries in India, domestic work was the occupation of the Sudras, a servant class whose main purpose in life was to serve the people of the higher castes.

Mostly female, the Sudra servants lived and served with extreme restrictions in their lives. The clothes they wore were the tattered and worn clothing thrown away by their masters. Their food was of the poorest quality and mostly leftovers that their masters did not want to eat. At the same time, there were, however, upper caste masters who, adhering to the teachings of Buddhism and Jainism, treated their servants and slaves with better care, especially those whom they perceived to be content with their work and their wages (Mehta, 1960). In Christian households, domestic service did not have the ritualistic traditional caste related obligation found in Buddhist or Jain households. The relationship between the master and domestic was characterized by a patron-client bond (Nayak, 1983).

Today, domestic servants in India are mostly male. Although poverty drives a majority of people from the rural areas to the urban centers, migrants are mostly male. Besides the fact that women are much needed in agriculture, there is a traditional cultural taboo on women working for males who are not part of their families (Nayak, 1983).

B-In Latin American Societies

Across the Pacific, in Latin American societies, domestic service has almost the same characteristics as that of the Philippines. Women account for 90% of domestic workers and it is the most important female occupation in both rural and urban areas of the continent (Boserup, 1980). This situation is a result of rapid urbanization and the widening gap between a small elite wealthy minority and a rapidly growing impoverished majority (Jelin, 1977). Studies in Ecuador (Nett, 1966), Brazil (Souza, 1980), Peru (Young, 1987; Smith, 1973), Colombia (Rubbo and Taussug, 1983) and Bolivia (Gell, 1990), show that Latin American women migrate from the rural areas to the urban centers

to join an impoverished cheap desperate labor pool. Like their counterparts in other developing societies, these women do not have other viable alternatives besides domestic service. They do housework for women of the more privileged classes who have the resources to hire other women to do housework for them.

There is a difference in the composition of female domestics in Latin America and in the Philippines. In Latin America, the women are of Indian or mestizo background (Nett, 1966). In the Philippines, there are no racial or ethnic differences between the employers and the domestics (Palabrica-Costello, 1978).

C-In India, the Arab Countries and Africa

Although domestic service is associated with women, there are countries in the world where domestic servants are mostly male. These are India, the Arab countries, and Africa. In India, because of the greater involvement and need for women in rural agriculture, the male heads of rural households were the ones who migrated to the cities to find employment (Nayak, 1983). In the Arab world, the traditional prohibition against women involving themselves in economic activity gives rise to native born men rather than women entering domestic service.

There are however an increasing number of foreign- born female domestics that are present in Arab countries of the Middle East. These migrant women come from Asia, especially from the Philippines (Arnado, 1992). In Africa, restrictions against the migration of women, the involvement of women in agriculture, and the men's negative attitude to having their wives and daughters work for men outside of their immediate households have effectively barred a lot of women from domestic service.

Domestic service in South Africa does not have the same characteristic as in the rest of Africa. As in Latin America, the United States, Europe and the Philippines, domestic service is an important occupation for women. Although today most of the domestics are African and “colored” women, historical studies show that this was not always the case in South Africa (Cock, 1988; Whisson and Weil, 1971; and Gaiskell, Kimble, Maconachie, Unterhalter, 1983). During the 18th century, about 1777, the early Dutch settlers enslaved the native population of mostly Khoikoi and San tribes to become their slaves and servants. This situation changed during 1820s when a wave of migration from England added a largely European component to the population of domestic servants.

However, by the 1890s when the white migrants found more lucrative jobs, white European domestics left to be replaced by black Africans. From the 1890s onward domestic service became an important occupation for black women. These women are treated in much the same way that the rest of white South Africa treats the black majority. Sociologists Whisson and Weil describe domestic service as a “microcosm” of South Africa’s racial situation.

D- In the United States

Domestic service in the United States follows four distinct historical periods (Rollins, 1985). These are the colonial period, the period of independence to about 1850, the period from mid 19th century to World War I and the modern period, from World War I to the present. During the first period, the policy adapted by England of sending the undesirable of its citizens to its colonies saw an influx of convicts, indentured white servants, and free wheelers to the United States. Servants during the colonial period also

included negroes and Indians (Salmon, 1972 edition of her study *Domestic Service*, 1890). During this period the line between slaves and servants is not clear. At this time servants were not free laborers. They mostly came from classes and races considered by the employing population inferior to the rest of the world. It was during this period that the servants in both North and South had similar characteristics.

The second period saw a great difference between the North and the South United States. During this time the master-servant relationship in the Northern states was characterized by egalitarianism, due mostly to the fact that native born white servants who were often of the same community, ethnicity and religion as their employers. In the South however, black slaves took over domestic servitude from white workers and made this period the most dehumanizing servitude experience in the United States (Sutherland, 1981).

The third period in American domestic service mirrored those of Europe. Rapid urbanization and industrialization saw the expanding middle and upper classes that enjoyed and had the resources to employ servants. However, the same rapid industrialization brought with it household technologies that made live-in servants less necessary. Towards the end of this phase the composition of servants gradually changed into black, older, married and living out.

The fourth phase saw a continued decline in the domestic service sector in relation to the overall population and the size of the female labor force. Although earlier in this period, servants were mostly older and married and native born black women, the later part of the 20th century saw an influx of immigrant women from Asia, the Caribbean and Latin America. Today domestic service in the United States is a female-female

relationship, typically with the employer being a white middle-class woman and her employer an immigrant from the Third World.

E-In the Philippines

Domestic servants, both male and female, existed in Pre-Hispanic Philippines. They belonged to a class of slave/servants who were either born into servitude or became such through non-payment of debts or by captivity during war. This class called “oripun” (I use the Visayan terms but the Tagalog equivalent means exactly the same thing) served the class of rulers called “datu” and the freemen called “timawa”. Accounts by Chirino, Loarca, Plasencia, Artieda in the Blair and Robertson Texts and the translations of the Boxer Codex as well as the Alcina manuscripts in Jocano’s “The Philippines at the Spanish Contact, show that the “oripun” were at the bottom of the social organization called “barangay”, a kinship-oriented community of from 30 to 100 families.

Spanish colonial policy sought to maintain the ruling “datu” class. The “datu” became the landed elite who now needed even more servants to work in their fields and to maintain their households. The “oripun” of the Pre-Hispanic era took on these tasks with the men in the field while their wives and daughters did the cooking, cleaning, laundry, and other domestic work in the landlord’s house.

When the Americans came during the later part of the 19th century they did not disrupt the master-servant relations that were already in place. Their egalitarian ideas prompted women to get more education than they had before and to seek occupations outside their homes. However, the women who could realize these two goals were mostly the daughters and wives of the elite since they had more resources at their

disposal which allowed them to have servants who could take over the household chores while they were out studying or in jobs outside of their homes.

In the Philippines today, domestic servants are overwhelmingly female. At the turn of the century (1900), 42.9% of laborers in domestic service were women. By 1939, this percentage climbed up to 63.3, to 80.5% in 1960, and to 81.5% in 1985 (NEDA, 1988). This is not unique to the Philippines. In most Third World societies, there is a wide gap between the small number of elite that has access to most of the wealth and resources and the rest that live in extreme poverty. This situation gives rise to poverty stricken, unskilled, uneducated women who migrate to urban centers looking for whatever job they can find to survive. These women end up as domestic servants of more privileged women who, with the resources available to them are able to pay others to do housework for them (Costello, 1987).

Conclusion

This short historical survey of domestic service gives us a picture of an occupation that has been related to slavery especially in the earliest centuries, has always been considered at the bottom of the labor power hierarchy, and has mostly been associated with women.

CHAPTER III

CLASS AND GENDER RELATIONS IN PHILIPPINE SOCIETY

In the late 1980s the picture of Corazon Aquino, the first woman president of the Philippines, reviewing an all-male honor guard in her trademark yellow soft-flowing dress and white dress pumps, brings to mind conflicting notions about the position of women in the Philippines.

Perhaps having a woman for a president could be construed as a sign that there is gender equality in the Philippines. Otherwise, how can an ordinary housewife, as Ms. Aquino had described herself when she wrote "housewife" under the heading occupation in her forms for candidacy, unseat a seasoned dictator and his well-entrenched political machinery?

But Corazon Aquino was anything but an ordinary housewife. Born into a family of land owners she was treasurer of the family corporation that oversees hundreds of acres of landed estate called Hacienda Luisita. Chances are, she had a staff of servants who did all her duties as a "housewife". Furthermore, she was not at all new to political life. Educated in exclusive female schools and colleges, she married an equally wealthy man who had enough political clout to challenge the Marcos dynasty.

The ascendancy of Ms. Aquino into a traditionally male seat of power is not that uncommon. In fact statistics show an increasing number of Filipino women in the work force who are in "masculine" occupations (1993 Philippine Statistical Yearbook). But these are mostly women who are either highly trained or highly connected to men in power - their fathers, husbands, uncles or brothers.

The glorification of women who have been very successful in their chosen careers as well as the visibility of highly placed and highly connected women occupying positions of power in business, government and politics obscures the situation of the rest of the Filipino women who are trapped in never-ending cycles of poverty. Furthermore, underneath the rhetoric surrounding the successes of a select few, Filipino women, rich or poor, do not experience equality with men in Philippine society. They stand in a power relation as subservient dependents of men.

The next few pages are divided into 2 sections. In Section A, I look at studies done to assess the position of women in the Philippines. In Section B, I take a historical view of class and gender relations in Philippines society from Pre-Hispanic Philippines to the present.

A-Position of Women in the Philippines

From birth, the Filipino woman is taught by word and example to be an obedient daughter, a self-sacrificing mother, and an understanding and forgiving wife who must always put the needs and welfare of her husband before her own. She is socialized to be the deferential partner to men whether at home or in the workplace. Dr. Lourdes Lapuz in her book A Study of Psychopathology and Filipino Marriages in Crisis, concluded from the case studies she examined that:

Filipinas are brought up to fear men and some never escape the feelings of inferiority that upbringing creates.

Within the family, the Filipino woman grows up to view men as the source of authority. As Leticia Ramos Shahani, a Filipino politician and sister of the former President, Fidel Ramos, said in 1975 while Chairman of the UN Commission on the Role of Women:

For all the rights and responsibility which are accorded

to the Filipino women by our laws and which custom and tradition allow us to enjoy, the Filipino family and society may still be described as "patricentric". This means that the father is the head of the household, and nearly all positions and authority in business, the professions and government are held by men... Leadership has been a traditional male function and it remains to be so. The provisions of the revised Civil Code attest to the patricentric character of our family system.

Studies on family relations indicate that because of the patriarchal character of Philippine society, the position of Filipino women is defined by men. The findings in a landmark study on husband-wife relations in the Philippines, by Sylvia H. Geurrero, show that 75% of the husbands surveyed, "...expect the wife to be at home at a certain time to greet their husbands when he returns from a hard day's work..". This is corroborated by findings of Justin Greene that among Filipinos "...women's most important role has been that of wife and mother.."

Cynthia Bauson Bautista, a social scientist who conducted research on "Women and Marriage" in the Philippines, found that although a majority of wives are the family treasurer (keeps the money including husband's salary), the husband has a greater say in deciding where the money goes. Among married couples 63% of the husbands compared to only 24% of the wives get their way in situations where they disagree. A majority of wives stated that they need their husbands' permission to do various activities including buying clothes, going out with friends and lending money to relatives.

Bautista's finding also revealed that wives preferred to stay home because it gave them opportunities to get their way "indirectly". Instead of discussing things with their husbands they get what they want by passive-aggressive tactics such as withdrawing their care, crying and sulking, going home to their parents, or sometimes inflicting punishment on themselves. A majority of males and females stated that for women marriage is a must, child-bearing is the fulfillment of womanhood, and homemaking and housekeeping is the

primary responsibility of a woman. A majority endorsed the idea that the husband should have the most say in family matters and that the husband should not allow the wife to work if he can afford it.

To continue with the findings from the Bautista study, the primacy of the husband is clearly indicated by 70% of the respondents agreeing that "married women cannot make long range plans for their jobs because it depends on their husbands' plans". The culture of 'machismo' dictates that a husband whose wife has a much more successful career with better financial remuneration is in danger of being the subject of ridicule. Hence the widespread agreement with the view that "...a woman's involvement would overshadow her husband's position... Public knowledge of a woman's higher position would put the men 'under the saya' (meaning skirt) (Neher, 1982)".

In the PSSC National Survey on the Status and Role of Women in the Philippines, among the 1,800 respondents, the most frequently mentioned advantages of being a woman were: she is expected to stay home and care for her family; she does not do hard work and she is placed on a pedestal.

The idea that women do not do hard work and are placed on a pedestal finds confirmation in the value Filipinos have for a woman's "femininity" whereby a woman is supposed to exude a fragile and gentle appearance as well as behavior that is untarnished by signs of manual labor. According to Gelia T. Castillo in her paper "The Filipino Woman: Wife, Mother, Worker and Citizen":

Although there are some misgivings on the absolute virtue of femininity, there seems to be a persistent desire even among advocates of women's rights to preserve it as the Filipina's trademark. The pursuit of beauty also appears to be a national pre-occupation.

The same respondents in the PSSC Survey mentioned that among the advantages of being a man in Philippine society was that he has few restrictions to do what he wants. Furthermore, there was a high endorsement for two value statements: 1. "It is a woman's job more than a man's to uphold our moral code, especially in sexual matters" and 2. "The unmarried mother is morally a greater failure than the unmarried father."

These results from the PSSC survey, concerning morality and conduct, reveal a double standard for men and women. In its section on marriage and legal separation, the Civil Code of the Philippines imposes strict moral standards for Filipino women. For example, one single act of adultery by the wife is enough reason for the husband to file legal separation. However, proof of concubinage by the husband is required if it is the wife who wants to obtain legal separation from her husband.

In the studies cited, there are many indicators that suggest that women are in a subordinate position in the Philippines. What is significant is that, while to an outsider these attitudes and behaviors indicate subservience and deference to men, Filipino men and women through years of socialization within the home and in other societal institutions have accepted them as part of their daily interactions. A majority do not consider them to be signs of inequality between males and females in the Philippines. In fact in the PSSC survey more than 50% of all the respondents stated that men and women are treated equally in Philippine society compared to only 1/3 who stated that men are treated better and 13% who mentioned that women are treated better.

However, Filipino women's experience of gender subordination is conditioned by class inequalities. This situation is seen in the interaction between women from the upper or middle class and women from the lower class who come together as female employers and female domestics.

In the Philippines today it is widely accepted that housework is the primary responsibility of women. Women who pursue careers that take them outside of their homes are not exempt from this dominant ideology. Filipino men come home from the workplace expecting to be served and to relax unencumbered by the demands of housework. Filipino women, whether they are housewives or are busy with careers that involve a full 8hour workday, are expected to deal with the housework and cater to the needs of their husbands and children.

In the households of these career women are other women who act as "surrogate housewives". By performing the tasks that are considered typically feminine and expected of the wife and mother, like marketing, cooking, laundry, ironing, child care, and cleaning, these surrogates free their employers from such activities.

In a society where a sizable number of the population (46.6% according to the 1993 Philippines Statistical Yearbook) are below the poverty threshold, there is a perpetual pool of desperate women willing to work for almost nothing. Men in this group, like their counterparts among the middle and upper classes, also subscribe to the gendered view of housework. No matter how poor or impoverished, these men also expect to be served by their wives. Plagued by a culture of "machismo" neither would they ever think of doing housework for other women even if it means the survival of their own children (This I suspect is a major reason why domestic servants in the Philippines are overwhelmingly female.) Therefore it is the women who go to the homes of upper or middle class women to work as their female domestics.

Fully aware of their domestics' deprivation and dependency, female employers take control of the lower class women's lives to the extent that in their daily interactions, they treat their domestics like property. Among upper and middleclass families in the Philippines, domestics are lent by parents to their married off-spring or their friends for a

day or a week to do housework in their own households. A well-trained domestic is apt to be given away as a wedding present to a son or daughter about to get married. When the parents die, it is customary for sons and daughters to inherit their childhood nanny or cook. This is a common practice among employers in Philippines and it results in a family of domestics serving the same clan for several generations. This is possible only because as soon as a woman puts on the apron of a female domestic her employers take on proprietary rights over her person. The domestic is viewed as a piece of property to be lent, traded or inherited - a commodity that no matter how valuable, still remains no more than one.

Domestic service in a society where housework is a gendered activity highlights the lines of exploitation that keep women in a subordinate position. The upper or middle class woman, in her effort to liberate herself from the demands of "womanhood" does so not by redefining womanhood or housework but by "passing the buck". She simply turns around and hands housework over to the lower class woman. She deals with her own subordination not by challenging the dominant ideology but by acquiring her own subordinate. Therefore although both are women and both occupy a subordinate position in Philippine society, the female employer and the female domestic stand in a power relation as the oppressor and the oppressed. Yet, the oppressor is also oppressed.

Given this paradoxical situation women from different classes find themselves trapped in, it would then be myopic to conclude that the liberation of a select few among Filipino women who are in traditionally "masculine" occupations signals gender equality in the society. In fact the preponderance of female domestics tells the opposite story. In the Philippines, female domestics will continue to exist and to be exploited by other women until there is a shift in power relations between men and women.

Historically, this power asymmetry between Filipino men and women dates back to the time of the datus (chieftains who headed a simple social organization called barangay),

in pre-colonial days. Although superficially different, the subordinate position of women in the Philippines today actually reflects centuries of gender exploitation.

In the next few pages I look at class and gender relations during different periods in Philippine history - from pre-colonization, during the 300 years of Spanish colonization, then from the beginning of the 20th century with the coming of the Americans, and finally in the present day Philippines.

B-Class and Gender Relations in the Philippines: A Historical View

1.) Class Relations in Pre-Hispanic Philippines

One problem social scientists face in trying to assess the position of Filipino women in Pre-Hispanic Philippines is the scarcity of data available for study. Except for the Code of Kalantiaw, a criminal code believed to have been issued by the 3rd Datu of Panay (a Visayan island) in 1433, almost everything written by the Filipinos in the Pre-Hispanic period was destroyed, intentionally or otherwise, throughout the 300 years of Spanish colonization (Phelan, 1959). What is available now are accounts of the Philippines at the Spanish contact written by Spanish friars, navigators, soldiers and civil servants.

Like most mainstream historical writing, these accounts are based on observations of Philippines society from a western male perspective. Therefore it would seem highly possible that these accounts would either consider the position of women as a non-issue or gloss over female participation while emphasizing the important roles and functions of the male members of the community.

Surprisingly, however, 20th century analysts who have gone back to these Spanish texts or their English translations share a common tendency to present an almost idealized portrait of highly respected women who possess access to power and resources in as much the same degree as their male counterparts in a society where class and gender exploitation are supposedly either benign or virtually non-existent (See for example Garcia, 1965; Kroeber, ; Jacobson, 1974; Fox, 1963; Agoncillo, 1960; Santos Maranan, 1984; Perrin, 1951; Mendoza-Guazon, 1920; Alzona, 1934). Furthermore, most of these writers contend that it was the Spanish who, in the process of imposing their own belief systems, transformed what was an egalitarian social order into a male-dominated, class-divided society where women were reduced to being mere objects of male subjugation.

While it certainly cannot be denied that colonization created serious problems for the Filipinos that even up to this day continue to grip them as individuals and as a country, it also is quite difficult to deny the fact that certain aspects of Filipino society were already

in place before colonization, although Spain, fully aware of the exploitative nature of these social structures and practices, encouraged and developed them to enhance its own colonial enterprise (Phelan, 1959).

In order to have a better grasp of the gender relations during this period, it is important to have a clear picture of the social organization within which the early Filipino men and women related to each other. A re-examination of the accounts of Chirino, Loarca, Plasencia, Artieda and de Morga in the Blair and Robertson texts, as well as the translations of the Boxer Codex and the Alcina manuscripts in Jocano's The Philippines at the Spanish Contact, indicates that the "barangay", a kinship-oriented community of from 30 to 100 families and the only form of social organization in PreHispanic Philippines with socio-political overtones, had a structural organization which represented quite clearly emerging social class categories (Jocano, 1975). In fact, based on these historical accounts, Pre-Hispanic Filipinos, most particularly the Visayans, saw themselves as divided into three main divinely sanctioned classes: the "datu", the "timawa" and the "oripun" (Scott, 1980).

At the top of the hierarchy is the "datu", which is both a social class and a political title. As a social class, the "datu" is a birthright aristocracy whose members enjoy an ascribed right to respect, obedience, and support from the class of servants and slaves called "oripun", as well as an acquired right to the same advantages from the "timawas"- i.e. the class of free men, neither chiefs nor slaves, who maintain a highly personal relationship with the datu.

As a political title, the "datu" is the ruler of the "barangay" and is the leader of a band of warriors or personal vassals, the "timawas", whose main reason for existence is to defend and preserve the power and authority of the "datu" to whom they have voluntarily pledged their support and allegiance. These men are usually the relatives and sons of the "datu".

The "datu" of early Philippines were very careful to maintain their power and authority as well as the purity of their bloodline, taking care not to marry outside their kind (Scott, 1980). They would often seek only high-ranking brides, women who are sisters or daughters of "datu" themselves, either by contracting bride prices consisting of gold, slaves or jewelry or by abduction in case the negotiations failed.

At the bottom of the scale are the "oripun", literally meaning enslaved who are either born into the "oripun" class because their parents were or enter it as a result of non payment of debts or captivity during a "barangay" war. This group is under obligation to serve and support both the class of "datu" and "timawa", performing all the agricultural labor necessary for the survival of the barangay.

Technically the oripun was a class of commoners which included scaled sub categories ranging from the most favored condition of the "tumarampok" and the "tumataban", who could live with their families in their own house and served their masters only on certain days of the week and could even pay off their agricultural duties with actual payment in kind (ex: in sacks of palay or rice grain), to the real chattels, the "ayuey" who worked and lived in their master's house as domestic slaves, totally dependent on him for their basic needs, and who sometimes ended up as human sacrifices buried with their deceased masters in the same manner as the Chinese porcelain and gold ornaments placed in the graves.

The wives of the ayuey also worked as domestic slaves in their masters' houses and whatever offspring they had became the bonded property of the master. However, if the married ayuey produced enough children the master could free them since he was assured that their off-spring then would take over their duties of bondage (Scott, 1980).

Although historical accounts seem to indicate the possibility of some form of mobility from one class to another, the "timawa" and the "datu" classes tended to form one closed upper class, able to fulfill their personal goals and maintain their lifestyles by exploiting the labor and tribute of the "oripun" class of servants and slaves. Furthermore,

since the members of the "datu" class were very careful to preserve their bloodline and to limit the membership of their group by marrying only within their kind, there must have been a rigid demarcation line between the "datu" and the "oripun". Also, while "baranganic" laws did allow any person in the lowest category, the "oripun", specially in its subcategory of bonded real chattels called "ayuey", to free himself from his master by paying his debts, in real practice, it would have been very difficult for this group to do so, since all their waking hours were mostly spent in serving their masters. As mentioned earlier, the "ayuey", especially if they became such through captivity during war with another "barangay", usually were the human sacrifices, buried alive with their deceased masters (Agoncillo, 1979; Scott, 1980; Jocano, 1975).

Although in some accounts, an "ayuey" upon marriage could be set up in his own house and raised to the level of "tumarampok" or "tumaraban" by his master and freed from part of his debts, it is still quite clear that the life situation of the class of servants and slaves was totally dependent upon the will and discretion of the two upper classes.

Pre-Hispanic Filipino society was not egalitarian. In fact, however much one tries to gloss over the existence of the "datu" and the "timawa" and to describe the "oripun" not as slaves but merely "debt peons" (see Phelan, 1959) in the western convention, and to describe the form of "servitude" expected of the lowest class by the two upper classes as "generally benign" (see Constantino, 1975), Philippines by the time the Spaniards came in 1521, was at the very least a stratified society where class exploitation to some degree did exist.

2.) Gender Relations in Pre-historic Philippines

Within the emerging class categories of the barangays, historical data reveal that women, whether members of the "datu" class or the "timawas" or the class of slaves called "oripun", were considered the property of men. In the next few paragraphs I will cite historical data concerning the existence of practices that objectified women and kept them

under the control of men. These would include binokot (female seclusion), bride price, abduction, as well as customs concerning child-rearing and wife-husband relations.

In her book, The Woman in Early Philippines and Among Cultural Minorities (1975), Teresita R. Infante points to certain specific practices among cultural minorities and tribes that she believes dates back to Philippines society before Spanish colonization. Although it is highly possible that these practices may have undergone some modification she contends that if some modification did occur, it would be minimal since these minorities have managed to hang on to their tribal culture and have stayed within their own tribal boundaries through the centuries of colonization. Given these assumptions, then her writings about cultural minorities could shed light on the position of Filipino women in the social organization of the barangay. In fact together with the writings of Jocano in his article, "The Philippines at the Spanish Contact", as well as the accounts of Quirino, Garcia and Placencia in the volumes of Blair and Robertson, her accounts of brideprice, seclusion, and marriage and childrearing paint a picture of women as property.

Binokot, was a common practice whereby fathers kept in seclusion their daughters who were of marriageable age (Robertson, 1917). With binokot the father could get the highest possible brideprice for his daughters. One primary goal of the father is the prospect of providing bride money for his own son's marriages.

Brideprice puts up the woman as a property literally for sale to the highest bidder. With this practice, the woman becomes the property of her husband and her husband's family upon marriage. Women were the valued commodities exchanged in marriage transactions. According to Infante:

A widow is commonly taken by her brother-in-law for a wife. Such a marriage is viewed as practical since the bride price paid for her by the man's family makes her theirs. Her husband's brother therefore need not pay another bride price. If another suitor asks for her hand, he has to pay the dead husband's family the price they paid for her. (Infante, 1975)

Besides contracting bride price, men in early Philippines, also find wives by abduction of women from other communities. According to the Boxer Codex, this was practiced by the datos so they could marry within the datu class. The datos went after high-ranking brides from other barangays in cases where no bride was available for them within their own communities.

Among the Igorots, a widow was often not permitted to marry again by her dead husband's family. Exceptions to this rule, according to Infante "...were rare and occurred only with the permission of the man's family who exercised absolute control over her."(Infante, 1975) That men in early Philippines got better treatment can be seen in that a widower on the other hand could marry again if he wanted to after 7 years of mourning. In the relationship between husbands and wives, the former could do whatever he wanted with fewer restrictions than the later.

Quotes from the Boxer Codex indicate that men can have several wives, but the man can kill his wife if he finds her with another man:

They are a very jealous people and usually kill their wives if found with other indians... and on this account often wage wars among themselves which cause many deaths.

They can marry with women they want, although all of them are alive, and for that they are not punished.

These suggest that although "machismo" has been associated with the Spanish, a culture of masculinity and maleness was already in place among the early Filipinos. That men could have several wives yet were allowed to kill a wife if found with another man indicates that women were viewed as men's property and subject to his control. That men waged wars over women does not at all suggest that women were held in high esteem. This practice seems to point to the man's drive to safeguard his territory- to keep what he feels is rightfully his property.

In Infante's writings about tribal practices, it is clear that the husband is the master of the household; he controls his wife and he can impose punishment if disobeyed.

Present Nabaloi laws unfairly allows a husband to whip his wife if she disobeys, has a fault or is lazy.

The contemporary Ilongot husband is master of the home. His wife is bound to obey him or else will be first scolded and later punished severely.

Furthermore, while men could have several wives, women were expected to be loyal to one man. From the Boxer Codex, accounts show that:

Men can leave the wife who commits adultery and take Away all that she has. If the wife commits adultery, the husband can leave her and take away all that she has, and on finding the adulterer can kill him anywhere without any penalty.

The method used for ending a marriage contract in early Philippines also shows the inequality between men and women. " If one wants to unmarry his wife he can do so by leaving her with what he gave her at the time of the marriage. If it be the woman who wants to unmarry, she carries nothing with her." (underline mine)(The Boxer Codes, p.229).

The practice of having several wives was viewed as also economically advantageous for the man. Extra wives meant added sources of labor in the household. However, whether an economic move or not, the practice of polygamy signified the existence of a gender hierarchy among the early Filipinos.

Inheritance was another instance where women did not share equality with men. For instance in Loarca's accounts in the Blair and Robertson volumes, he writes:

It is the custom to share inheritance in the following manner. If a man died and left four children, the property and the slaves were divided into four parts.... If the dead man left no children, all his brothers inherited, if no brothers, cousins, all his kinsmen. (Loarca,)

From the Boxer Codex, the same practice is used in the line of succession for the office of datu (barangay chief). The office of the datu was passed only through the male line - from father to son or brother. In both instances, the wife is never mentioned. She obviously could not get into the line of succession for the chief's office and neither was she of any consequence in terms of inheritance.

Colin's accounts indicate a gender division of labor existed whereby men went out to do male-associated tasks while the wives stayed close to home doing feminine activities such as weaving and some form of needlework.

Besides taking care of the household chores and tending to the chicken and pigs, she dedicated herself to needlework and weaving, while the men worked the fields, went fishing and sailed the seas.

A similar quote is found in the accounts of Quirino and Garcia concerning male and female chores.

The men took care of the agricultural tasks and hunting, while the women did the household chores and other moderate jobs.

Infante in her accounts of practices among tribal minorities which she contends dates back to pre-colonization, noted an unequal compensation for men and women for the same amount of labor in the fields.

While men received two bundles of rice for an afternoon's work, women were ranked the same as children, receiving only one bundle.

In another instance, Infante describes how a woman is expected to do the household chores and yet also expected to entertain her husband's guests...

Starting by scouring clean the bamboo floor of their houses at the spring, she proceeds to do the work of

preparing the meals, carrying water, pounding and winnowing the rice, all the time having to present a sociable and pleasant countenance to her husband's guests...

On many occasions, women will be working in the house while men merely watch and talk in their presence.

Teruray husbands expected their wives to attend to the household work such as fixing the house, cooking and serving the rice, fetching water...

That there seems to be no evidence of wives going against the wishes of their fathers, husbands or their husbands' families could be attributed to the differences in the rearing of boys and girls. Boy and girls were raised differently among the early Filipinos. According to Jocano:

Bringing up the child during pre-Spanish days was similar in many respects to those obtaining in contemporary upland (and to some extent lowland) groups. The mother taught the daughter the female roles in the house and in the community. The father took care of training the son. (Jocano,)

In their article "The Manners, Customs, and Beliefs of the Philippine Inhabitants of Long Ago: Being Chapters of a Late 16th Century Manuscript, Transcribed, Translated and Annotated" published in The Philippine Journal of Science (LXXXVII, pp.413 (1958), Carlos Quirino and Mauro Garcia wrote about the training and rearing of boys and girls. They wrote...

When the boys reach 8 years of age, the fathers teach them to shoot a bow and arrow, others the use of the lances and spears in which later they become great archers. If a chief has a small boy, it is brought to war by a servant or Indian to cut off heads and incite (the child's) inclination.

When a girl first menstruates, it is their (ancient Filipinos) custom to enclose her with mantles and cover the windows, such that there where she is becomes very dark; they cover her eyes and she is not allowed to talk to anybody during all that time except the woman who performs the ceremonies.

Thus she stays for four days if a free woman, or a month and twenty days if of a principal (datu class), and eats nothing for four days except two eggs or four mouthfuls of rice in the morning and the same amount at night; and even though somebody talks to her, she does not answer because they say if she does she would become very talkative. They blindfold the eyes so she may not see anything dishonest which they say if she sees, she would become a bad woman, and if the wind blows on her she would become crazy in the head, and this is the reason she is covered with mantle.

The accounts of Quirino and Garcia indicate that among the early Filipinos there were disparate views concerning males and females. The rearing of boys was characterized by goals such as strength, bravery, and development of skills like archery as quoted above. The girls on the other hand were trained by the mother for female roles in the house and the community. The ceremony a girl had to go through upon reaching puberty seems to be a cleansing ceremony suggesting that even among the early Filipinos femaleness had negative connotations. The idea that the girl had to be covered to keep her from becoming crazy, or from being talkative, or so that she does not become a bad woman, suggests that they viewed women as potentially weak or bad.

Another reason for the practice of covering the girls is based on Plascencia account, writing about the same practice above concerning girls: "...the old men said that they did this in order that the girls might bear children." This suggests that among the early Filipinos, one of the primary responsibilities of women was to bear children.

Some early Filipino women were priestesses and some may even have become leaders, inheriting their thrones from their fathers. Foremost among these are Queen Sima, who ruled the lower Cotabato valley in 674 AD and Princess Urduja, who ruled the kingdom of Pangasinan in the 14th century. However, just like Corazon Aquino (wife of Benigno Aquino, the most prominent opponent of the dictator Marcos), Imelda Marcos, and Senator Leticia Ramos Shahani (sister of a former President of the Philippines), Queen Sima and Princess Urduja as well as the other women who acted as high priestesses were

no ordinary women. They belonged to the princely class of datu, a social category parallel to the upper class in contemporary Philippine society.

That some women in early Philippines were priestesses and one or two became rulers of barangays or kingdoms, does not erase the fact that women as a group were subject to male domination. Binokot (seclusion), brideprice, polygamy, rules for separation and the treatment of widows, the gender division of labor, as well as the gender differences in the socializations of boys and girls, underscore the subordinate position of women in the Philippines before colonization.

2.) Class and Gender Relations during Spanish Colonization

The Spanish colonial policy was to utilize the emerging class categories already in place among the Filipinos, keeping, yet modifying the office of datu (to be called "cabeza de barangay") as the chief intermediary between the Filipinos and the Spanish authorities.

According to Larkin:

Observing the changes in native society during the years of Spanish control from 1571 to 1765, one cannot fail to note their continuity with pre-Spanish patterns...The Spanish deeply involved in the galleon trade, brought no social or economic revolution and were more than content to allow native political power to remain with the old ruling class.
(Larkin, 1972)

Given this characteristic of Spain's colonial administration, Filipino women during Spanish colonization, as in pre-colonial days, did not hold any formal position of power in the political life of their communities. Instead, with the advent of Catholicism and the conservative view of womanhood that it engendered at that time, women became more entrenched in their roles in the home and the church.

During the Spanish period, several elements combined to further strengthen male dominance over the lives of Filipino women. In addition to parental and marital authority,

they also became subject to the Spanish conquestadories and the authority of the Spanish friars, who with religious zeal tried their best to train and educate the Filipino woman in the mould of her Spanish counterpart (Garcia, 1965).

Among the women of the principalia (the emergent elite class from the datus of the pre-colonization period), education was focussed on domestic pursuits and social refinements. According to Emelina Ragaza Garcia, writing on the Position of Women in the Philippines, the women during the time of the Spaniards were:

Reared and trained primarily for motherhood or for the religious life, her education principally undertaken under the supervision of priests and nuns. Being economically dependent on her men folk, she had to be subservient to them. Held out as an example was the diffident, chaste, and half-educated woman, whose all-consuming preoccupation was to save her soul from perdition and her body from the clutches of the devil incarnate in man. (Garcia, 1965)

However, the education that Garcia points to was confined mostly to women of the ruling class. The encomienda system whereby the Spanish extracted tribute and taxes from the natives in forms of labor and produce, forced women below the ruling class (those not connected to the "cabeza") to work to meet the quotas for their barangay. This usually involved manual labor in the farm and in public construction. Women also provided domestic service in the churches, sewing the friars' garments and doing chores like pounding rice and cooking for the house of the Spanish clergy (Pescatello, 1976).

In his writings of this period Loarca (1903) points to reports of fathers who encouraged their daughters to become mistresses of the friars. Although the friars preached marital fidelity, encouraged chastity, and discouraged polygamy, concubinage, and bride price, they did not exactly say no to such liaisons. They were the recipients of free housekeeping and free sexual favors provided by these native women. On one hand the friars educated the women of the elite to be modest and chaste and upheld their virtues. At the same time they did not discourage less privileged women from becoming their glorified

housekeepers. Among the married women, there are historical accounts that reveal how their own husbands used them to obtain favors from the Spanish authorities (San Agustin, 1903). Husbands received material rewards at the expense of their wives who contacted sexual relations with the Spaniards.

In spite of the sexual liaisons between Filipino women and the friars as well as the Spanish authorities, the Catholic Church in the Philippines encouraged the establishments of convents which, although confined to Spanish women in the beginning, opened their doors to Filipino women who agreed to enter religious life. This and the emphasis on religious teaching and on being a good wife and mother as the role of women, in the education of women, proved to be strong forces in removing the women of the Spanish era from the public and political life of the communities.

The legal system that the Spaniards brought to the Philippines was another element that further cemented the subordinate position of the Filipino women. Patterned after Spanish Laws that viewed women as inferior to men, these laws further put women under the domination of men in their lives. Laws on marriage and the family, for instance, restricted the rights of wives and daughters further, making them more subject to their husbands and fathers.

3.) Early 20th Century (American Colonization)

American colonization brought ideas of freedom, rights and liberty to the Philippines at the onset of the 20th century. With the introduction of a public school system that was open to both sexes, rich or poor, more and more women sought new educational possibilities and opened up their minds to opportunities beyond the home and the church.

In time, the suffragist movement was launched in 1907 which culminated in Filipino woman winning the right to vote (30 years later) as mandated in the 1935 Constitution of the Philippines.

During this period, laws were passed that lifted several restrictions on Filipino women. Under the constitution, women were given the right to own and dispose of their own property. The Labor Code included provisions for equal employment opportunities for women in the work force.

The egalitarian concepts that were introduced into Philippines society by the Americans at the turn of the century envisioned social relations that upheld equality between men and women. But the power relations between men and women already in place in pre-colonial times and further cemented during Spanish colonization persisted and have continued to be well-entrenched up to the present. Sadly, the ideals of gender equality that the Americans sought to instill among the Filipinos a century ago, have not been fully realized in the United States today.

4.) Women in the Philippines Today

At the time I did the interviews (Summer, 1989), the largest category in the female labor force of 8.1 million are service workers, 86% of which are uneducated unskilled domestic servants averaging earnings of only P150 or the equivalent of \$7.50 a month (Palabrica-Costelo,1980). Studies show that 90% of these female domestics are rural to urban migrants (Engracia and Herrin,1983). A majority are wives, sisters or daughters of small farm owners dispossessed of their only farmland by the influx of corporations involved in agribusiness or industry (Illo,1979). Unable to sustain a family (average size=6) with incomes (\$237/year) as seasonal farm laborers in plantations now owned by multinationals, they flock to the urban centers to seek alternative livelihood. Once in the city however, devoid of special skills necessary to enter a highly competitive urban labor force, they join the predominantly subsistence existence of the urban poor- as washer women, stevedores, assembly-line workers, street sellers or domestic servants (David,1978; Palabrica-Costelo,1980).

Women who migrate to the urban areas end up working for women of the middle and upper classes. As a domestic servant, the migrant woman shares in or replaces the domestic labor of other women in the household. Her occupation is an extension of "women's work" and the labor arrangement she enters into is a relationship of domination- the domestic is rural and of the lower classes while the employer is urban and belongs to the more privileged elite in Philippine society.

However, to both groups of women, for men to have equal responsibility for housework has never been a part of their reality. In Philippine society, as is true in a lot of societies in the world, regardless of whether they work outside the home or are full time housewives and whether they come from the middle or upper or the lower classes, women have always carried the burden of housework. The forces of development that transferred economic activity from the home to the public arena relegating the male as the primary bread winner, and ironically creating the conditions that made it necessary for women to join the workforce, never shifted the social responsibility for housework from female shoulders. Therefore in a society that designates women as having primary responsibility for housework, the lower class woman and her more privileged counterpart do not see any alternative but to come together and try to forge a relationship as domestic and employer.

CHAPTER IV

THE WOMEN AND THE RELATIONSHIPS

Introduction

My interviews with the female employers and female domestics in Albay bring into focus the extent of the inequality in the relationship between the two women in the dyad. Two indicators of this inequality are the forms of address they use for each other, and the terms the employer uses when referring to her domestic. In the beginning I saw these two indicators as just a matter of semantics or simply a linguistic superficiality. But, as I went from one interview to the next, I began to see the significance to my analysis of the relationship between these two women, of the forms of address employers expected from their domestics and the terms employers use when referring to their domestics.

Employers must be addressed by their last names with the honorific Mrs. or Ms., while domestics are addressed by their first names only. But employers, when referring to their domestics, use terms that are demeaning and derogatory. Although these female employers use a variety of terms for their domestics, certain groups of employers prefer one term over all others. In Albay, the term an employer chooses when referring to her domestic is a barometer of the kind of relationship that the two women have with each other. Based on the forms of address and the terms employers prefer to use when referring to their domestics, the interviews reveal four kinds of female employer-female domestic relationship.

Although there might be other forms of female employer-female domestic relationships, in this chapter I focus on the four that my interviews reveal. These are the following: the “sergeant-surugon”, the “supervisor-kabulig”, the “queen-maid”, and the “mentor-ward”. My discussion is divided into 3 sections. The first section is a survey of the words for domestics that Albaynons use. In the second section, I present the description by the employers and the domestics of the relationship they have with each other, their words highlighting the differences and similarities between the four types of relationships. In each type of relationship, I discuss how class and gender hierarchies inform the interaction between the two women in each dyad. I demonstrate that the choice of term is an indicator of an employer’s view of the capabilities of her domestic and her behavior towards her domestic. I close the chapter with my Conclusion and Reflections.

A-Terms for Domestics

Albaynons use a variety of words to refer to female domestics. The words “kabulig”, “binata”, “surugon”, “binulan”, and “sakop” are from the local dialect. Words like “muchacha” and its derivatives “chimay”, and “achay” are borrowed from Spanish. The English word “maid” is also used by some. When an Albaynon hears these words, he or she associates them with domestics.

There is one word that is an anomaly- i.e. the word “ward”. One group of employers insists that they do not have domestics, they have “wards”. I was born and raised in Albay and during all those years, I never heard anyone referring to their domestic as their “ward”. In a later section I explore why the term “ward” and the

employers that use it stand apart from the rest of the employers. In the next few paragraphs I discuss the meanings of the terms and how they relate to each other and to the Albaynons' views about domestics and domestic service.

“Kabulig” means assistant or aide or helper. “Suruguon” is used for someone you give orders to, who is expected to obey your every command without question and to fetch or carry things for you. The word “binulan” comes from the root word “bulan” meaning month or moon. Adding “in” to “bulan” forms “binulan” which, although it literally means someone on a monthly wage rate, usually is used for domestics. “Sakop” means someone who is under one’s control or supervision.

“Binata” comes from the root word “bata” meaning “child” When “in” is added, the word “bata” then becomes “binata” which then means “to make into one’s child” or “to take a child under one’s care and control”.

The use of “binata” for female domestics comes from the traditional practice by urban families of using their tenant farmers’ children, especially the girls, as all-around errand maids or playmates-cum-babysitters for their own young kids. The parents, too impoverished to clothe and feed their own children, give them up for service with the landowner’s family. The girls, who in most cases are as young as 6 or 7, do not have any choice but to obey their parents.

As soon as the girl’s parents leave her with her employers, the latter have absolute control over her. She becomes their “binata”. She spends her childhood as the landlord’s “bata” (child) from the farm. Since she is a child in the employer’s house, they have parental control over her. They could do with her whatever they wished. Those who were young children when they started domestic service recall that at that time their

parents knew that they were being made to work non-stop from dawn to as late as midnight. In some cases they were physically or verbally and in some cases sexually abused, but they felt helpless to do anything. They also knew that their parents could not do anything to help them.

Today, the term “binata” can be applied to any female who works as a domestic. She could range in age from 7 to 60 or older but still be referred to as a child – a “binata”. This is indicative of the employer’s view of the domestic – a child who has no mind of her own or as some would say, has no brains, no concept of right or wrong, no decision making skills, and has nothing intelligent to say about anything at all.

This view of the domestic as a child is evident in the use of the Spanish word for “little girl” – “muchacha”, to refer to domestics. Over the decades the word “muchacha” took in the added meaning of “slave”. Filipinos in Albay have also taken to using its derivative in the local dialect – “chimay” or “achay”. These two words also carry the connotation ugly or unkempt.

In Albay, these three terms are considered more demeaning than the word “binata”. To refer to someone as “my muchacha” is like saying “my slave”. Calling a person who is not a domestic “chimay” or “achay” is very insulting. But employers, who know exactly how bad these words are, do not hesitate to refer to their female domestics as “muchachas”, “chimay” or “achay”.

B-The Relationships

I begin with an excerpt from my conversation with Mrs. Ureta, a pediatrician, who talks about one of her domestics, Glenda. In her own words she states that her use of

“suruguon” for Glenda is because Glenda cannot be trusted to follow any routine or do things on her own after the initial instructions. She, the employer, has to keep on telling her what to do and how to do it every day. Her evaluation of Glenda’s capabilities as a domestic is clear in her words as she says:

No I cannot call her a kabulig. She really is a suruguon. At least with the kabulig, after you give her instructions on what to do then the chores become routine for her and then you have no problem. But with her, she is really a suruguon because I have to tell her what to do, how to do it, day in and day out.

Conversations with the other women indicate that Mrs. Ureta is not unique in using her assessment of the domestic’s abilities as a criterion for her choice of term to refer to her domestic. Her words show that term usage is not random or accidental. It is purposive. It reveals an employer’s view of a domestic’s capabilities which then impacts on how the employer behaves towards or treats the domestic.

The accounts of the 50 women I interviewed show 4 distinct types of female employer-female domestic relationships that I identify using a compound word. The first half is a word that describes the employer and her behavior towards her domestic. The second half is the term preferred and often used by the employers to refer to their domestics.

Employers who prefer the same term over all others for their domestics tend to have the same kind of relationship with them. They also have comparable demographic characteristics, and similar views about marriage, family, careers, housework, and domestic service.

The term often used by the employer reveals her view of domestics in general and her assessment of the abilities of the domestics in her household in particular. These two factors determine how the employer treats her domestic and the relationship between these two women. Employers who use “suruguon” most often behave like the proverbial “sergeant” would towards the soldiers in his/her unit, who issues commands left and right and expects everyone to obey them without question. Those who use “kabulig” act more like “supervisors” who allow the domestics to function with more creativity and independence. The employers who use the word “maid” adopt the demeanor of a “queen” reigning over her court of servants. The group of women who insist that they have “wards” instead of domestics act like “mentors” to their domestics.

The stories and accounts of the employers and the domestics describe four distinct types of relationships among the 25 dyads I interviewed; the sergeant-suruguon, the supervisor-kabulig, the queen-maid, and the mentor-ward. Each of these relationships will be explored in the next four sections.

1-The “sergeant-suruguon” relationship:

The employer-domestic relationship in 4 of the 25 dyads is that of a “sergeant” and a “suruguon”. The female employers behave like the proverbial sergeant in a small military unit. The sergeant rattles off orders day in and day out, expecting nothing less than complete obedience from the soldiers. The soldiers are not expected to think or be creative, but they must simply obey without question. They do what they have been told to do under the watchful eye of the ever present sergeant who is constantly checking to see that orders are completed to specifications.

There are four female employers who use “suruguon” most often when referring to their female domestic. These women have college degrees, and are married to men whose jobs keep them away from the house the whole day. Although they had full-time jobs before marriage, two of these women decided to become full-time housewives and care for their growing family. The other two, a pediatrician and an optometrist, opened clinics attached to their homes so they could work and still be close by to check on their children and their domestics.

There is a maximum of 2 “suruguon” in the households of the “sergeants”. These domestics have very minimal education. Glenda, who works for Mrs. Ureta, stopped at 4th grade. Dayday, the “suruguon” of the optometrist made it to 7th grade. Brenda and Pamela, the domestics in the households of the full-time housewives, both finished 5th grade. While Glenda and Pamela started domestic service very early in their lives (8 and 10 respectively), Brenda and Dayday did not enter till they were 16 years of age.

Like the sergeant, the employer who refers to her domestic as a “suruguon” does not expect her domestic to have any independent intelligent thought. She believes that household chores cannot be done right if she does not tell her “suruguon” what to do and how to do things on a daily basis. Being at home most of if not all day, she is constantly checking on the “suruguon” to see that every chore is done the way she wants it done. Mrs. Ortiz, a full-time housewife, complains that her “suruguon”, Pamela, does not know anything. Her account of what she has to put up with to keep things in order at home says a lot about her view of her domestic - of how “stupid my suruguon is”.

My suruguon? She is very low IQ. Every day I have to tell her what to do and how to it. But I have to put up with it. It is very difficult. But I have to put up with her. Otherwise I will be doing the washing. I cannot stand washing clothes.

So, you have to tell her to do this and that every day. I feel like a broken record. She is very slow. It is a problem, because she cannot understand. Because she really is stupid.

There is one common thread that binds the 4 employers who call their domestics “surugon” and behave like a “sergeant” when dealing with them. All four women think of their domestics as low IQ, with no brains and stupid. Mrs. Turalba, the optometrist, couldn’t agree more with Mrs. Ortiz when she describes Dayday.

You know what I scold her about? When I say this is the way something has to be done. Then tomorrow I have to say the same thing. It’s like driving a nail. Because you know the brain is the one that determines. Like my husband says, she would not be a “surugon” if she has a brain. I think he is right. That’s what she could only be.

I talked about the employer’s view of her domestic’s abilities because this fact, coupled with her being home most if not all day, is connected to her behaving like a “sergeant” towards her “surugon”. These employers do not trust their domestics. They do not expect their domestics to think and be creative. The ideal domestic for these women are those that they can order about without ever doing anything on their own.

Communication between the two women is not as open as the employers would like to believe. Although the “sergeants” say that they encourage their “surugon” to talk freely about their problems and that they know a lot about their domestics’ lives, my interviews with each person in the dyads show that the domestics are selective in what they tell their employers and that the employers do not really have a clear idea about their domestics’ plans for the future. Mrs. Ureta, for instance, thinks that Glenda tells her everything.

She is relaxed and at ease with me. Sometimes too at ease. Sometimes I do get irritated with her being too free with me.

When asked what Glenda's plans are for the future she stated very emphatically that her domestic's concern is simply to have enough money for her family. When I asked her about schooling, she stated:

The biggest thing for her is to have a lot of money to help her family. I don't think she wants to go to school.

But here is what Glenda says about her future:

My ambition is to go back to school. This coming school year I would like to. But no one will send me to school. I really want to. Even if I feel ashamed because I'll probably be the oldest student. If someone would pay my way, I really would. But what can I do?

The quotes above show contradictions in the statements of the employer and the female domestic. Mrs. Ureta has very little knowledge about Glenda's future plans. Although she says she talks to her domestics many times during the course of the day, this is simply to issue orders and to correct her. Glenda's standard response is "yes, ma'am" or "no ma'am" or "I'm very sorry. I'll try to do it correctly next time." These two women do not sit down to talk. This situation is common among the women in this group.

Among the four domestics in this group, one actually refers to herself as a "surugon." Brenda, a domestic who has been with her employers for 17 years, calls herself the "surugon" and accepts the relationship she has with her employer. She explains why in this quote:

I have been her live-out domestic for 17 years. She helps me in times of need, and I am very grateful for that. So no matter what, I stay. And

I do what she wants me to do. That's how we get along.
I'm just the "surugon" so I have to do what she says.

2-The "supervisor-kabulig" relationship:

Trust is a significant aspect of the relationship between the "supervisor" and her "kabulig". As I listen to the tapes and read the transcripts over and over again, what comes out of my conversations with the employers in this group is that they trust their domestics and view them as reliable and dependable persons with a lot of intelligence and creativity. Ms. Samonte, who has to travel a lot in her job, has this to say about Linda:

I have no problem with her. She is alone the whole day with my mother. She is honest. I am on travel most of the time, so I depend on her. She does everything. Sometimes, when she does not know something she comes and asks me. But she is easy to teach. She learns fast.

Mrs. Yulo, who has a 2-year-old boy and a 4-year-old girl that she leaves in the care of her domestics, says the same thing about Loida.

I trust her. When I come home and she tells me that we need milk for the kids, I just tell her to go to my room and get money from my bag and just return the change. I do trust her a lot.

There is a self-fulfilling prophecy in the supervisor-kabulig relationship. These employers have jobs that keep them away from their homes the whole day. Those with very young kids need someone to take care of them while they are out. The responsibility of marketing, meal preparation, laundry, keeping the house clean, and taking care of the needs of the children at home has to be relegated to a woman that is dependable enough to do these things with nobody to give her orders repeatedly. The

employer has no time to check on her “kabulig” since she leaves early and comes home late in the day. The domestic must be able to go about her day without someone to check on her. Mrs. Bando leaves her baby and her house secure in the thought that her kabulig will do the housework while she is gone. She explains:

In the morning all I do is get ready for work.
I do not cook breakfast. My kabulig does it.
My husband and I look in on our baby and see
if she needs a bath. Then we have breakfast and
off we go. I do not worry because my kabulig
is very responsible. I just depend on her. For our
meals, she decides what to cook. I do not worry
about it. I just give her the money and I say, here
just see what is good and cook it anyway you
want to.

There are six women who call their domestics “kabulig”. Four (4) of these women are married, one (1) is a widow and one (1) is single with an aged, widowed and blind mother living with her. The married women have children, but not one of them took time off from work (outside jobs or family business) to take care of their children. At the time of the interview all six women were at jobs that kept them outside of their households the whole day. Mrs. Reyes is an accountant who works for the same government agency as her husband. Mrs. Bando and her husband are accountants who work in the same private bank. Mrs. Yulo is an auditor married to a policeman. Mrs. Wanabe is an optometrist married to a lawyer with his own private practice. Mrs. Quito runs a store downtown. The single woman, Ms. Samonte, is the chief training officer for a government agency. The husbands of the 5 women who are married also have full-time jobs. Both husbands and wives in these households are out the whole day, so they leave the household to their “kabulig”.

The domestics in this group do not want to work as domestics all their lives. Two of them, Linda, the 14 year-old domestic of Ms. Samonte, and Lorna who works for Mrs. Wanabe, both want to go back to school. Minda, who has been Mrs. Quito's cook for 17 years, wants to retire and start a pig farm. Clara, the only married domestic in this group, wants to save enough money to start a tricycle business for her unemployed husband and sons. Loida and Gloria want to get married to their boyfriends and start their own families. These two women dream of opening their own "sari-sari" store so they can stay at home and care for their husbands and kids.

When I asked the six employers if they ever wonder whether or not their domestics really do their work and if they have any reservations about leaving the running of their households to their "kabulig", they all answered, "No". Mrs. Yulo's explanation is typical.

No. I like my domestics to just do what they are supposed to do without being told. Like cooking. I tell her to go to the fridge and see what can be cooked. They know what I like, so they just cook. When we come home, the food is ready, the bed clothes are set, the kids are ready for the night and the baby bottles are done. She even knows how to discipline my kids.

Right from the very start these employers communicate to the domestic their need for someone they can trust. The situation that the "kabulig" finds herself in gives her the opportunity to follow the daily routine on her own, and to make decisions the whole day while going about her chores. She knows what her employer expects of her. The knowledge that her employer trusts her and depends on her gives her a chance to respond in a positive way. She lives up to her employer's expectations.

When it comes to rest periods these domestics make their own decisions on what time they take it and what they want to do. All six employers are aware of this and not one had any problem with it. Minda, who has been Mrs. Quito's cook for many years, has a big block of free time after lunch before she starts cooking again for the evening meal. Her words in the quote below show that she is free to use it anyway she wants. The confidence in her words and the tenor of her voice communicates that this is something that she has done for years and that this is known to her employer:

I have a daily routine. I am the cook. She taught me how to cook and to do marketing. I was scared at first, but she told me I could do it. So I learned. I am the cook and marketer every day. But every afternoon, after the lunch dishes are cleaned and everything is put away, I have a free time until about 4. That's when I start cooking again for supper. I go out to visit some cousins or I just rest and take a nap.

My interview with Mrs. Quito confirms that she is aware of Minda's behavior, but she says that Minda does her work well and not a single chore is neglected, so why should she worry about it.

Communication between the women in these dyads is a lot more open than the women in the previous section. Despite the fact that the employers are out most of the day, when they do talk, these two women are more frank with each other than the women in the sergeant-surugon relationship. Clara, for example, has told Mrs. Bando that she would like help with buying a tricycle so her unemployed husband can be a driver and get some income. These two women have talked about it and Mrs. Bando has this to say:

Her plan is to buy a tricycle for her husband to earn from. I told her that I can help her around December when I get my bonus from the bank. But she told me

that she cannot wait. She said that someone in Manila wants to hire her. I know that the pay over there is higher than here. So I told her it's okay for her to leave because she needs to for her family. But I think she actually hesitates. I think she likes it here. I just leave her alone on that. Whatever she decides. If she wants to wait that's also fine with me.

Another aspect of the “supervisor-kabulig” relationship that is noteworthy is the sensitivity they have for each other's feelings, moods, and needs. Listen to Mrs. Bando talking about how sometimes Clara has her moods:

Sometimes she is moody. But when she is in a bad mood, I leave her alone. I just don't mind and she gets better anyway.

She explains that she feels sorry for Clara and that she tries to help her when she can. She listens to her domestic and talks to her about other things besides the household chores.

Her problem is lack of money and a family that depends on her for everything. Even with the pay she gets from me, I don't think it is enough to sustain her family. I think I am helping her too. Like when she wants to borrow money, I let her.

When I asked Mrs. Bando what kind of relationship she has with Clara, I can still remember the pride in her voice when she said:

We are friends. We are together most evenings and weekends. Especially that my husband studies law at night. Clara and I have supper ahead of him. We eat together and we talk.

The domestics in turn trust their employers. They feel free to talk to them about their problems. All the “kabulig” say their employers listen to them. Clara explains why

she hesitates to go to Manila despite the fact that her monthly pay would be greater in that city.

The pay here in Albay is very low compared to Manila. But I like it here. For me, they have been very good. So I stay. I hope they continue to treat me well. I have never had a problem where they do not help me with. They are both good to me.

Minda, the cook for Mrs. Quito's household, whom I quoted earlier, understands that employers are people too and that no matter how well they treat you sometimes they do get angry.

Well, of course sometimes she gets angry. But when she scolds, I just keep quiet and ask myself what I did wrong. But you know I do not mind, because I cannot repay her enough.

In another part of the interview, when she talks of her plans for the future she says that her employer knows what she wants to do.

She knows all about my life. She has always listened to my problems. When my mother died she paid for all of the funeral expenses. She treats me well. When there is a misunderstanding, and I know I did wrong I ask her forgiveness at once. But you know, when she finds out that I was right about something she does not hesitate to admit it and say she is sorry it happened. Her sons are like her. They know how to be good to us.

3- The "queen-maid" relationship:

The employer in this category sees herself as the "queen" of her castle. For all intents and purposes, she does live in a huge stately house. Secondly, like a queen she also has an "entourage" of "underlings" to do her bidding. Her household does not just have 1 or 2 domestics. She has a staff. Mrs. Enriquez, for instance, has a doorman, a

gardener, a laundry woman, a cook, a driver, an all-around girl, and 2 whose main jobs are to keep every nook and cranny of the house clean. In one household, a uniformed security guard is always at the gate. In another, there is a domestic whose main duty is to care for her employer's orchids and roses 24-7.

The nine employers who call their domestics "maids" have college degrees with two also holding doctorates in education. They come from families that are of the "old-rich" in Albay society. Four of these women are childhood friends and classmates of the wife of a very high-ranking government official in the Philippines. The other five, while not directly connected with this woman, socialize in the same circles and are married to men who wield either political or business power, or both, in Albay. They have an organization that I call in this work, the "Party People". Although fictitious, this name is quite apt because this group is known not only for being leaders of the ruling political party, but also for the elaborate parties and formal balls they hold throughout the year.

Just as their female employers belong to the "old-rich" of Albay, a majority of the "maids" in this group come from "old-servant" families. It is in this category that one finds domestics who come from families that have been serving the female employer's family for several generations. Some have been inherited. Others came to their present employers as wedding gifts. Sylvia, for instance, was the personal maid of Mrs. Enriquez's husband's mother. When the mother died, Mr. Enriquez inherited everything including his mother's personal maid. Now, Sylvia serves the present Mrs. Enriquez. Her husband has been hired as the chauffeur and their daughter, the all-around errand girl of the family.

In two cases, the domestics go back and forth between the households of her employer and those of the parents or the employer's siblings. These domestics do not have any ambition beyond their present livelihood. Most have little or no formal education. However, they have become able cooks, gardeners, nannies, or laundrywomen through years and generations of servitude.

The Uniform

The tenor of the relationship between the "queen" and the "maid" can be deduced by the fact that it is only in this group that the female domestics are required to wear uniforms or to adhere to a strict dress code. The employer supplies the uniforms for the domestics. The maid may quit but the uniform stays. The employer issues it to whoever takes her place. In the next few paragraphs I explore the significance of the uniform to the relationship between the queen and the maid.

The Uniform: Status and Segregation

When Mrs. Zullea insists that her maids wear uniforms "not for anything", the "anything" has to do with "status symbols". I did not even ask her about the "status symbol". Her effort to explain this only shows that she is aware of the significance of maids in uniform. There is a commonly held view among Albaynons that uniformed help can be seen only in the houses of the elite. Any household can have domestics, but the presence of uniformed maids sets the elite apart from the rest of the community. But these employers do not need to use maids in uniforms to enhance their standing in the community. Considering that they are "old-rich" families, they are high up in the socio-political spectrum of Albay and are not dependent on uniformed maids to secure their

standing in the community; they belong to the very elite. However, even among the highest echelons of power, rivalry and competition are not unheard of.

Their insistence on uniforms could also be related to group identity and membership. The stiff starched uniform serves to identify who is the employer and who is the employee. In a country where people come from almost the same mix of Malayan, Chinese, and Spanish ancestry, maids who do not wear uniforms may be mistaken for members of their employer's family. Although they say that they treat their domestics like one of the family, these employers want to keep the "maids" in their proper place – separate and apart from their family. Just listen to Mrs. Pascual as she talks about her kids' relationship with their maids:

But you know although they have a closeness for the maids, we always see to it that there is a barrier.

The wearing of the uniform is one barrier. It segregates. It communicates at once to the observer, the lowly position of the wearer. It is a position-affirming symbol for the employer because it keeps domestics in their proper place. In the quote below, Mrs. Arce explains that the goal in her insistence on proper attire is for her domestics to look the part:

I don't like my maids to go around in curlers. They must keep themselves clean. I tell them especially when we are home to look decent. I tell them that they should always be in proper attire. They should wear shoes.

The Uniform as a "Cleansing" tool

Mrs. Zullea, a "queen" who holds a doctorate in education, has a security guard in full dress uniform when he is on duty. When I asked her why she requires uniforms, she explains in this quote.

I let them wear uniforms. Not for anything, but because I have seen so many maids who wear shorts. I also frown upon maids that go around the house in their dusters. So every morning, I tell them to take a bath, change into their uniforms before they start doing things for the day. I don't like to see them in curlers either. And then they serve you? No.

In this quote Mrs. Zullea tells her maids that they must “take a bath and change into their uniforms before they start the day”. She is not concerned about the domestic’s health and personal cleanliness for the domestic’s sake. This quote is more about fear of contamination. It could also be an indication of an employer’s disdain for the origins of the persons who come to her household as domestics. Before these domestics are allowed to start the day’s work they must rid themselves of external traces of their origins. They need to get into the persona of the uniformed servant in a clean white crisp uniform ready to serve the master.

In a Third World country like the Philippines where more than half of the population is below the poverty line, the universal belief among the more privileged classes is that the poor are dirty. Since domestics come from impoverished rural families, employers believe that they do not know anything about cleanliness. This belief does not seem to discourage female employers from allowing these “dirty” women to work as domestics. Mrs. Ibanez stresses this in the quote below:

I have to teach them... You know they come from the barrios.
So their standard of cleanliness is not the same as yours.
So you have to train them.

The uniform serves to reassure the employers that when a maid is in uniform she is “sanitized”. Whatever form of bacteria or unhealthy and unclean ways the domestics

bring with them to their households, employers wish to believe that these contaminants disappear as soon as their domestic puts on the uniform.

The Uniform as a “Badge of Status”

Ironically, the uniform that makes them disappear and blend in with the household furniture is also a badge of status among domestics. Those who wear the uniform see themselves as better off than those who don't. The uniform distinguishes them from other domestics. After all they are in households of the elite. By association, these domestics believe that they are also better than the other domestics. Mrs. Ibanez talks about how proud Ofelia is to be known as her maid:

She is proud of the fact that many people know me here in Albay and in turn they know her as my maid. So a lot of people know her. She says that where she comes from nobody knows her.

In examining the relationship between the “queen” and her “maid”, the uniform says it all. The employer does not want to get to know the person behind the uniform. She expects the uniform to hide or keep in check personal idiosyncrasies that otherwise an employer must deal with. With the uniform, she expects her maid to behave as a maid and nothing else. Anything that relates to the person must be superimposed with the persona of the maid in uniform. In this way, the employer does not have to relate to an individual who has feelings, likes or dislikes. She is not confronted with anybody else's preferences for a certain style of dress, a certain color, a footwear choice. A uniformed maid blends into the well-ordered life of the queen.

Trust Between Queen and Maid

Despite the fact that it is in this group where generations of domestic families have served generations of employer families, there is a lack of trust and sensitivity between the “queen” and the “maid”. In the “supervisor-kabulig” relationship discussed in the previous section, domestics could go into the bedrooms even when the employers are out. The employers even trusted the domestics with taking money from their bags for groceries and left them to decide on what to buy and prepare for the family’s meals. This does not happen in the “queen-maid” relationship. Domestics in this group are not allowed to clean the bedrooms when the employers are not home. According to Mrs. Zullea, there are strict rules about this.

There are rules. They cannot get inside rooms when we are not here. Like when we have breakfast they can go inside the room to bring the hot water. And they can get whatever they want from the dressing room. Because the rest of the rooms are closed to them. But they clean the rooms. We all come down and they clean the rooms and then we lock them.

4- The “mentor-ward” relationship:

What type of employer would send a domestic to school during the daytime when they could be doing the household chores that domestics are expected to do? There are women in Albay who do this. I met six of them and they all say that the women doing housework for them are not domestics. They are “wards”. These employers see themselves as the “mentors” of their wards. Mrs. Josol tells us why she uses the term “ward”.

I do not want to call her a maid or a domestic.
She is a ward because she only works at home
when she is not studying. I send her to school.

Although the mentors refer to their female domestics as wards, not once did any of them introduce these women as “my ward” or call them “ward” to their faces. Instead, the mentors use their wards’ nicknames or first names. There are several possible explanations for this. The first comes from a common practice in Albay and elsewhere to address domestics in this manner - to call domestics by their names or nicknames. Secondly, these employers also understand that the word “ward” does have a negative connotation. It is an English word but has been borrowed as part of the dialect. It means a person that needs taking care of because of her or his inability to do so by reason of a mental disability or as a result of his or her tendency to misbehave unless well supervised. These mentors may not want to give their wards the impression that they, the wards, are some kind of social misfits who need to be monitored 24 hours a day.

An employer’s avoidance of the term ward when addressing her domestic could also be a result of an employer’s own ambivalence about the place of the ward in her household. While she may sincerely want the ward to get an education, she also needs housework done for her. She does not want her ward to forget that her primary duty is to do housework.

But how does a domestic become a ward and an employer a mentor? None of the employers know who started this practice and how and when it began. However, at the time of the interview they were either on their 3rd or 4th ward.

All six “mentors” have graduate degrees in education and are professors in the same university that specializes in teacher training. Teaching and mentoring is a

significant aspect of their lives. As they have demonstrated by the very act of sending their domestics to school, these women are open to the idea that given the chance a female domestic can get an education and move on to a better paying occupation.

These mentors do not take their mentoring responsibilities lightly. Mrs. Josol says it succinctly when she talks about providing for the needs of her ward, Fe:

She is my responsibility. That includes her tuition, books, school needs, transportation allowance. Her clothes, health.

Like their mentors, the wards know what their responsibilities are. They understand that they have obligations to the women who are giving them a chance at an education. But they also do not forget that their ultimate goal is to get out of domestic servitude. Coming from poor rural families, they see that getting a college degree is a way to get themselves and their families out of poverty. These women are so determined to get an education that they will endure all kinds of hardships to get it. Delia for instance gets subjected to taunts and snide remarks from her classmates as soon as they learn that she is a domestic. But she does not care. She says:

I don't really care what they say about me.
What if I am only a domestic ? I go to school.
and my work here is good. It all depends on how much you are willing to sacrifice. So when my classmates ask, I do not hesitate to tell them that I am a domestic in this house. In my mind, even if I am a domestic now, I have a future because my employer helps me to go to school. So when I finish I would have fulfilled my dreams. I want

to finish college. That's what I am hoping for.

Delia's attitude is common among the wards. This opportunity of getting a college degree and getting out of domestic servitude, that Delia and the other wards have, is unique to the mentor-ward relationship. Since domestics are hired to do housework for the female employer, not to spend the day studying so they can stop being domestics, this concept of servitude espoused by the "mentors" seems to be an anomaly. It is also tempting to conclude that the "mentor-ward" is the best relationship possible between an employer and a female domestic. However, it is important to keep in mind that despite the nomenclature, the mentor is still the employer, who has the power to derail the ward's educational ambitions anytime she wants to

There are aspects of the mentor-ward relationship that may make one conclude that it is better than all the others. Unlike other employers, the women in this group insist that their house workers are wards, not domestics. Wards stay with their "mentors" until they finish a college degree and then they move on to better jobs. Other domestics get monthly payments for doing housework but wards do not. Instead they get room and board, tuition, books, school supplies and incidental expenses from their employers. In lieu of a salary, wards get either a weekly or a monthly allowance.

In other employer-domestic situations, when a domestic leaves there is no motivation for either party to maintain the relationship. In the "mentor-ward" relationship the two women continue to keep in touch. Wards invite their former mentors to their weddings, or to the baptisms of their children. Mentors sometimes are pleasantly surprised when their wards come to help during town fiestas or bring them birthday gifts.

For their part, employers continue to invite wards long since gone to other jobs, back for visits. This rarely happen in the other employer-domestic relationships.

When I asked why the wards for one particular mentor all came from the same place outside of Albay, they said that this is because wards who are about to graduate see that it is their responsibility to recruit and train the new wards. Since it is easier to recruit someone they know, they ask women from their hometowns, thus continuing the tradition of wards for one mentor all coming from the same place of origin.

Although they emphasize that they have wards, never did I hear any of these mentors call them wards to their face. An employer's avoidance of the term ward when addressing her domestic could be that she does not want her ward to forget that the ward is there not just to study but to do the housework. Mrs. Cortez, for instance, allows her "ward" Violeta to go to school to earn a college degree. But from her statement below, she does not want any household chore done any later than she thinks they ought to be. Nor does she want to do some herself. She says:

So I told her, that she really has to wake up early, so that breakfast and the pack-lunch are ready as early as possible. She drops the pack-lunch in my office, then brings my grandson to his school. He is in Grade 1 and has to be in school by eight. She is also the one who opens my office. That way I don't have to hurry to school. Oh yes, I have made it clear to her that all the dishwashing should never be neglected. It would be different if it's just my husband and me. I guess that's understood between the two of us. But when there is someone who we are spending money on, then it is but natural that there should be no unwashed dishes lying around on the sink. So I really told her to budget her time well. You know I do not really want her to be late for school.

This quote from Mrs. Cortez underscores the ambivalence with which the “mentor” views the position of the “ward” in her household. On one hand, she wants to help the ward finish a college degree so that the latter can get out of being a domestic for the rest of her life. But at the same time, she does not want to be cheated out of having a personal maid to do the chores she does not want to do or has no time to do. Although she insists that Violeta should never “be late for school”, Mrs. Cortez also makes it clear that her household chores must not be neglected. Therefore Violeta needs to wake up very early to prepare breakfast, serve breakfast, pack the lunch, clean the breakfast dishes, take her employer’s grandson to his school, and get her employer’s office at the university ready for the day before she can go to her own classes. At noontime, she must pick the grandson from his classroom to take him to her employer’s office, get lunch ready, eat lunch with her employer, clean the dirty dishes, pack it up, and then go back to her own classes. During the day, whenever she has a free period, Violeta also has instructions to report to her employer’s office to check on whether her employer needs her to run some errands. Violeta, like the other wards, is busier than most other domestics during a 24hour period.

Wards understand clearly that for all intents and purposes, they are domestics. They have no illusions about their positions in their employers’ households. They recognize that their ability to study for a college degree is dependent upon the wishes of her employer. As Aleta, the ward of Mrs. Guzman, said when asked whether she and her employer got along:

There are times when we do not. But I understand. I know my place. I can study..sure, but she is still my master. It is necessary that I go with what she wants. Although I would like her to tell me ahead

what she likes or does not like me to do. As it is I am always at a loss to know what I should do as her maid.

Marla, Mrs. Dajoya's ward, found out too late how unstable her position is and how dispensable domestics can be whether they are wards or not. Mrs. Dajoya's explanation for firing Marla is illustrative of a ward's tenuous place in the employer's household. In the interview, she was complaining about Marla staying an extra hour on Sundays at the Protestant church to do extra volunteer work that her church requires the members to do. According to Mrs. Dajoya:

I told her, you do have a freedom of worship...What you are doing is your obligation to God. But how about your obligation to me...What you will do for me through me is for God. Which she could not accept. But she told me that what her church tells her to do is the only way to salvation. So I told her that if you believe that that is your salvation then so be it. So she had to go.

Marla learned unfortunately that practicing a religious faith different from her employer can be very detrimental to her future. She was just 1 year away from a Bachelor's Degree in Education when she lost it over her religious membership. After Marla, Mrs. Dajoya still continued to have wards, but being a Catholic is now mandatory. In her own words:

Now, I always ask – what's your religion?
...because I'd like to get somebody who has the same religion as mine.

As in the other employer-domestic relationships, the mentors' wishes must be obeyed. Marla's case is typical. The mentors have the power. The position of a ward, as Marla found out, exists only because the mentor allows it to

Conclusion and Reflections

As with any human relationship, the employer-domestic relationship is a dynamic and complex mixture of many components. The extent to which trust, supervision, communication and power, are present or absent in the relationship makes one relationship similar to or different from the others.

Trust is important in the relationship between these two women. An employer has no choice but to trust at some level that the domestic she hires is able and willing to do housework and will not in any way endanger her (the employer's) family. However, different types of employers exhibit differences in how much they trust their domestics to accomplish what they have been hired to do and in their domestic's overall honesty.

Why do the queen and the sergeant type of employers show a low level of trust in their domestics while the supervisors and the mentors have more faith in the honesty and trustworthiness of their domestics? One answer to this is the employers' view of domestics. While the sergeants and queens do not credit domestics with intelligence and creativity, the supervisors and the mentors attribute these characteristics to the women in their employ. Furthermore, trust begets trust. When the employers do not trust their domestics this shows in their behavior towards their domestics. The result is that the domestics in turn do not trust their employers.

Communication is another important component in the relationship between employers and their female domestics. The kind of communication that these two have is

affected by how much trust there is in the relationship. Communication is more open when the level of trust between employer and domestic is high, than if it was low or absent. Among the 25 dyads in Albay, there is a significantly greater openness between the women in the supervisor-kabulig and the mentor-ward relationships than in the sergeant-surugon or the queen-maid ones.

Related to the level of communication is the domestics' awareness of the language their employers use when talking about them. Are these domestics aware of how their employers view them and what terms their employers use to refer to them? During the interviews, the employers use the words surugon, kabulig, maid and ward with these women in attendance and within hearing distance. They hear what their employers say about them and are aware of these terms. Some do not like the words used to describe them. Others are resigned to being referred to in a derogatory language and still others actually believe that the term their employers call them with is just about right and have no complaint about it. But whether these domestics like the language or not, they all know that there is nothing they can do about it.

Power is another significant aspect of the employer-domestic relationship. Whatever type of relationship exists between the female employer and the female domestic, whether there is trust or not and whether there is open communication or not, power still resides in the hands of the female employer. From the accounts of both employers and domestics, it is the employer who initiates the type of relationship she prefers between herself and her domestic. Domestics do not get to decide what type of relationship they will have short of quitting and looking for another employer if they do not like what they find themselves in. But in a society where there are many poverty-

stricken women waiting to take their place, these domestics do not really have the resources to choose.

Although the employers of suruguon, for instance, may say that their domestic's "low IQ" caused them to call the domestic a suruguon and not a kabulig, the employer ultimately is the person who made the decision to classify them as such.

The domestic's behavior is both a cause and effect of the employer's classification. She has been classified as a suruguon because the employer believes she behaves like one. As for the wards, do they know that their employers call them wards? In one interview the ward was saying that she had to go to her hometown to recruit a new ward and train her because she, the current ward, was about to graduate.

How does each woman fit herself into the behavior expected of employer or of the domestic? The domestic assesses her employer's description of her (the domestic) and acts accordingly. From a symbolic interactionist perspective, the interaction between the two women is a product of their observation and evaluation of what they perceive of the other's behavior and expectations. They act according to their evaluation. Their actions are what they believe should be actions of the employer or domestic in each type of relationship.

The mentors' insistence on calling the women who do housework for them wards instead of domestics raises two questions. Is the ward really a domestic? Is the mentor-ward relationship anomalous? During the interviews these employers did not want the wards to be referred to or considered domestics. They did not allow me to do so either. Wards, as explained in the main body of this chapter, are young women who are sent to school by the employers to further their education and eventually earn a college degree.

The employers pay for their tuition and give them a monthly allowance to cover all their other educational expenses. In return these women do housework for their employers. But as soon as they are done they leave to work at higher paying jobs mostly as teachers like their mentors. Given the situation they are in, are these women really domestics?

This relatively generous behavior is rare among the employers in Albay. Since all these mentors are connected to an institution for higher education, these women are more aware than other employers of the importance of education. Mentoring is what they do and perhaps this behavior extends to the young women in their own households. But despite the nomenclature, wards are domestics and mentors are employers. Like Teresa, a ward, says, “Just one click and you are out.” The educational future of the ward depends upon the wishes of the mentor.

In this chapter I explored the four types of female employer-female domestic relationships, comparing and contrasting them in terms of the level of trust between the two women, the level of supervision, the openness in communication, fear of contamination, and power. In the next four chapters I focus on themes common in all the relationships that demonstrate how class and gender hierarchies in the wider society are perpetuated and preserved by this woman-to-woman relationship.

The employer in the sergeant-surugon relationship does not trust her domestic enough to do the housework without orders and instructions repeated on a daily basis. She also does not think highly of her domestic’s honesty. The employer in the queen-maid relationship is similar to the sergeant in this aspect. Although she has a much higher regard for her domestics’ ability to accomplish what she has hired them to do, she gives her staff firm instructions about how much access they have to certain parts of the

house especially the family bedrooms which are locked when the employers are not home.

The employer who refers to her domestic as her *kabulig* believes that her domestic is intelligent enough to do housework without supervision. The domestic is allowed to make decisions on the meals she prepares for her employers and has access to all parts of the house, including the master bedroom with or without the presence of her employers. She is also allowed get money directly from her employer's wallet for groceries and other necessities for the household. This same level of trust is exhibited by the employers in the mentor-ward relationship.

CHAPTER V

THE WORK SITUATION

Introduction

In this chapter I look at the working arrangements and conditions that the female employer and female domestic “negotiate” to get what they need from their work relationship. The word negotiate is in quotes because the use of this word needs to be qualified. In this work arrangement the two parties do not have equal powers. The lower class domestic can negotiate to a certain extent some aspects of the work situation like vacation, free time, or tuition assistance in the case of the ward, but her power to negotiate is very limited. This makes the domestic vulnerable to exploitation by the employer and the employer’s family. The employer dictates the terms and the female domestic most of the time has no choice but to accept. She knows that if she does not accept the conditions set by the employer another impoverished woman will take her place.

Discussion in this chapter is divided into 6 sections. In Part I, I look at the hiring and firing process. Part II deals with the work load and work schedule; Part III with compensation; Part IV with meals and eating arrangements; Part V looks at the quarters and use of space; and Part VI at free time and vacation. In each of these sections I examine how the working conditions vary from one type of employer-domestic relationship to another. The working conditions of the surugon, the kabulig, the maid and the ward are each looked at in turn.

Part I-The Hiring and Firing Process

Different employers may adopt different styles of hiring and firing but what is common in all of them is their almost absolute control over the entire process. In this section I look at how women from the less privileged classes are recruited into domestic service and how they gain entry into their employer's household. In the second section I examine the circumstance under which a domestic gets dismissed.

Section A-Recruitment and Entry

There are many ways by which a domestic enters the female employer's household. One type of entry involves the movement of the domestic from one generation to the next or across sibling families within the same clan or kinship group. In the case of Mrs. Arce, a dance troupe director at a local college, her domestics are inherited from her parents. She sounds comfortable with the way she acquired one particular domestic who was her childhood "domestic-cum-playmate". I noticed her smiling broadly with a far-away look in her face when she said:

She was my parents' maid when I was a child.
She really is not mine. But when my father died
and my mother migrated to the USA, she was
given to me as my own.

Besides being inherited by Mrs. Arce from her parents, Rosa is one of those domestics that are shared by sibling families. Although she is in Mrs. Arce's household, she also does duties for her employer's younger sister.

It is not unusual for domestics to enter an employer's household as a wedding gift from a parent to a daughter or son. Mrs. Reyes is a young married woman from another part of the island. Her mother gave her Gloria as a wedding present. Mrs. Reyes says:

She was my mother's maid. When I got married my mother thought I should have something from home.

There are domestics who are relatives of their employers – the poor relations. Economic circumstances have forced them to live in their wealthier relative's house as domestics. This arrangement sometimes lasts for several generations. Mrs. Wanabe, whose present helper is a daughter of her nanny, explains:

She is actually a relative. She is from La Paz. Her mother is my second cousin. When I was very young, about 3rd grade, her mother was our nanny. When my sister and I went away to college, our nanny came with us. My mother told her she was our all-around maid in our apartment while we were in college. After we graduated she went back to my mother's. Then she got married. She still goes to my mother's place as a live-out maid. Then, when I got married and I needed a maid, I went to her and asked her for one of her daughters. So that is how I got Lorna for my maid.

Some domestics come from the ancestral home of the employer's husband. This situation is acceptable to some female employers but to others, this causes some problems. Two female employers, Mrs. Ureta, a pediatrician and Mrs. Guzman, a Phys. Ed. Instructor in college, view this type of entry in different ways. Mrs. Ureta does not seem to mind that her nanny is the former maid of her mother-in-law. There is pride in her voice when she says:

Jay (her husband) grew up with her. She was a maid of his mother. She was still very young when she entered as a maid in their house. Now she is the nanny of our children. She has been trained by my mother-in-law, so that's good because I have no time to do that.

Mrs. Ureta has her own practice and must be at her clinic the whole day. The fact that her nanny came to her already trained by her mother-in-law is an advantage for her.

She needs the support of family members and having her mother-in-law ready to send her maids and nannies is very important for her busy schedule.

Mrs. Guzman, the Phys. Ed. Instructor, views the idea of domestics from her husband's ancestral household with mixed feelings. Her husband's parents are landowners and have a few tenant families who have been with them for several generations. When she needs a maid, her husband tells her to go to the tenant farmer and ask for one of the farmer's daughters to be her domestic. At this point in the interview her words seem to convey that in terms of having easy access to a domestic when she needs one, this arrangement is fine:

All my maids ? They are children of the tenant farmers belonging to my husband's family. So their families are all known to my husband. I talk to the parent. I tell them what type of help I need. Like for instance, when I needed a laundry woman, I asked the mother who among her daughters is good in washing and ironing clothes. I just ask.

There is a hint of snobbery in her voice when she talks about just going to the tenant's house to get a domestic. In Albay this shows that your family is rich enough to have tenant families that can provide you with domestics anytime you want them. She conveys her pride in her position as a member of the elite.

However, as she continues talking about her domestics, her mood and attitude undergo a change. She starts frowning and at times brings her hand up in a gesture of despair. She conveys through her words below that the way she gets her domestics can be problematic:

The maids are children of tenants of my husband's family. They feel we help them a lot by taking in their children as our helpers. For us it really raises their loyalty to our family. The problem is they see my husband as their master. And he is very lax with money. He does not do what I do. When they come back

from marketing I do an audit. They do not like it. They say I am very strict. I have caught them going to my husband for marketing instead. This becomes a conflict. I tell him all the time to discipline them about this. I insist to him that he should tell them that I am their boss and that they should come to me and get the list and money for marketing from me. This goes on and on...I do not like it.

Although Mrs. Guzman is thankful for the pool of domestics that she can get from the farmer's family when she needs one, she obviously has misgivings about this practice. She thinks that with this hiring process the domestics in her household do not see her as their employer. She distinguishes between their loyalty to "our family" as opposed to their loyalty to her as the female employer.

There are employers who depend on friends and family for recruiting their domestics. Sometimes, it is the husband who initiates the process. Mrs. Ortiz's husband, a judge in a town outside of Albay, asks the Barrangay Chairman to find maids for his wife. Mrs. Ortiz's words reveal that she likes this method when she answers my query about how she recruits her maids:

They are from Santa Ana where my husband is a judge. Mostly his friends, the Barrangay Chairman and the Barrio Captainbecause we would not want anyone we do not know. All of them, we know their families. At least, we are sure, because we never know if they are... you know... So we do not accept without any recommendation.

Mrs. Ortiz and her husband live in her husband's family compound. It is actually a four story building with the parents on the top floor and the brothers using one floor each. In this situation, the maids not only come from the town where Mr. Ortiz is the judge, but these maids are all related to each other.

Employers, especially those with jobs that take them outside of the home the whole day tend to let family recruit their maids. These maids are usually from their hometown. In most cases a sister or sister-in-law, or a mother or mother-in-law interviews the prospective domestic, makes the decision to hire, and then brings the woman to her sister or daughter's house. The first time the female employers see their domestic is when she is brought over to start working as soon as she sets foot in their doorstep. Although employers do have the option to say no, I did not meet anyone who rejected a maid hired by whoever she had asked to do the recruitment. These employers are just too busy to bother about it. Mrs. Liu, a government auditor, says she has no time to interview or even talk to a prospective maid:

I am busy. So my sister interviewed her. She said this maid was going to be fine. So, I got her on my sister's recommendation. Actually, I have fired her once. I sent her back to my mother. She learned a lot. Then my mother sent her back.

Mrs. Faelnar, a lawyer working as a public prosecutor, does not worry what kind of maid enters her house. With a recommendation from friends or family she will take the woman as her domestic and find out if she likes her work or her attitude. When asked what her conditions are for choosing a maid, she answers:

I don't really choose. I know that you cannot really know for sure what a person is really like. So, I test them here as soon as they enter. I take them just on references. So, I go for someone who is not irritating and can be trained. So, if my friends say the person is reasonably okay I take her. Then when they come to our house I tell them what to do and what not to do. If they are good they will adjust to what I want.

Mrs. Faelnar does not stop at this point. After explaining why she does not interview a prospective domestic and instead hires her based on references from her friends, she goes on to talk about what would make her dismiss one from her household. I use her words to begin the next section.

Section B-Dismissal from the Household

All it takes for a domestic to be dismissed from Mrs. Faelnar's household is for the domestic to go against Mrs. Faelnar's wishes. This sounds reasonable enough. However, her words below show that the domestic is not given a hearing at all. This process results from only one source- Mrs. Faelnar's perception:

When I notice that they do not accept my wishes...
like a rebellion... I let them go home at once. That
very moment, I do not delay. I do not ask questions.

Whether Mrs. Faelnar is mistaken or not does not matter at all. She does not care to ask the domestic any questions at all. The domestic is dismissed. In this case an employer's firing practice mirrors that of her hiring procedures. No questions asked before and after.

Mrs. Faelnar's firing practice is not uncommon among the employers in Albay. In almost all cases the domestic does not get any hearing at all when her employer decides to let her go. Dismissal from domestic service is entirely the prerogative of the female employer.

The case of Mrs. Dajoya and her wards is also typical even among the employers who are magnanimous enough to allow their domestics to earn a college degree. Although she talks of helping out under-privileged women through education, she did not

hesitate to dismiss a ward who was about to graduate with a degree in education because of religious beliefs. According to her, if a ward “goes out of line” she has to go. Here is what she says of the ward that she dismissed about a year before I started my interviews:

My former ward... I dismissed her this year.
This would have been her last year and she
could have graduated with a college degree.
But we disagree about our religious beliefs.

She describes this particular ward as being very industrious and very responsible. The ward was on her last year in college and would have gotten a degree, except for one single mistake. According to Mrs. Dajoya, her ward was becoming more and more carried away with her observance of religious practices which were not like hers, Catholicism. It conflicted with what Mrs. Dajoya and her family believed in. This, according to her, was not acceptable. So she dismissed her ward, claiming that since the ward chose to go her own way about religion, then she might as well be on her own. Three years of college education were wasted because of differences in religious beliefs. Unless that ward finds another employer who would be willing to send her through her last year of college, then she has no way to ever get that degree.

Part II – Work Load and Work Schedule

I begin the discussion about the work load of the female domestic and her female employer with two quotes. In previous chapters, all the quotes are labeled – a first name for the female domestic and a Mrs..... for the female employer. In this instance, I intentionally left out any identifying name or honorific. Without these distinctive words, it may not be readily apparent who the speakers are. Are these domestics or employers?

I cooked, I washed the clothes. It was terrible. The hot stove, the cold water for laundry. I had to do it all.

It is very tiring and the number of chores I have to do is endless. Everyday I do the same things over and over again. Most days I feel like crying.

These two women speak of the difficulties they have with doing household chores. The first speaker had to do it all, without any assistance from anybody else in the household. The second speaker complains of having to do the same chores over and over again. Although they sound like two domestics, only one is. The other voice is that of a female employer.

The first quote is from the female employer, Mrs. Ortiz. Notice how she phrases her sentences in the past tense. She is recalling a time when she had no domestic to do her housework for her. It is taken from her response when I asked her if she thinks the work of her domestics are easy or difficult. Here's what she says:

I have experienced what it is like to have no maids, you know. I did everything for my husband and kids. My rheumatism came out. I cooked. I washed the clothes. It was terrible. The hot stove, the cold water for laundry. I had to do it all.

Mrs. Ortiz went through a couple of days without any maid in the house. She had to do everything that a domestic would do without any help from her husband and kids. She knows that domestic work is very difficult. She experienced, albeit for a short period of time, the back-breaking work domestics do.

The second quote is from my interview with Rita, the domestic. This is the entire quote from her answer to my question about how she views her work as a domestic:

Domestic work is not easy. Especially that my wages are rather low. And yet my work is all around. It is very tiring and the number of chores I have to do is endless. Everyday I do the same things over and over again. Most days I feel like crying.

Both Rita and Mrs. Ortiz agree that the work of a domestic is difficult, tiring, endless, and repetitive. However, their actual work situation in relation to housework is very different. Mrs. Ortiz had to do housework for a short period of time. She knew that her situation was temporary and would end as soon as she hired a new domestic. Rita has been doing it since she was a child and will probably be doing so for most if not her entire adult life. Mrs. Ortiz has the resources to pay another woman to do housework for her. Rita has to do it to survive. It is important to keep this in mind as we discuss the Work Situation. The domestic does the work the employer dictates and the employer controls the work situation.

In a previous chapter I have identified four types of domestics. These are the “kabulig”, the “surugon”, the “maid”, and the “ward”. Except for the “ward”, the other three have schedules that approximate that of Rufina, the female domestic of Mrs. Marabe, whose family includes her husband and their 3 elementary school age children.

Rufina's Weekday Schedule:

5:00 am Wakes up
Cooks breakfast
Sweeps and mops the floor
Sets the table

7:00 am Waits at table while employers eat
Cleans up breakfast things

Washes clothes
Cooks rice for lunch
(Note: Employer's mother sends her own cook to
prepare lunch and supper for daughter's
family, every weekday)

11:30 am Sets table for lunch
Waits at table
Has lunch
Cleans up lunch dishes
Cleans bathrooms
Irons clothes

5:00 pm Takes care of employer's kids (3) as soon
as they arrive home from school
Gives all three kids their baths
Sweeps and mops the floor

6:30 pm Sets table for supper
Waits at table. Washes supper dishes and cleans up.

9:00 pm Has supper. Washes whatever laundry that employer
wants done at once like underwear and socks

12:00 pm Goes to bed

The work schedules and workloads of the domestics in Albay, whether they are the
“kabulig”, the “surugon”, the maid, or the ward are dependent on these factors:

- a. whether the domestic is on live-in or
live-out arrangement
- b. whether the domestic is doing one
specialized chore or is an all-around help
- c. the number of domestics in the household
- d. whether the female employer stays at home
most of the day or works outside the home
- e. whether or not there is a more
egalitarian responsibility for housework
between men and women in the household

Except for three women, all the domestics in the first three groups (i.e. the "kabulig",

"surugon", "maid") I mentioned are on live-in arrangement. The live-outs start their day just as early and in some cases, actually earlier than those who live in. They have to be up by four in the morning to prepare for the day. If she has school age kids herself, she has to count on them being independent enough to fend for themselves. However, except when urgently needed by her female employer, the live-out domestic seems to have an earlier closure to her workday. As soon as her chores are done, she usually can go home by 5 or 6 in the afternoon. However, some live-outs' workdays could be longer than those of live-ins based on what the female employer's needs and wishes are on any given day. Since her schedule can change on the wishes of her employer, the liveout on any given day may or may not have enough time to attend to needs of her own family.

Lucia, for instance, has been with Mrs. Pascual 20 years but has been on liveout arrangement since she got married. Her family resides right outside the city. However, by the time she is done attending to her employer and her employer's children and is allowed to go home, her own family is usually fast asleep. When asked why, she says:

Even if I am done with my chores I can only go when she says she does not need me anymore. I do the laundry and marketing for her and then I also go to her daughter's household. I just work and work. I owe them a lot. And I don't think I can repay them enough. So I have to be here till I am dismissed. Although I do not stay here for the night, I sometimes go home very late in the evening. But I cannot really complain.

For the live-in domestic, an average workday begins as early as four or five in the morning. They have to be up ahead of their employers who in most cases expect their breakfast ready and the house clean as soon as they get up.

Although the live-in may sometimes have the chance to get a short nap right after lunch, this does not make her day any lighter. Her short rest periods get interrupted whenever her employer calls. Having their employers say they may take periodic rests only provides a legitimate excuse to keep the domestic still at their beck and call as late as 12 midnight or even to the early morning hours. Rufina complains of having chronic headaches since she started working in Mrs. Marabe's household:

At night, while I am still cleaning up after supper, she tells me that I have to do some laundry. Mostly uniforms of the three kids. Sometimes, it is so late and when I cannot wash them at once because I am still washing the dishes, she gets angry and shouts at me telling me how slow and lazy I am. Even if it's very late, she does not want me to sleep unless I have done them. That's probably why I've had this headache forever. I wake up at four in the morning and the earliest I can go to bed is 12 midnight.

When her employers go out at night, for example, no matter what time they come back, the live-in domestic has to get up to open the gate and to make tea or coffee or attend to her employer's needs as soon as they arrive. Since her workplace is her "home" the live-in domestic ends up being on call 24 hours a day.

For both live-in and live-out domestics, the workload is always heavy and the schedule full. Given the number of tasks to accomplish within a day, these women barely have time to sit down for a meal. Rosa, Mrs. Arce's maid, echoes most domestic's feelings in her words below:

Most days I don't even have time for breakfast. I have to go to market very early since I am buying for several households. So when I'm done cooking here, I then go to her sister's house to do the

same. It is rather difficult. But I guess that's what our life is, us poor people. If I had money I would not work like this. But there is no other way.

Although all the 25 female domestics say they have heavy workloads, there are some who have lighter loads relative to the rest in this group. Among these women, it is the live-in, all-around "surugon" or "kabilig" whose female employer is around either all day or most of the day, who has the heaviest workload.

Since the female employers of these two kinds of domestics usually have only 2 or 3 women working for her and in some cases only 1 all-around with someone just coming in to do the laundry and cook, these groups of female domestic get loaded with a lot of chores to be accomplished. By the end of the day the "kabilig" or the "surugon" is deadtired, especially if the employer is a full-time housewife who keeps on thinking up things for her domestics to do. Many of the domestics in this group, especially the "surugon", find themselves over supervised.

The "maid", who is one of 4 or more domestics in the household of the female employer who is out all day busy with either her career or various social engagements, seems to have the lightest load and a more flexible daytime schedule. Since there is more household help, the workload gets divided among more hands. The domestic who is one of 4 household help is not as loaded with chores as those who are 1 among only 2 or 3, or is the sole all-around helpers.

Doing housework with more women also gives the "maid" a support group when she is feeling under the weather and needs to have a lighter workday. In this situation the "maid" gets to have some help when she needs it without having to negotiate directly with the female employer. The rest of the household staff covers for each other when necessary.

Rita, a live-in domestic of Mrs. Faenar, has been able to visit her aged father who lives in a town just 30 minutes by jeepney from Albay, without asking permission from her female employer. She shares here how she is able to do this:

I do have a lot of work to do. But all of us here, we help each other. Like whenever I want to see my father. He lives by himself in the next town you know. Even on a Saturday, but the way my employer is, I just feel hesitant to ask if I could. It is shameful. So sometimes I just sneak out. Like in the afternoon, as soon as they go out again after lunch. It's easy because the other helpers and I are good friends. So I am out for some time, but I see to it that I am back before they arrive.

In her own words in the quote above, she explains that she depends on her co-workers to sneak out and visit her ailing father in another town. Knowing that she won't be allowed to on a regular basis anyway, even on Saturdays, she has not bothered to tell her employer about the visits she has been making. Instead the other domestics just cover for her when she is out visiting her father. Although the honest thing to do is ask her employer, instead of sneaking, I do not see how Rita can go with permission. Mrs. Faenar does not sound like an employer who would be willing to let a domestic take time off every day. When an employer proves to be difficult or strict about certain things, or the domestics feel that their request would be turned down anyway, this is a usual survival or defense mechanism that female domestics use. They talk it out among themselves and cover for each other.

Furthermore, since their female employer is out all day busy with her career or some social engagement, the "maids" are given their assignments and are left to do their

work with no supervision at all. This gives them enough flexibility in their workschedules. Since the attitude of the employer in this case is to leave them alone to do whatever they want to do for as long as chores are done, this group of domestics tends to be more independent minded. They also have a better sense of how they should divide their time so they can take some rest periods now and then.

Among the domestics I encountered, it is the "ward" that has a different work schedule. Since she entered into service on condition that she be allowed to go to school, she is given time off to attend classes and to do whatever school work is necessary so she can finish her schooling. Among the 6 "wards", 2 are in High School, 2 are pursuing a college degree, and the other 2 are both preparing to take the NCEE (National College Entrance Examinations) so they could go to college as their employers have promised to give them the chance to.

Despite some variations, the work schedules of the other 5 "wards" are similar to that Mrs. Lopez's ward Delia, who is trying to finish secondary school so she can start on a college degree while still working for the same employer.

Delia's Weekday Schedule

5:00 am Wakes up
Opens windows and doors to veranda
Sweeps and mops the floor
Cleans lawn and waters all the plants
Wipes the furniture
7:00 am Has breakfast
Takes a bath
Prepares for school
8:00 am At school
11:30 am Comes home for lunch
Helps get lunch ready
Has lunch
Helps clean up

1:00 pm Goes back to school
5:00 pm Comes home
 Takes care of any ironing to be done
7:00 pm Helps set table
 Has supper
 Helps clean up
9:00 pm Studies lessons
 Watches television
10:00 pm Goes to bed

Comparing Delia's schedule to that of the fulltime domestic - i.e. one who does not go to school, it is obvious that the "ward" spends part of the day at school or doing some sort of school work. However, she does wake up at the same time as other types of domestics. She is also expected to do household chores before she goes to school. In fact most employers do not change their domestics' workload even if they go to school.

Although the "ward" spends part of the day at school studying for a high school diploma or a college degree, she is expected to be up at dawn to do everything that the housewife is expected to do at that time in the absence of household help. However, I notice in Delia's schedule for instance, that in the evenings, she seems to have enough flexibility in terms of chores that she can have time to study her lessons. She seems to be done with chores earlier than most domestics and is free by 10.

Since the female employers of "wards" are career women who are out all day, obviously they do not hire "wards" to go to school, so that they, the employers can do their own housework while their domestics attend classes. These employers are able to let them go to school by having more than one ward. So while one is in school, the others are in the house doing their own chores. In this way housework is always done.

In Delia's case, her employer, who is married with three kids, actually has another "ward" who is taking high school courses. The household also has a liveout laundry

woman who comes in daily, and a live-in babysitter for the employer's 2 year old. Between these four helpers, Delia's employer divides the workload conveniently so as to allow the two "wards" time off for school work and yet still keep her house in good order.

Delia's schedule seems to show that the "ward" does have a convenient schedule. However, further along in the interview with her employer I found out that although she can go to school, one of her duties is to "cover" for anybody who gets sick or has to go home for an emergency. Delia then has to take time off from school to stay home and do the chores. Mrs. Lopez explains this in the quote below:

Delia goes to school. She is the one who takes care of the ironing and all my plants. She is also the all-around substitute for anybody who gets sick or takes the day off.

When I talked at length with the 2 "wards", Violeta and Fe, who were both in college, I found out that the "time-off" given to them by their employers to attend to their college work does not really mean that they are off-duty or free from being asked to attend to their employer's needs.

In another case, since Fe studies in the same college where her employer works, she ends up being asked to run errands in between classes throughout the day. Her so called "time-off for school" has actually been arranged to suit the employer's needs. In fact, when asked if there is no conflict between her ward's school work and her household chores, Ms. Josol says:

No, because I arrange with the scheduling of her subjects that she won't have problems with that. I see to it that her schedule would fall on this period so that she will have time to go home early, to go downtown to shop for me, and to go home to attend to the household.

Although Violeta, the other college "ward" is supposed to be at school the whole day, actually she spends about half that time attending to her employer's needs. In the morning, for instance, she is the one who has to take her employer's grandson to his Grade 1 class at 7:30. Then she opens her employer's school office and gets it ready for the day. The employer herself tells me that she lets the "ward" do this so she does "not have to rush to work at once". Violeta also brings the pack-lunch to the office of her employer. Only after all these chores are done is she allowed to walk over to her own college, which is about 15 to 30 minutes away. Then at about 11:30, in a 100 degree blazing noonday sun or a heavy downpour, and whether she needs to do some library work or not, she must walk to her employer's college to set up lunch, and to clean up afterwards. Then off she goes for another walk to her own class. At about 4:30 she takes another walk to fetch the grandson, to get all the remains of the pack-lunch as well as to see if she is needed to do errands for her employer. Otherwise she takes the grandson home, prepares supper for her employers and goes about cleaning the house again. Although she manages to clean up after supper by about 9 in the evening, Violeta says that for her to be able to have time to do some schoolwork in the evenings she has to do the chores real fast.

For the female employers of Fe and Violeta, letting their domestic study gives them a good excuse to bring a "personal" assistant with them to their place of work. It is evident that they do not believe that when a domestic is given time-off for school, she is free from attending to the employer's needs. The "ward" is after all still a domestic, who has been hired for the employer's convenience.

Part III-Compensation

A. Wards

Attending classes to earn a diploma or a degree is part of the package the employer has promised her ward. The employers with wards believe that "time off for school" is part of the compensation. In other words it is a portion of the ward's wages. It does not

come as a surprise that the 6 student domestics or "wards" in this group do not have the same arrangement for wages as most of the other 19 female domestics who happen to be regular full-time maids.

Two (2) student-domestics do not receive fixed wages, while one (1) has been told that as soon as she starts college she won't either. In these three arrangements, the employers pay for tuition, fees, books, and school clothes and instead of wages each domestic is given either a weekly or a monthly transportation allowance.

Fe, for instance, gets 20 pesos a week while Violeta is given 100 pesos a month for transportation allowance. Both, however, maintain that they use part of their allowances for personal needs like toothbrushes, bath soap, shampoo, or deodorants. Since they hesitate to ask their employers for money with which to buy these articles, sometimes they have to make a choice between walking to school or doing without any toiletries at all. In the quotes below, Mrs. Josol and her ward are both aware of what the wages are for. For Mrs. Josol:

No wages really. But I pay her tuition fee, her uniform, her books, all her school needs. I give her transportation allowance. She really gets everything free.

Fe says sometimes she runs out of money:

Sometimes I run out of money for my toilet articles like soap and toothpaste. I get it from my 20-peso a week allowance. But when there is a school project I really run out of my allowance.

Teresa, who was still reviewing for the college entrance exams at the time of the interview, was receiving a fixed wage of 300 pesos a month. Her employer told her that as

soon as she passes the NCEE and starts college work, all her school needs will be taken cared of and instead of getting fixed wages she will be given a monthly transportation allowance.

Teresa's employer sounds very upbeat about her educational plans for her ward. She explains that she will get Teresa registered into the StudyNow-Pay-Later student plan. The government actually will subsidize Teresa's schooling. It is obvious that since Teresa's tuition will be paid by the government and she will receive some sort of allowance for books, uniforms and other school needs, the employer will not be spending a penny from her own pocket. Teresa, however, does not know this. She thinks her employer is spending a lot for her schooling. Like most of the other wards, she does not get any monthly wage. Instead she receives a weekly allowance.

The two universities where these "wards" study have the lowest tuition fees, averaging 2000 pesos per school year that runs from June to mid March or about 10 months. With a transportation allowance of 100 pesos per month, this would be about 2,800 pesos that the employer spends on the student-domestic. This would average to about 280 pesos a month that the female employer spends on her "ward".

The six employers in this group argue that this is just but fair to them since the "ward" gets free board and lodging besides. But this is true for all live-in domestics. For those "wards" who do not have fixed wages, the overall monetary compensation is actually less than either the full time live-in ones or the student-domestics who are given fixed wages. Full time domestics get an average of 500 pesos a month which for 10 months would be 5,000 pesos. So for the employer with the student-domestic, this is a saving of about 2,200 pesos. Add this to April and May, where the domestic does not have classes

but still has no fixed wages and transportation allowance then the total savings would be about 3,200 pesos for a whole year.

For the other three "wards", wages are fixed but as the employers themselves admit, the wages are quite low. Two of the employers in these 3 cases pay for the tuition fees while with one employer, the domestic has to get it out of her monthly wage.

These "wards" are just as loaded with chores as the full-time ones. But according to the employers these women have higher levels of comprehension, better work habits, possess initiative and are more ambitious than ordinary helpers. So they can accomplish more tasks in less time, with little or no supervision at all. For the same number of chores, the ward's compensation is below what a fulltime domestic gets. However, the advantage is that a ward is given the opportunity to earn a college degree and get out of domestic service.

B-Full-Time Domestic

For the 19 full-time domestics, monthly wages range from no monetary compensation to 1,000 pesos a month plus a 13th month pay and social security benefits covered by the employer. In between these lowest and highest wages are:

<u>Wages per month</u>	<u>No. of Domestic</u>
1,000 + SSS & 13th mo.-----	1
500 pesos -----	4
400 pesos -----	1
350 pesos -----	2
300 pesos -----	5
250 pesos -----	3
200 pesos -----	2
no salary -----	1
Total-----	19 domestics

Except for the woman who has been with her employer for 20 years but at

the time of the interview was no longer receiving any pay at all, these cash wages seem to be dependent greatly on the number of years of service for the employer or the employer's family.

When asked whether they think that the wages of their female domestics are low or not, most of the employers of the full time domestics argued that the wages were just right and added that their domestics were satisfied. Most felt that their helpers were even lucky that they had some earnings, and added that after all they the employers also help their domestics in terms of giving them hand-me-down clothing, medicine, leftover food, and other gifts for themselves and their families. For the live-in ones, the female employers thought that board and lodging was part of their domestics' "wages"

Based on the Labor Code of the Philippine (Revised, 1991), the minimum wages for household helpers are: 1.) P60.00 a month for the cities covered in the MetroManila area; 2.) P45.00 a month for other chartered and first class cities; and 3.) P30.00 a month for those in other municipalities. Legally therefore, all of the 25 employers I interviewed, except for the employer of the domestic who does not get her wages directly from them but through a government job that they found for her, are paying their domestics wages that are far and above what the law provides. However, since the law does not reflect the actual current cost of living in the Philippines, the 25 domestics are very grossly underpaid compared to other workers.

Vicenta for example, a full-time domestic whose main task is washing and ironing clothes from Monday to Sunday, gets 40 pesos daily which would then be P880.00 a month. This is above what the Labor Code mandates. However, this amount still puts domestics below the "poverty-line", when the cost of living and the current buying power of the Philippine Peso are included in the equation.

Vicenta is feeding 6 people with her 40 pesos daily wage- a jobless husband, a teenage son, her other son, with his wife and a 5 year old kid. Every day after work she

goes to the neighborhood market and the only thing she can buy with her 40 pesos is a ganta of rice (about 2 meals for 6 people) and a small bottle of salted anchovies. On good days she gets to buy 3 medium size fish. But mostly it is a meal of rice and anchovies and on real lean days she and her family just season the boiled rice with salt. But since her family needs three meals a day, sometimes they have to stretch a ganta and the anchovies just so they won't go hungry.

When I asked the employer about Vicenta's situation, she said that Vicenta is lucky because on days that there are enough leftovers or on a day that the cook is cleaning out the refrigerator or the pantry, she gives Vicenta free food as a treat to bring home to her family.

But Vicenta cannot afford to wait for "treats". What happens if there are no leftovers or if the cook is not cleaning out the refrigerator? Wouldn't it be much better for Vicenta just to have a daily wage that is enough to buy her family's basic needs, so she does not have to be dependent on her employer's "charitable acts"? The employer simply shrugged and explained that she could financially afford to raise Vicenta's wages. But she cannot do so. If she raises Vicenta's wages, then Vicenta will have enough money to skip 1 or 2 days a week and still be able feed her family. This employer, who has a husband and kids to clothe every day besides attending to her own career, cannot afford to have dirty laundry just lying around. Her husband, who she says is very supportive of her career, expects his clothes to be ready every morning and does not bother how it is done as long as it is done. So, if Vicenta takes a day off, then no one is going to get her husband's and her children's clothes ready. The employer says she not only hates to do laundry, she also cannot be bothered. She has better things to do than doing attending to the laundry. Since she wants a well-run home, a satisfied husband, and clean-clothed children, then she has to find ways and means to keep a household in good order while pursuing her own career. She believes that although she feels sorry for Vicenta, she is powerless to help her. Otherwise, she the employer will suffer the consequences. She will be the laundry woman in her household.

Part IV- Meals and Eating Arrangement

A. Full-Time Domestic

There is a tendency among employers of full-time domestics to think that since these women are poor rural-urban migrants who have been used to a "hand-to-mouth" existence where they come from, they do not know the difference between fresh nutritious food and "about-to-spoil" leftovers. While some of these employers do allow their domestics to eat the same food their family eats, this usually only happens if there are leftovers. Otherwise, the usual meal for the full-time domestics consists of rice and salted fish.

In one meal-time situation I was able to observe, I saw Sylvia, the female domestic, putting away the leftovers from lunch in the refrigerator and then getting rice and salted fish for herself. When I asked her about this during my interview with her, I found out that this has been the situation since she started working there and it is also the same thing for the other household staff. Her feeling of hopelessness and resignation about her situation is evident in her words below:

Our food...almost every day, just rice and salted fish. We cannot complain. I guess that is better than nothing. At least something goes to my stomach everyday.

Although Clara has the same experience as Sylvia, she is more candid about her dislike for the way her employer treats the domestics in the household:

Mostly fish that's sometimes almost two weeks old. Even if we are just like this, we do know what stale and rotten fish is.

Most of the domestics I interviewed believe that their female employers do not care what the domestics eat or whether they have enough food or not. However, these employers, like Ms. Faelnar, who hires only full-time domestics in her household, believe that their domestics should even be grateful to the employers for giving them the opportunity to taste food that they probably never had before they became domestics. In her words below she emphasizes that her domestics get a good deal in her household:

I think they have a good deal at my house. They actually are better off than we are really, because they are free as soon as my family and I leave for work or school. You know, because they do not eat with us so after we do, they can choose whatever they want to eat. Their food is usually whatever they want from what is there. I do not have any limit. Like breakfast, they prepare it for us. But then we are all in a hurry, so it goes to them. Like the milk, whatever is on the table they can have it. Sometimes we just drink coffee, so I really think my maids do not have anything to complain when it comes to their food.

When I interviewed her domestic, Rita, I noted the same state of affairs as in other households with full-time live-in domestics. Although Rita admits that they sometimes do get to eat the same food as their employers, she says that this happens very rarely and then only when there are leftovers from the meal. In the quote below, she describes how she and the other domestics compensate:

We eat the same food they do, but only if they don't eat everything up. Only if there are leftovers. Otherwise we have to find ways and means to eat. But now we have gotten used to it. Sometimes we make a vegetable dish from the small vegetable garden the

other maid and I have managed to grow at the back. If not we both will starve. It is difficult because if we don't eat then how can we do our chores if we are weak ?

Besides the kind or type of food that the domestic eats, the eating arrangements is another aspect of the work situation that gives us a closer look at the life of a female domestic in her employer's household. The most prevalent eating arrangement was for the domestic to serve the employers in the dining room and to eat only after the employers were done with their meal. Domestics usually have their meals on the kitchen table. In the group of 19 employers with full-time domestics, not one ever gets to have meals together and at the same table as her employers

An extreme case in eating arrangements among the fulltime domestics is the employer who would not even let the domestics use the kitchen table. Although I did not interview this particular maid, one of my interviewees acted as an informant when she related to me how other domestics are treated in other households.

Teresa, a ward who eats all of her meals with her employer, had this to say about some domestic friends of hers:

My friend tells me that they can only eat in the kitchen and they have a different food. Actually most of the time, they are allowed to eat only in the stockroom with no chairs at all.

B. "Wards"

Employers of "wards" (student domestics) view food and meal arrangements differently from those who hire full-time domestics. The wards eat with their employers and join the family for Sunday dinners. These employers have a higher opinion of their wards and view them as someday becoming professionals like they are. Since the wards have a future beyond domestic service, it is possible that the employers are a little less

worried about crating a barrier between their families and their wards. Four (4) of the student-domestics always have their meals at the same table as their employer, one (1) always has a special Sunday dinner with her employer's family, and one (1) always has lunch with her employer's teen-age girl. Listen to the pride in the voices of these two wards:

I always have breakfast and supper with my employer and her family. We usually have a lively conversation while eating. Sometimes we tell jokes. Sometimes we talk about the problems in the household and sometimes about a movie we all had seen on video the night before. (Teresa)

Although all of us 4 helpers have our own table in the kitchen, we eat the same time as my employers and also the same food. She never gives us what is leftover from their meal. But on Sundays we always have a special dinner. All members of the house eat at the same table. She and her husband really treat us well. Like they are our parents. I feel like I am their daughter. (Delia)

Part V -Quarters and Use of Space:

One significant difference between the way "wards" are treated by their employers and the other three types of domestics (i.e. the "surugon", the "kabulig", and the "maid") is in the use of, and access to household space.

A. "Wards"

Student-domestics or "wards" have permission to sit in the living room whenever they want. Three have their own rooms. One shares a room with 2 other student

domestics, another one shares a room with a full-time domestic, and one shares a room with the daughters of her employer.

B. Full-Time Domestic

Although getting one's own quarter in the employer's house is not in any way peculiar to the "wards", among full-time domestics, it is usually the exception and not the rule.

Clara, for instance does not have a room of her own. Instead, since part of her job as a full-time domestic is to feed her employer's infant and care for her night and day, she sleeps on a straw mat between the crib and her employers' bed so she can attend to the baby every time she wakes up or cries. Rufina only has a makeshift folding bed in the kitchen. Lorna unfolds a straw mat for herself to sleep on every night in the living room.

There are full-time domestics who do have their own rooms. But these are the ones who have been with their employer or their employer's family for a long time. The employers whose full-time domestics have their own quarters also have intercoms installed in the "servant's quarters" so they can still have ready access to the helpers 24 hours a day.

A majority of the full-time domestics were told explicitly that they were not in any way or at any time allowed to sit in the living room. When I asked Rufina why she was hesitating to sit down on the couch in the living room where I thought I would interview her, she said:

No, I cannot sit there. They do not allow that. On my very first day here they at once told me that I should not under any circumstances sit in the living room. So I have not done so.

One extreme case was that of Sylvia. On the date set by Ms. Enriquez for our interview, Sylvia, the laundry woman, came right out to meet me in the living room after the security guard had let me into the house. Thinking that I was going to interview her in

the living room, I started to talk, expecting her to join me on the couch. When she did not do so, I casually asked her why, although at that point I sensed the reason for her hesitation.

Sylvia: "No, I've never tried to sit in the living room.
We were told right at the beginning not to."

"Madam" had given her and the rest of the household staff firm instructions that under no circumstances were they to sit anywhere in the living room. So I pointed at the immaculately clean kitchen that looked like every housewife's dream. She said they were not allowed there either. I was really puzzled by this since normally if you cook or wash dishes or do anything in the kitchen, then you ought to have access to it. With beautifully crafted cabinets, drawers, and counters with all the modern gadgets you can think of, the kitchen was a housekeeper's dream. But, Sylvia instead led me through the door of the kitchen to an open outdoor space at the end of which was a door to what looked like a workroom or a stockroom.

As we entered I saw that we were in another kitchen. This one was dark with unpainted greasy walls, old beat up counters, an old two-burner gas stove to cook on, and a kitchen table that, given the way the rest of the house looked, should have been sent to the junk yard a long time ago. This, according to Sylvia, is the kitchen that they had access to. The other one is for Ms. Enriquez and her family's personal use when they feel like preparing the meals themselves.

Sylvia led me out through another door to a cement walkway on one side of which were doors to three 2 by 3 meter rooms, one of which she entered telling me that this is where she did her work. She told me she was not sure if she was allowed to stop her ironing while talking with me, so I said if she didn't mind being interviewed while doing the ironing that was fine with me. Actually, I was glad that she was frank with me about this, because I did not want any of the domestics to lose their jobs because of the interview.

The room had an ironing board on one side, a wooden bed with piles and piles of laundry, and on one corner were laundry baskets. Sylvia picked up the flat iron and started to do some ironing. I then sat on the bed, but quickly jumped in surprise when I heard a very loud bark and a huge dog came out from underneath. Sensing my surprise, Sylvia explained that although this room was the bedroom for whoever happened to be the live-in laundry woman at the moment, it also doubled as the ironing room and the dog's bedroom.

Since there was only one tiny window to let air go through, I could only imagine how oppressively hot this room would be during summer nights when temperatures remained in the 90s. In fact I must have sweated a whole bucket full throughout the two hours I stayed talking with Sylvia and the other domestics who were in and out of the room. Although these rooms shared a wall with the rest of the house, I found it rather difficult to comprehend how the central air conditioning that I noticed at once as soon as I came, could be confined only to certain parts of the house. The employers must have made this decision while they were consulting with whoever was the architect who designed their house. There must have been a clearly defined intention to keep the domestics' rooms from getting any air conditioning.

When I saw how beautiful the back garden was with its trees, roses and all kinds of orchids interspersed with comfortable looking garden chairs, I mentioned that it must be great for them to sit and relax in when they were finished with their chores in late afternoon or even late evening. Sylvia then pointed toward a solitary bench at the far corner of the garden quite a distance away, which if she had not pointed out to me I would never even have noticed. That bench, she said, was the only one they were allowed by the "Madam" to sit on. Under no circumstances were they ever to sit on the other chairs. For that matter Sylvia was quite candid about their not being allowed to sit anywhere inside the house at all.

When I saw an intercom unit attached to one wall, I asked about it and Sylvia informed me that there are similar units in the soot-covered kitchen, and also the other

rooms where the domestics slept. "Madam" had the units installed so she could call them anytime. This, according to Sylvia, did not allow for an uninterrupted sleep. No matter how late it was or how early at dawn it was, if the employers needed something, they just shouted through the intercom. This she said with a shrug, adding that that's how life is for poor people.

With the use of the intercom, the employer is basically saying that, as the superordinate in the relationship, she has access to her domestic anytime she wants to. The physical and mental privacy of the domestic is deemed inconsequential.

Although Sylvia's situation may seem like the extreme case, especially when we recall the two types of kitchens in the house, the controlled access and use of space is not rare among the households in Albay. This is especially widespread among the houses of the very rich in Albay society.

Access to house space also includes sleeping arrangements for the domestic. In Mrs. Enriquez's house, for example, the bedroom for the live-in laundress doubled as the laundry room and the dog's bedroom.

In another household, that of Mrs. Guzman, one of the college professors who employed "wards", the ward who was assigned as her baby's nanny slept on a straw mat in the master bedroom where the baby's crib was. Every night, Aleta spread her mat at the foot of her employer's bed. Mrs. Guzman felt this was the best arrangement since it freed her and her husband from getting up whenever the baby woke up at night. After a year, Aleta was allowed to join the other wards in their quarters, which as in Ms. Enriquez's household, doubled as the laundry room and the storage room for rice

This sleeping arrangement was very common among the female employers with babies or very small kids. Most often the domestic only had a "mat" for a bed and a movable bedroom depending on the current needs of her employer. In households where the domestics had their own sleeping quarters, their room was always placed next to the kitchen.

Among the households with separate quarters for their domestics, whether the quarters doubled as storage room or laundry room, the motivation for the quarters, I found out, was symbolic of one's capability to build a house complete with maid's quarters. "I am rich enough to build a fancy house like this," was the impression I got from these female employers. Except for one professor, Ms Lopez, who said she wanted her maids to have their own space so they could avail themselves of some privacy "...even if they are maids only", most of these employers were obviously not as concerned with allowing their domestics their own private space as they were with "maid's quarters" as a symbol of wealth and status.

Part VI- Free Time /Vacation

As a predominantly Catholic society (85% of Pop.), every Filipino community celebrates the annual "town fiesta" to commemorate the feast day of its patron saint. For this occasion it is a traditional practice among Filipinos to go back home from wherever they are, to celebrate the fiesta with her or his own family.

The female employers I interviewed, being Filipinos themselves, are aware that going home for the town fiesta is just as important for her female domestic as for anybody else. Most employers allow their domestics to go home for a number of days to participate in the festivities. It is a common practice among employers to buy food for their domestics to bring home to their families. The longer the domestic has been with her employers, the more foodstuffs she can bring on her visit home.

Employers who are mostly Catholics and even some Protestants think of it as their duty to give their domestics the opportunity to go to Sunday Mass or services. While some domestics are allowed the whole afternoon off, others are given only one hour or two to go to church. Some employers also encourage their domestics to go to weekend dances, see a

movie or go shopping for their own toiletries or clothes. There are employers who allow their domestics to partake of the afternoon siesta – a Filipino practice of having a short nap in the middle of the day. This is usually the period after lunch dishes and pots have been cleaned and put away and before the preparation for the evening meal begins. However, there are employers who do not allow any kind of rest period during the day or time off for movies or dances during the weekends.

Conclusions and Reflections

In this chapter I looked at the working conditions in domestic service, comparing and contrasting the situations for the *surugon*, the *kabulig*, the maid and the ward. I also looked at how the working conditions differ for the live-out and for the live-in full time female domestics. In studying the work situation of the four types of relationships, I came to the following conclusions.

First, entry to the employer's household can take a variety of routes. With the exception of the mentors, hiring practices reveal the very low regard female employers have for the women they hire to do housework for them. When domestics are inherited, received as wedding presents, used as going away gifts for a daughter about to move to another city, instructed to be the personal maid of one's college bound child, won by lottery among siblings, or borrowed from one household to another, then the objectification is never in doubt.

Secondly, domestics can be fired anytime and without due process. Although there are exceptions, if the employer thinks that her domestic has done something wrong or displeases her or any member of her family, then without checking whether the alleged infraction is true or not, the domestic is told to go. This practice is common even among

the mentors and their wards, some of whom have been fired one year before they were about to earn a college degree.

Next, the work load of domestics is heavy, repetitive, boring, monotonous, difficult, tiring, and endless according to both employers and domestics. Their workday begins very early and ends very late. Those who are in households where there are intercoms either in the domestic quarters or in the kitchen are on call throughout the night catering to their employers' needs. The wards who are given time off to study have the most stringent schedule. She does housework before she can go to school. Since her mentor works in the college where she studies, she is the personal assistant of her mentor, trying her best to attend classes in between catering to her mentor's needs the whole day. She does housework again at night before she can study, and if there are chores still undone, she has to do them before she goes to bed.

Domestics have very low monthly wages. Even among those who have worked for the same employer or the same clan for several generations, the compensation is well below the minimum wage set by the government. Those who are live-out and work on a daily wage are the most abused of all in terms of compensation. These are mostly married women who do the laundry in their employer's homes. As one employer puts it, even if the employer wants to pay her more, the employer can't because she is afraid that if the laundrywoman can earn the equivalent of a 2-day wage in one day, then she might not come on a daily basis leaving the employer with no household help once or twice a week. Wards usually do not get monthly wages. Since their employers pay their tuition and buy the school supplies, what they get is an allowance or pocket money for emergency expenses.

While wards tend have access to all parts of the house, the rest of the domestics, especially the surugon and the maids, are given strict instructions about which parts of the house they are allowed in or where they could sit. Wards and maids have their own quarters while the surugon and the kabalig do not. At night there are domestics, especially among the surugon and the kabalig, who sleep on a straw mat that they spread on the kitchen floor or by the baby's crib.

Wards have the best deal in terms of meals and eating arrangement. They eat with their employers and even join in the family Sunday dinners. Next to the wards, the maids also eat whatever the employers have but they only eat after the employers are done. The surugon and the kabalig eat either rice or salted fish on a daily basis or whatever is leftover when the employers finish their meals. Finally, free time during the week days, time off on Sundays, and 3 to 4 day vacations to go home for the town fiesta are all dependent on the goodwill and wishes of the employers.

This discussion of the work situation of female domestics demonstrates the power asymmetry in the female employer-female domestic relationship. The employer exercises absolute control over all aspects of the work situation. The woman who comes in to do the housework does not have any voice in any part of the hiring and firing process or in setting up the working conditions.

CHAPTER VI

“Like one of the family....” Maternalism and Paternalism in the Relationship

Introduction

Although female domestics in Albay work under exploitative conditions, they do not hesitate to say that their employers treat them “like one of the family.” The female employers themselves use the same phrase to describe how they treat their female domestics even as they emphasize the need to put up barriers between them.

In this chapter I explore how and why female employers and female domestics use the family analogy in describing their relationship. The discussion is divided into three sections. In Section A, I look at the use of phrases such as “like one of the family” or “part of the family” in Albay and in other parts of the world. I also examine why there is ambivalence in their usage. In Section B, I explore the Filipino tradition of “compandrazgo” and its significance for the paternalism and maternalism in the employer-domestic relationship and for the use of the family analogy in the Philippines. In Section C I close the chapter with my conclusions and reflections.

A-“Like one of the Family”

There are two parts to this section. The first part focuses on the family analogy in Albay. The second half looks at its use in other parts of the world, comparing and contrasting such usage with those of the employers and domestics in the Philippines.

1-Family Analogy in Albay

The family analogy is universal among the 25 female employer-female domestic dyads in Albay. Discussion in the next few pages will center on Yolanda and her employer, Mrs. Hermoso. Their relationship highlights the ambivalence and contradictions in the words and actions of employers and domestics when they use the family analogy.

Yolanda is in her second year of service with Mrs. Hermoso. She belongs to the group of domestics called “wards” by their employers. As I have stated in a previous chapter, wards are domestics who are given time by their employers to finish high school and in many cases, to get a college degree and get better employment. Employers of wards are most often teachers, college professors, or are in careers connected with education. Mrs. Hermoso is a professor in a local state college.

Yolanda has just graduated from the 6th grade and is a freshman in high school. At the time of the interview she was dressed in jeans and t-shirt. She is paid 300 pesos a month, roughly the equivalent of 10 dollars. We were alone in the kitchen, when I asked her how the family treats her. She answered without hesitation:

They treat me like one of the family. When they come home I also bring their hand to my forehead for a blessing just like their kids do. And I do feel like part of their family because my heart feels light and I feel kind of concern for them.

There is pride in her voice when she talks about taking part in the Filipino ritual of bringing the hand of her employer to her forehead for a blessing “just like their kids do.” She “feels like part of their family” because she has feelings of concern for them. Later in the interview, when I asked her about family conversations and whether or not her employers ask her opinion about certain family matters, she then talks about the

limitations of her position in her employer's family. She goes on to say:

Although I sometimes join in the conversation, when it is about their family I don't because I have no right to. Even if they treat me like their own child, I have no right to discuss their family matters with them.

This is an important distinction that Yolanda makes. She says she is treated and even feels like one of the family in the first passage. But immediately, in the second, she qualifies her first statement by saying that when it is about "their family" she has no right to be in the discussion.

One explanation for this is that she considers herself part of her employer's family at a ritualistic level. She feels comfortable in behaving like the children of her employers as far as bringing their hands to her forehead for a blessing. As a child I saw this same behavior among the helpers in our house. Whether the domestics were young or old, my parents must have viewed them as children, and as such they were allowed to take part in this parent-child ritual.

When a domestic brings her employer's hand to her forehead, the action communicates to the observer that the person accepting the blessing belongs to or has a connection to the group. At the same time, the domestic herself may feel that she is a part of the group, hence "a part of the family". But no matter how many times a domestic says her employers treat her "like part of the family", a domestic's position, as Yolanda's words suggest, is not one of belonging in the same sense as the children of her employer.

Mrs. Hermoso, Yolanda's employer, uses the family analogy in much the same way as her domestic. Although she insists that Yolanda is "part of the family", at the same time she emphasizes the need to set limits and barriers between her family and the

domestic. When asked whether she considers Yolanda a part of the family, she does not hesitate to say so:

Actually there should not really be any line. I consider them help in the house. When I go to Manila I make it a point to bring them things. They are part of the family.

Although Mrs. Hermoso stresses firmly that “there should not really be any line” between domestics and employers, the rest of her words in this passage suggest otherwise. She draws the line when she calls them the “help”. Later on in the interview, when I asked her about mealtime arrangements, she makes the distinction again by stating in a very emphatic voice that it is not right for the maids to eat with them.

According to her:

It seems not really correct for maids to sit with us. Not so much that they are down below but because you want to talk to each other about private matters.

Her domestics are only “part of the family” in the sense of being a member of the household (the staff) but not “one of the family”. If they were, then Mrs. Hermoso would not mind having them be around when the family talks about private matters.

The female employers in Albay either stress the word “like” or they use phrases like “part of the family” or “part of the family budget”, or even “part of the household” or a “must in every home”. In a previous section I mentioned one employer saying “I can never imagine raising a family without maids.” Another employer believes that a maid “is a must in every home.” These statements are very telling of how employers view the place of domestics in their households. For these employers, domestics are basic necessities. The family needs food, shelter, water, clothing, and domestics. Mrs. Arce puts this very succinctly when she says:

Maids are part of the family. You cannot have a family without maids. Maids are part of the family budget.

Mrs. Arce's monthly budget includes the maids' fees as part of the family expenses. Money must be set aside for them just as much as they must do the same for water, food, clothing, electricity, and other basics. By making maids' salaries part of the budget, Mrs. Arce is assured that she does not have to worry about doing the "family chores" such as cleaning, cooking, dishwashing, laundry and ironing. She has "a part of the family" do them.

2-Comparison With Other Countries

Research on domestic service in other societies shows that use of the family analogy is not unique to the Philippines. It is a predictable response from employers in cultures where domestic servitude exists. Jacklyn Cock, Whisson and Weil, and Preston Whyte, found the use of "like one of the family" to be pervasive among female employers in separate studies about domestic service in South Africa. TellisNayak in his research on domestic servitude in a part of India which he calls by the fictitious name of Nanavoor, also found the use of this "personalized idiom" quite universal among female employers.

Scholars who focus on Latin American societies discovered similar usages of the family metaphor by the "patronas". Emily M. Nett in her exploration of the servant class in Ecuador concluded that:

It is not insignificant that household servants are inevitably members of the family. But their place in the family structure is as distinct as their place in the social structure in general. They are not equals; they are children who never grow up.

Lesley Gill, researching on gender, class and domestic service in Bolivia, found that employers integrated servants into their homes. The white upper class female adopted a maternalistic attitude towards the Aymara women in their households and described them

as their adopted children. It did not matter, of course, that in many cases the domestic servant, especially those who had been with families for generations, were a lot older than the "senoras".

Rubbo and Taussig in their research in Colombia observed that the "muchacha" (Spanish for "girl") was indeed considered a part of the family. However, while the "real" girl - i.e. the daughter of the employers grew up to become a woman, the "muchacha" remained forever one to the extent that in many instances they got deprived of or had to struggle to go through the rest of their life transitions, such as marriage and motherhood. They were kept in a state of "perpetual infantilism" (Rubbo and Taussig, 1983). In the words of Grace Young in her article "The Myth of Being Like a Daughter" in which she discusses her findings about domestic service in Peru:

As she entered a child, she remains a child.

Margo Smith found many employers in Lima (Peru) quite vocal about their self evaluation as good "patronas", making such statements as "Why, I treat my muchacha like a daughter!" However, like Grace Young who found a strict division of labor between the "real" children and the domestic in her research in the same society (Peru), Smith could not find a single case in which the domestic was actually treated like a daughter. She concluded that:

The servant is always kept in her place. She does not eat with the rest of the family, but alone in the kitchen; her clothing and living quarters are noticeably inferior in quality to that of the family; she is not treated personally like a member of the family, even if she has been employed there long enough to be considered an integral member of the household.

Smith would certainly draw the same observations had she talked with the 25 female employers from Albay. From what they shared with me, I would say that these women have mastered the "art" of keeping the domestic in "her place". They say their domestics are a part of the family but they set up rules and conditions to make them understand in no uncertain terms that they are not bona fide members of her family. One of the employers, Mrs. Hermoso, whom I quoted extensively in Section A, is a good example. While she was talking about how difficult it is to keep domestics, she also stressed how important it is to make it very clear to them what they can and cannot do or say. In her own words:

It is difficult to hold maids. So there needs to be some kind of relaxed rules. But of course there are many things which I tell them they cannot do. Like talking back. We make it very clear from the start that they should not just say things that are not for them to say. And at least we expect them to be honest, be careful with their manners, and show respect and courtesy.

Although studies done in other parts of the world reveal that there are cases where domestics do feel "like one of the family" and think they are treated like one, it is interesting to note that South Africa and the Philippines are polar opposites in their usage of the family analogy. In research conducted by Judith Rollins in the United States, Young in Bolivia, Smith in Peru, (etc.), results indicate that the use of the family analogy is neither totally absent as in South Africa, nor universal as I found among my 25 interviewees in the Philippines.

When we examine the demographic component in each of these societies mentioned, it becomes easier to understand why this is so. In Cock's sample all the female employers were white Afrikaners and all the domestics were black. There is a clear cut racial divide between employers and domestics in South Africa which, as Cock pointed out

in her book, Mmaids and Madams, is exacerbated by the oppressiveness of apartheid. At the present time, with the new government of South Africa in place, it could be possible that some of the cruelty of apartheid has been relaxed on paper. But I doubt whether the demographic composition of female employers and female domesticshave undergone any change at all.

In the Cock research on South Africa, the female domestics are clearly very much aware that their being domestics is a result and a cruel reminder of the racial oppression they suffer as blacks. To quote some of the women in her sample:

A white woman can tell you to move a wardrobe.
Because you are black she does not think that you
are a woman.

Look at me. I am still working hard at my age
(63). But white old ladies don't have to work
hard.

No white woman would work for R9 a month
as I do.

There is no white woman who would do the work
I do for so little money.

Educated blacks have difficulty finding jobs
but you will never see an educated white
jobless.

Unlike their counterparts in South Africa, female domestics in the Philippines do not see themselves as belonging to a racial group that is different from their employers'. Among the 25 female employers in Albay, for example, were women who could trace their ancestry to the Malay, some to the Chinese, others to Spanish and some who were a mixture of a lot of races. But then, there were just as many among the female domestics I interviewed who had similar ancestral histories.

The absence of a clearly defined racial division allows for a situation wherein the domestic can easily identify with her employer to the extent that the exploitation she suffers as a lower class woman tends to get obscured by a sense of belonging as well as feelings of loyalty and concern.

Cock's interviewees may wonder why their counterparts in the Philippines not only feel like one of the family, but also claim that their employers treat them like one. In fact no matter how much they complained of being overworked or underpaid, the domestics in Albay would punctuate their complaint with words alluding to their feelings of concern for their employers and how they are doing what they do and endure some maltreatment because they feel "like part of the family".

B-“Comandrazgo”

The use of the family analogy by employers and domestics in Albay may have its roots in “comandrazgo”- a paternalistic process through which Filipinos form family and kinship groups. In this section I focus on how this process fuels the paternalistic and maternalistic relationship between domestics and employers.

1-What is Comandrazgo ?

In Philippine society, the nuclear family is the primary kinship group. The Filipino views this unit as the core surrounded by two other concentric circles of "kin". While the core is considered the most important, every Filipino recognizes and values her connection to the second ring, composed of her extended bilateral family - i.e. all the relatives of her father and mother. Beyond this is another concentric circle that includes all non-blood related "kin". Included in this third ring are the tenant farmers, the domestics,

and any other person or persons whose primary purpose as far as the core unit is concerned is to be of service to one's nuclear family.

In Albay, as in other parts of the Philippines, the non-blood relationships in the third ring are maintained through the process of "compandrazgo". This term, which is borrowed from the Spanish, means "spiritual relationship between godfather and parents of a child". It loosely connotes "becoming comrades". A related word, "compandraje", refers to forming a "league for mutual protection and benefit". Whoever becomes a kin through "compandrazgo" is one's "compadre". The word "compadre" is used by the godfather and the father of the child to refer to and to address each other. The wives of the godfather and the father of the child call each other "commare".

The relationship between the family (the primary kinship group) and the occupants of the third ring is that of a super-ordinate and his subordinate. It is a patriarchal relationship whereby patronage and protection is given to the subordinate by the super-ordinate for as long as the subordinate accepts his inferior position in the relationship and does what the person in the superior position expects of him (Hollnsteiner).

"Compandrazgo" is also used by the Filipinos to forge relations between two families even without the "baptism" ritual. Two families or clans, either of equal or unequal wealth and power, are brought together into a situation wherein one does the other a big favor. This culminates in an unwritten and nonverbal pledge of mutual loyalty and protection and continued exchange of favors. This kind of exchange is how such a relationship begins and how it reinforces the system of patronage that is very much entrenched in the lives of the Filipinos (Hollnsteiner).

The system of patronage that arises from “compandrazgo” is both paternalistic and maternalistic. Paternalism relates to patriarchal protection for service and loyalty. Maternalism is a concept related to women’s supportive intra-familial roles of nurturing, loving, and attending to affective needs (Rollins, 1985). In the next section I illustrate, using the words of the employers and domestics, how the system of “compandrazgo” fuels the maternalism and paternalism in domestic service.

2-How Compangrazgo fuels Paternalism and Maternalism

a. Paternalism

Female employers in the city of Albay prefer to have in their households domestics who are "related" to them through "compandrazgo". Although there are cases where employers may hire someone "off the street", the usual process is to tap the pool of "kin" that are in the third ring. However, hiring someone from a market line or "off the street" may very well bring with it another extended "kin" wherein the entry of the domestic into the employer’s household marks the beginning of “compandrazgo” between the domestic and the employer and their respective families.

Mrs. Guzman, for instance, one of the employers with "wards" that go to school while working as her domestics, does not hire just anybody to be her helper in the house. She goes to the tenant farmers of her husband’s family.

The families are their “kin” by “compandrazgo”. Young couples like Mrs. Guzman and her husband refer to their domestics as siblings under their care but as Mrs. Guzman’s words reveal, they are still domestics who just happen to be connected to them through “compandrazgo”:

My maids call me "ate" (honorific term for older sister). You know we are all like one big family here with me and my husband as the eldest looking after our younger sisters which in this case are the maids who just happen to do all the housework.

Mrs. Guzman's domestic, Aleta, is the daughter of her husband's "saop" (farmer who is in charge of tilling one of the landowner's farmlands). Aleta joined her employer's household through the request of her employer's husband and with counter request from her own father that they help her finish high school and if possible get a college degree.

All the other domestics in Mrs. Guzman's household are daughters of their other tenant farmers and they have been with the family for five years or more. During my interview with Aleta, her loyalty to her employer's family was very much apparent. In fact she calls Mrs. Guzman her "ate" (meaning older sister since Mrs. Guzman is too young to be her "mother") and Mr. Guzman her "kuya" (older brother) and stated quite emphatically during the interview that she feels like a member of her employer's family and feels they treat her like one. In the context of "comandrazgo", Aleta and her family are indeed "related" to Mrs. Guzman's family. They are each other's third ring of kin.

Although both groups know they are not related by blood, maintaining their connection and cultivating their reciprocal relationship serves their respective nuclear families' interests. Mrs. Guzman and her husband have honored Aleta's father's request that she be allowed to study. For his part, Aleta's father has made the land he tills very productive and besides the usual rice harvest, has provided Mrs. Guzman's family with a steady supply of free fresh farm produce.

The relationship between these two families is that of a "superordinate" to a "subordinate". The farmer is forever bound to the landlord in "utangna-loob" (innermost

gratitude from the heart) and will do anything his landlord asks him to do to try to repay this debt of gratitude. The farmer, however, does not actually have the capacity to do so in exactly the same manner or amount if it is a cash credit. Therefore, being the "subordinate" in the relationship, this repayment lasts not only during his lifetime but extends for generations to come. The landlord then is always assured of a pool of bonded labor for his family and his household.

On the other hand, "comandrazgo" does give the farmer the assurance that he will have someone to turn to when he needs to borrow money, to facilitate hospitalization or medication for him and his family, and for any other problems that only his well-connected and rich landlord can help him with. The landlord will not hesitate to help his tenant farmers or the parents of the family domestics. But he does all these not entirely for altruistic reasons. He uses the process to enhance his own power over his tenants and to secure the interests of his own nuclear family. His actions bind the farmer and the farmer's family in gratitude to his own forever as part of their 3^d ring of kin. So when the female employer says her domestics are part of the family or like family, in terms of "comandrazgo" they are "family" however limited their privileges are.

Although she is the subordinate, the female domestic also takes advantage of "comandrazgo". One case that illustrates this is that of Brenda, a liveout domestic to an employer whose sons are lawyers and doctors. From her story, one of her teen-age sons had an altercation with an off-duty policeman and ended up in jail one night. That morning, when she found out that he had spent the night in jail and had been subjected to physical abuse by the policemen on duty, she immediately went to her employer's house to ask for help.

In Albay, it is very difficult and generally futile for someone in Brenda's position to go through the government channels. Without any help from people like her employers, her son would languish in jail for weeks and even months without medical help. It would be weeks before he could even have his day in court. However, her employer's sons provided her with the help she badly needed. Her employer's sons see her as extended family despite the fact that she is there as their helper. In one day her son was out of jail and received the medical attention that he needed.

"Comandrazgo" however has a price. Although she has a patron and a protector in her employer and her employer's sons, Brenda and her family for many generations to come are under obligation to be the domestics of her employer's family for as long as the latter need them. "Utang na loob" (debt of gratitude that cannot be repaid), a very highly valued virtue in the Philippines, comes with the process of "comandrazgo".

In the case of another domestic, Lucia, the system of patronage that comes with "comandrazgo" and the "utang-na-loob" that the domestic feels towards her employers binds Lucia and her family to Mrs. Pascual's family forever. Lucia started domestic servitude when she was only 7 years old. She has been with Mrs. Pascual ever since then. She grew up and got married while serving the latter's family. Mrs. Pascual stood as her sponsor during her wedding. Mr. Pascual, who is a very high-ranking elected official, found them jobs. Lucia's husband is a security guard at a local bank. Lucia works as a janitor in the government owned supermarket. Here is how Lucia describes her relationship with her employer and her employer's family:

I have been her laundry woman for 20 years. Right now, I do not get paid for any of my work. I do not mind really because her husband gave me my janitorial job at the market. I have no way of repaying them enough.

Lucia gets 1,000 pesos a month for her janitorial job. But she continues to do laundry, cook, do the marketing, and other domestic jobs at Mrs. Pascual's. In her own words:

So even if I am still cleaning the bathrooms at the market, when her driver is already outside telling me to hurry because she needs me to do some household work, I really have no choice but to come at once. There is really no limit to what I have to do. I just work, work, and work till I drop.

She also does laundry at her employer's daughter's own household and all these, with no wages at all since she got her market job. But she does not complain, because not only does she owe them unending gratitude, which she says she cannot repay, she also feels like they are her family. Mrs. Pascual echoes this family analogy in her answer to my question about how her family treats Lucia:

Lucia has been with us ever since she was single. She is trusted. She attends to the laundry. She knows me and she knows already what I want. Although she has a regular job now, she still comes. She knows the whole family. We treat her not as a maid anymore, but as a member of the family.

There is pride in her voice when she says "...although she (Lucia) has a regular job she still comes...". She sounds like she believes that Lucia comes to do domestic work for her willingly despite the fact that Lucia already has a janitorial job that actually pays her enough to live on. But from Lucia's account, when Mrs. Pascual sends her driver to wait for Lucia outside the supermarket with the message that she is expected to do household chores at the Pascuals', Lucia cannot say no.

Mrs. Pascual knows that Lucia has no choice but to come. Failure to do so could jeopardize the "compandrazgo" she and her husband have with her employer's family.

Since they got their jobs through the largesse of her employer then these jobs could easily be taken away. As a child I have seen this happen a lot. Obtaining these types of jobs is very much dependent on the patronage system. Bucking this system could mean losing one's job. For as long as Lucia and her husband behave in a manner pleasing to Mr. and Mrs. Pascual then they have benefactors they can appeal to when they have problems. As the wife of a very high-ranking elected official, Mrs. Pascual exerts a lot of influence in the city. Lucia's husband has had no secondary education and no training for the job but because they are related to the Pascuals through "comandrazgo", he got the job as security guard. Mrs. Pascual words below indicate that she and her husband will do what they can to help Lucia and her family:

I have recommended her husband a job at the bank. He is also close to us. All the problems of the family, they come to us.

The ambivalence in Mrs. Pascual's description of her maids' relationship with her kids is very telling of how employers in Albay view the domestic in terms of their own nuclear families. In her own words:

Our maids stay with us for years and years. It is really heartening to note that whenever we have the campaign, they come and help. I had a maid who took care of Roxanne for four years. I did not remember her anymore. But during the campaign time she came back. She told me she was my daughter's nanny and that her name was Karing. But that was 15 years ago. I told Roxanne this and said, look at her, she was your nanny when you were young. But you know although my kids have a closeness for the maids, I always see to it that there is a sort of barrier. Not because of status, no, no, no.

She considers them as part of her "third ring" whose main usefulness as she sees it is to be at the service of the core unit. Beyond that, she has no intention of extending to them the rights and privileges of a real family member- i.e. one who belongs to the core or primary unit. In fact she has to put up "barriers" between her own children and the female domestics. Although she denies the "status" distance she wants to maintain, this is exactly what she does. She cannot afford to dismantle the class inequalities that provide a continuous pool of lower class women willing to do housework for almost nothing. Otherwise, she, the employer becomes the domestic in her own household.

b. Maternalism

Like the "senoras" in Colombia who adopted a maternalistic attitude towards the Aymara women (Rubio and Taussig), and the "patronas" in Lima that considered their "muchachas" as their daughters, the female employers in Albay have the same attitude toward their female domestics. In the quote below Mrs. Pascual says that she treats the maids like her own children:

My kids who now have their own families, up to now they give old clothes to the maids. But that is also how you can keep them. I treat them like my own children.

Since they see their maids as part of the family, employers see themselves as protectors of these women. Mrs. Ibanez, an employer who runs a catering business, talks about what she does when her domestic or her domestic's children get sick:

When they get sick I pay for the medication. Also their kids. They are like family to me. Well, because they have been with me for a long time... When I see that their kids are sick I usually ask a doctor who is a family friend to examine them. Sometimes I even make the request when the doctor is here for a party. My doctor friends give my maids samples.

Besides the medical needs, Mrs. Ibanez also says that her maids' families have taken to coming over for visits especially during town fiestas.

During the town fiesta here, her whole family stays here. Before, when we had a small cottage in the back yard, I let her relatives use it whenever they came for a visit... And when Christmas time comes all of her family stay with me.

Some older employers cast themselves in the role of a parent to their domestics in situations where the domestic's parents are supposed to be in attendance. Mrs. Marabe relates how the husband of one of their maids (who became a liveout one after her marriage) had asked permission from Mrs. Marabe and her husband to marry Delia.

I am their parent you know. Well, especially with her. Her husband asked for her hand in marriage from my husband and I in our house.

Although Delia's parents are still living, this did not stop Mrs. Marabe from saying that she is Delia's parent. This is pervasive among my interviewees. Employers do not see anything wrong with assuming parental roles during important events in their domestics' lives. As Mrs. Arce, whose domestics are "inherited from my father's house", explains:

I had a helper who had been with us since from when she was 12 to when she was 29 years old. She really was like a part of the family... She went to high school and finished college when she was with me. So when she graduated, I marched with her during the commencement ceremonies because in that school the parents are also presented.

Delia's employer was presented as her "parent" at the ceremonies. I doubt though if her biological parents even questioned their daughter about this. They may actually have felt honored to have their "rich compadres" with their daughter during the graduation ceremony.

One proof that domestics view their female employers as their maternal protectors is that the domestics do not hesitate to take her employer's advice about important decisions concerning her future. Mrs. Reyes says this about her domestics who were toying with the idea of going to Manila to find work:

My maids listen to my advice. Like they wanted to go to Manila. So I told them they might earn more there. But if they get sick there will be no family to take care of them. They listen. They are like my younger sisters.

When the domestic (live-out) is married, the employer considers it part of her maternal role to settle family problems for her domestic. Mrs. Ibanez relates how she scolded Yolanda's husband about what he did with Yolanda's earnings:

I guess because I see them has my extended family. Even their own family's welfare I also attend to. Like for example, the spouse of one of my maids. She had a complaint about her husband. She said, "Mana, I really have no money today because my husband just spent what remained of my salary in gambling last night." So I told her to let her husband come and I proceeded to scold and lecture him. They listen because they have been with us for a long time.

Mrs. Ibanez went on to talk about how her domestic has over the years become part of the family so that even the Ibanez children see her as an adult in charge of disciplining them. She talks about Yolanda's relationship with her family:

She has been with us so long that she has gotten to feel at ease with us. She is really like a part of our family. She know about us. My children even are a bit afraid of her, you know. I really feel like she is a member of my family. She is very loyal to me.

Domestics, especially those who have been with the employer's family for ten or more years, do see the employer's family as their own. They become extremely loyal

despite the fact that they know that they are part of the family as domestics and nothing more. Rosa, the domestic that Mrs. Arce inherited when her father died and who is in her late 50's, is so loyal to Mrs. Arce that no matter how badly her employer's husband treats her she says she won't quit. This is what she says about her relationship with Mrs. Arce:

When we have a misunderstanding and I go home, she would at once send somebody to fetch me. So even when I answer her back after she scolds me, she still comes to get me. I guess because I've been with their family for years since her parents' time. Like when her husband does something like pushes food away because he is not satisfied with my cooking, and I tell her your husband is not a good person. She is the one who apologizes for his behavior. She asks me to forgive his actions and begs me not to leave. Well, I reassure her by telling her not to worry because as long as I am able I'll always be there for her. I see her and her siblings, who also have their own families as my own and as my friends. . . . Like I also cook for her brother's family and I tell her you know I will divide my time between your households because you are both dear to me. I care for you equally. And you know I don't really have a fixed salary. They just give me any amount every time.

In this case a form of reverse maternalism occurs. The older domestic adapts a maternalistic attitude towards her younger employer.

When I was doing my interview, I noticed that Rosa was actually the supervisor of all the other domestics in the house who are all very much younger than she was. I concluded that since she has been with Mrs. Arce's family from her parents' time, she has gotten used to running the household for her employer. Watching her giving orders to the other maids and the fact that they did not question her authority shows that this is something that Mrs. Arce approves of. Otherwise the rest of the household staff would not obey her and would probably tell their employer about the situation. The fact that Rosa

says her employer “apologizes” to her and “begs” her to come back whenever there is some kind of misunderstanding, indicates that she occupies a unique position in Mrs. Arce’s household. According to Mrs. Arce, “she is like a member of my family” and “I cannot do without her.”

Conclusion and Reflections:

Use of the family analogy is universal among the 25 female employer-female domestic dyads in Albay. Although these women appear to be ambivalent about their treating each other “like one of the family”, and seem to be contradicting themselves when using the family analogy, this is not the case.

When the domestic states that she feels “like part of the family” but she does not participate in any discussion about “their family” she is not contradicting herself. Most of these domestics started serving their employers when they were children. Some were barely seven-year olds. Having been removed at a very young age from their own families, their desire to belong to a group drives the domestics to say they feel “like one of the family” even when they understand that their position in the household is that of a servant and nothing more.

Use of the family analogy also gives the domestics a “reason” for enduring the oppressive working conditions that they are subjected to by their employers. They know they do not control their working situation and in effect their lives while in their employer’s household. So to them, the only way to keep their sanity is to feel that they belong and say that they are part of the “family”. Rufina, who works for Mrs. Marale, states without any fear or hesitation that “they treat their dogs better than they treat me”, but at the same time she emphasizes that she feels “like a part of the family”.

None of the domestics say that they are family. Their actual statement in the dialect translates into the English phrase “like family” or “part of the family” but never “I am family” or “we are family”. This is a significant distinction that the domestics make. They accept their position in the household as part of the family in the context of “companrazgo” and know that they are “related” not by blood but by patronage. The employer is the “patron” who was kind enough to take them in exchange for domestic servitude.

There is also no ambivalence on the part of the employers. Like their domestics, the employers never say that the domestic is family but just “like part of the family” or “a part of the family”. They view the domestics as part of the household and that when people in their position start having a family, domestics become necessities. Domestics are part of their outer kinship ring in the context of “companrazgo”, but not anywhere near the first or second kinship circles. This is why the employers say that it is very important to put up “barriers” between their family and the domestics. Their domestics are part of their kinship groups only as members of the outer circle and can never be allowed anywhere closer than that.

Based on the words of the employer and domestics that I interviewed, I conclude that use of the family analogy only serves to keep social distance and to cement class inequalities in a society. It serves no other purpose than to give the employers a “legitimate” reason to exploit their domestics and at the same time give the domestics a reason to endure the oppressive conditions they are subjected to by their employers. The phrase serves as a barrier between the employer class and the class of domestics.

CHAPTER VII

“...Like a Special Commodity...” (Domestic as Property)

Introduction:

In the book Remembering Slavery (Berlin, Favreau, and Miller, 1998), the first chapter opens with this paragraph:

Slavery, a social system that defined men and women as things, vested owners with enormous power over those they owned. Southern slave holders – “masters” and “mistresses,” as they liked to be known – enjoyed full command over the slaves’ labor and nearly unchecked power over their person. Owners could buy and sell slaves as they saw fit, for any reason or no reason at all. They could beat, whip, and physically abuse their slaves with virtual impunity.Owners dictated where and how the slaves lived, how they worked and played, and with whom they associated.

This quote is about slavery in the United States during the 19th century. While there are enormous differences between the slaves in the United States during the 19th century and the female domestics in the Philippines today, some of what I saw during my fieldwork and when I was growing up in the Philippines remind me a lot of what this paragraph describes. Slaves were forced into slavery while domestics, although their economic situation leaves them with fewer and sometimes no alternative at all, do still have the option of not becoming one or simply quitting. In the United States during the 1800s entire families of slaves were broken up and sold separately when the slaveholders chose to do so (Berlin, Favreau and Miller, 1998). Female domestics can go back to their own families when they are fired or if they chose to quit domestic service. But in varying degrees and in

different levels of intensity, the ways employers treat their female domestics are reminiscent of how masters treated their slaves. Except for the words “slavery”, “owners” and “slaves”, the paragraph quoted above could be a description of domestic servitude in the Philippines today. The new version goes like this:

In domestic servitude, the female domestics are defined as property - objects at their disposal by female employers who possess enormous power over the women they hire. These female employers enjoy full command over their domestics' labor and nearly unchecked power over their person. Employers can lend, give away as gifts, inherit, share, and draw lots over their domestics as they saw fit. They fire them for any reason or no reason at all. They can beat, whip, and physically and verbally abuse their domestics with virtual impunity. Employers dictate where and how the domestics live, how they work and play, and with whom they associate.

With the revision the quote describes what happens to domestics because they are defined as property by their employers. But how does one person become the “property” of another? The process by which most of these women enter domestic servitude or become domestics gives rise to this view.

Among the 25 female domestics I interviewed, 2 began at 7 years of age and more than half were working as domestics before they even reached their 15th birthday. On their initial entry into domestic work at a very young age, most of my interviewees do not recall having any contact with the female employer before the first day of service. If there were any negotiations at all about wages and other conditions of service, these were done without their presence and most of them had no idea about wages and other terms agreed

upon between their employer and their parents or other relatives who offered them up for service.

The younger the domestic is, the greater is the chance that she does not receive any compensation especially if her employers are distant relatives or owners of the land her parents till. If there happens to be some compensation it is very rare for her to collect her wages herself or at the very least to know exactly how much her monthly wages are. It is common for the parents or an older sibling of an unmarried young domestic to make a trip to the city every month to collect her wages or to get cash advances for up to 2 or 3 months. Since her parents have no other method by which to pay the employers, the young rural girl becomes the collateral for their parents' debts. In most cases the payment goes on forever and the domestic does not have the ability to get out of it. In this sense, domestic service becomes a form of human bondage. A human being actually becomes the "property" of another.

In this chapter I focus on the causes and effects of this conception of another person as "property" that makes domestic service akin to slavery. I explore, through the words and actions of the employers and those of the domestics, how the domestic becomes objectified as the property of the employer. I examine the connection between this objectification and the invisibility of the domestic as a person in her own right. I look at the physical and verbal abuse that domestics are subjected to as a result of the employers' disregard for the personhood of their domestics and of their belief that their domestics are their possessions and therefore they, the employers, can enjoy rights of ownership as of a master over his slave, with impunity.

This chapter is divided into 4 sections. In **Section I**, I examine how domestics become the “property” of their employers. I demonstrate through the words and behavior of the women I interviewed that female employers do consider their female domestics as their property – a special commodity that they have proprietary rights over. In **Section II**, I focus on the abuse a domestic is subjected to because of the employer’s perception of the domestic as her property and how this perception gives her a sense of ownership and entitlement. In **Section III**, I look at how the person that is the domestic becomes invisible despite their conspicuous presence all over their employer’s household at all times of the day. In **Section IV**, I look at the employer’s immense and unchecked control over her domestic’s personal life. I close the chapter with my Conclusion and Reflections.

I- Domestic as Commodity and as Disposable Property

Not one of the employers in Albay says outright that a domestic is a piece of property. Yet, their actions and their words show that they believe they have ownership rights over the women who do housework for them. To the employer, as soon as the domestic enters servitude in her home, she becomes an object or a commodity– a piece of property for the employer’s possession, and to be at her disposal as she the “owner” sees fit. The employer takes full command of her labor and has nearly unchecked powers over her person.

Mrs. Faelnar, Rita’s employer, uses the phrase “like a special commodity” when she explains why she must always have a domestic. She is a very sought after lawyer, and therefore cannot attend to her children and her household duties herself without a retinue of

domestics to do her bidding. For her, the absence of a domestic would mean her taking time off from her job which of course means loss of income. Therefore, according to her:

My maid is like a special commodity for me...
I am willing to spend money just to have them
around... Three hundred pesos is a small
amount to pay.

Three hundred pesos is certainly a pittance compared to the thousands that she will forfeit if she does her household chores herself. Therefore, her female domestic is indeed a “special commodity”. Juxtapose this statement with what she says she looks for in a domestic and her policy towards firing of domestics and it becomes even clearer that she regards domestics as consumables in her life:

When they come to our house I tell them what to do and what not to do. If they are good they will adjust to what I want. When I notice that they do not accept my wishes... like a rebellion ... I let them go home at once. That very moment, I do not delay. I do not ask questions.

Her view of the domestic as a commodity no matter how special, allows her to dismiss a domestic whenever she wants to without even giving the domestic any chance to defend herself. Since there are so many impoverished women in Albay that would do anything to survive, Mrs. Faelnar knows that as soon as she dismisses one, there is always another one ready to take her place. From her actions and words, it looks like Mrs. Faelnar regards domestics as commodities that can be returned or disposed of in any way they please - like a pair of shoes that you take back to the store when you change your mind about their fit and style.

An employer's sense of ownership over her domestic makes her believe that she has every right to dispose of her domestic when and how she wants to. Her property is at her disposal and therefore she can do what she wishes to do with "it".

Domestics as Gifts and as Inherited Property

The oppressiveness of this sense of ownership I equate with slavery when the employer, without hesitation or thought that the domestic is a person, gives her domestic away as a wedding gift or includes her maid as an item in her will that her children will inherit. Mrs. Arce attests to this common practice among many rich families when she proudly talks of Rosa as the maid "...that I inherited from my father's house." She explains further:

She was my parents'. She was not really mine.
When my mother left for the states....my
father had died by then...she was left to me.

Another employer, Mrs. Reyes who is newly married, considers Gloria a very special wedding gift when she says

She was my mother's maid. When I got married she was
given to me by my mother. My mother thought I
should have something from home. A very special
wedding present.

In this case, Gloria, the domestic is like a favorite toy that a child needs to have with her so she does not get homesick when she is far from home. This is the way Mrs. Reyes talks about Gloria – like a favorite teddy bear that Mrs. Reyes's mother chose to send off with her when she left home.

When Mrs. Marabe and her younger sister got married one year after each other their mother gave them permission to pick any of the domestics from her own house for service in the new households. When both daughters wanted the same childhood nanny to

stay with them, they merely drew lots to see who gets her. She laughs when she recalls the situation:

You know who my ideal maid is ? The one who was my mommy's personal maid. She has been with my family for years and years. My sister and I had to draw lots on who would get her

Deciding the fate of a domestic by lottery leaves no doubt that the employers view the domestic as a piece of property - a thing. The way she related this incident punctuated by giggles and laughter, gives the idea that Mrs. Marabe does not see anything wrong with what her family did. She was laughing and rolling her eyes at how lucky her sister was to have their mom's personal maid.

In another case, Sylvia, together with her husband and their daughter were disposed of as part of an estate. When her original employer died, as part of her employer's last will and testament, she was told that she was going to serve her employer's son and his family.

There is not resentment in her voice when she says:

I was the maid of her husband's mother. When she died I was told to come here.

Sylvia has been with three generations of the clan. She was the personal maid of Mrs. Enriquez's husband's mother. As a young child she became the playmate and eventually nanny for Mr. Enriquez and his siblings when they were young. When the matriarch died, Mr. Enriquez inherited everything including Sylvia and her family. Note that she was never asked if she wanted to continue serving as the younger Mrs. Enriquez's maid. She was simply moved to the household of the next generation. Now that Mr. Enriquez' own children are married, Sylvia also doubles as a nanny for his new set of grandchildren.

Lending and Sharing Domestic

Lucia experienced how it is to be defined as “property” by one’s employer when she was only 13 years old. Now, as a 45 year-old domestic, she recalls her pain at how severely she was exploited. Here is her story:

I was lent to my female employer’s friend.
Three people in that household– a doctor,
an attorney and their aged father. My main
chore was giving them a massage every evening.
That was difficult. I was only 13 years old. Then
when her daughter got married I was transferred.
I was passed on from one house to another. Like
a pot that gets borrowed around the neighborhood.
Like a rattan that keeps getting chopped into
Pieces.

Lucia leaves us in no doubt about her awareness of her exploited condition. Her words show her awareness of her being treated as a piece of property. Unfortunately, Lucia’s fate has not changed over the years. Now working for Mrs. Pascual, she is also lent to all of Mrs. Pascual’s grown-up kids’ families.

Sharing, borrowing or lending domestics is a common practice among households of daughters and their mothers, and between siblings. Mrs. Marabe for instance only has one all-around help. But every day her mother sends her own cook to prepare lunch and supper and her mother’s laundrywoman comes twice a week to wash and iron clothes.

Although my interviews reveal that these domestics do not like being treated this way, not one of them said that they have complained or are going to complain to their employers. This is only possible if they either believe that they do not think have a right to complain to their employers or feel that complaining will not change their situation, so why bother. They feel that their only alternative is to abide by their employer’s wishes.

II-Physical and Verbal Abuse

Employers, knowing that the women who do housework for them have no other alternative but to accept whatever working conditions are given to them, do not hesitate to use verbal and sometimes physical abuse for the flimsiest of reasons. Clara, who is now 52 years old, was only 7 years old when she experienced the worst of what happens because employers consider domestics their personal property. There is pain in her voice when she recalls how she was treated:

I was only 7 years old...She was some sort of a distant aunt, so I had no wages...I took care of the baby, washed and ironed clothes, cleaned the house, cooked and all kinds of chores. But one day, I was preparing the baby's formula when she got hold of a bottle of tincture of iodine and splashed it all over herself. As soon as my aunt's husband learned about it, he at once got a leather belt and whipped me with the buckled end.

According to Clara, it is not unusual for employers to use physical punishment for mistakes that domestics make. Mrs. Nunez, for instance, relates what happened to her domestic, Charita, when she got caught stealing. According to her, Charita was "slapped the domestic and punished her severely..", by one of Mrs. Nunez's daughter. The expression on Mrs. Nunez's face and her voice and manner made it clear to anyone looking at her and listening to her voice that she believes Charita deserved to be punished and that her daughter was within her rights as employer to remind Charita not so much that what she did was wrong but more importantly to remind her of the power her employer has over her. What is sad about this incident is that there was no proof that Charita stole any money

at all. What if she did not do it? I gather that it did not matter. If the employer says the domestic did it, then the domestic did it- no questions asked, end of discussion.

Another employer, Mrs. Enriquez, scheduled our interview right before her grandson's birthday so that, according to her, I could meet her friends during the party and she could explain to her friends why I was in the Philippines. I was a little taken aback with this machination, but to her credit she was instrumental in my getting more employers to interview.

During our conversation Mrs. Enriquez asked Sylvia to phone someone. Sylvia either did not have the correct phone number or did not know how to use the phone. She bungled the whole process. Most of the guests had already arrived so when she called Sylvia "Stupid!" it was in front of everyone assembled. But she did not stop there. She scolded Sylvia rather severely. She did this in a voice for everyone in the room to hear - the guests, and all the domestics who were standing by in their uniforms and aprons.

When you do not have any high expectations from someone you are saying this person is not capable of any higher brain function besides cleaning and dusting. What could be more humiliating than dismissing a person's wages as pittance and as better than starving? Her demeanor when she was talking about her domestics was quite revealing. She was saying in her face, voice and manner "See what I have to put up with!"

The time it would have taken for Mrs. Enriquez to teach Sylvia how to use the phone would have been shorter than the amount of time wasted in yelling and calling the domestic names. It is also ironic that the employer on one hand dismisses the wage earned by the domestic as a pittance and makes an issue of how low her expectations are but at the same time expects her to use a gadget that she has not used before.

However, what struck me as quite significant about this incident was the matter of fact way Mrs. Enriquez berated her domestic. There was no hint of embarrassment about having her guests be a party to her treatment of her domestic. What was more interesting was the nonchalant reaction this elicited from her friends. They were either trying to be polite about it or her guests did the same thing with their own domestics and therefore an incident like this is just too common to pay attention to. Furthermore, if Sylvia is assigned to do laundry, the only reason I could think of as to why she was told to make a phone call and also why she was in a white uniform catering to the guests, is that Mrs. Enriquez expects her to be at her service at any time and for whatever she wants her to do.

My interview with Sylvia reveals that she is not oblivious to how Mrs. Enriquez views the domestic staff. She does not like being treated like she is stupid or has no feelings at all. She is very angry and upset when she says:

Actually, here, especially during parties we get to be the conversation pieces. She tells her friends, and this is while we're serving dinner, that we are stupid. That's what makes me feel so lowly. Why should she do that? It's like we have no feelings at all because we are like this?

Like Sylvia, most of the other female domestics I interviewed are very much aware of the way their employers view them. They are not happy with being treated like a piece of furniture or property. Rosa, the 65-year old domestic Ms. Arce "inherited" from her father complains about being treated like she was without any brains at all:

She is like a daughter to me. But you know, just between the two of us. I really do not want to complain. But I hate it when she starts treating me like.. you know... like I had no brains.

As a young single working woman in the Philippines, I saw how people who I would consider good and law-abiding Catholics forget that domestics are people too. I was

a houseguest of a close friend of mine and her husband. They had 3 children at that time. The oldest, a girl, was about 10 years old, the second was another girl about 8 years old and the youngest a boy of about 6 or 7 years of age. The reason I am emphasizing the ages of their children is that they also had 3 domestics, 2 girls and 1 boy who were not much older than their own kids. The oldest domestic could not have been much older than 11 or 12 years of age. The other female domestic was also about 12 years old and the boy who was the sibling of the oldest looking girl was only 9 years old.

I was able to observe these three subjected to extreme verbal abuse punctuated by some physical abuse over an entire weekend. These 3 children domestics were doing laundry by hand, ironing clothes, waxing and mopping the floor, cooking rice, serving the meal and cleaning up afterwards. But my friend kept talking about them as if they could not do anything right. As in the case of the employers I interviewed for my research, it seemed not to bother her at all whether they were within earshot or not. The frequency and the intensity of verbal abuse these three domestics were subjected to even with me there as a guest left me in no doubt that it could only have been worse without the presence of an outsider.

I noticed that when I woke up to take a walk at about 7 in the morning, these three were already up and about doing their chores. They were also still up attending to our needs late into the night while we watched midnight movies.

During subsequent visits I noticed more and more of the dynamics of the household. The house had rooms for everyone but I did not see any bedroom designated for these three. They spread their straw mats in the kitchen floor to sleep on during the night. For every infraction like a broken plate or a shirt still having wrinkled edges, these

domestics were hit on the head and called a moron or stupid. I recall being so uncomfortable with this but I was a guest and I did not want to interfere with how they managed their household. I wonder what I would have done if the domestics got seriously hurt. One observation I found disturbing involved the eldest child of my friend and the oldest domestic. I noticed that when the oldest child needed a pair of socks, she called one of the domestics to get it for her. This girl happened to be sitting on the bed right next to her dresser where her socks were. But the domestic who was busy with other chores came and got it for her anyway. The child's behavior towards their domestic did not surprise me. Children in Albay are socialized to view domestics in much the same way as their parents do.

Ofelia, a maid who works for Mrs. Ibanez, summarizes the reaction of these domestics to the physical and verbal abuse they get from their employers:

I just finished grade 2, so this is where
I can only be – a maid. Nothing more.....
So even when they use foul language on me
What can I do ? I get treated like an animal. But
What else is there ? I just have to endure this to
survive.

Ofelia's words show that domestics are aware of how badly their employers treat them.

III-The Invisibility of the Person

During my interviews with the female employers, the female domestics in the household were in plain sight whether they were in their white uniforms or not. Some were serving us tea, others were dusting in an adjacent room, and some were watering the plants. Others were standing nearby ready for whatever their employer needed.

Although domestics were always in attendance, employers behaved as if they were invisible. The female employers showed no hesitation at all in talking about them disparagingly and in some instances telling me how stupid their help were within their domestics' hearing distance. Some employers referred to the domestic like they were included as participants in our conversation but did so like they were showing me their latest furniture or household appliance purchase. Mrs. Nunez for instance, summoned the domestic she wanted me to interview and introduced her without even mentioning her name.

However, never once during our interview did Mrs. Nunez refer to Charita by name. Mrs. Nunez talked about the faults and mistakes Charita made like Charita was either not present or deaf. Charita remained standing there like a specimen for inspection while her employer told me that she wasn't sure the interview would help me at all since her domestic was rather stupid. In the Albay dialect the words for "this one" are the same words used by a seller and a buyer for a piece of commodity that they are negotiating the price of.

Domestics are not oblivious to their invisibility. Although they are over burdened with chores from dawn till midnight, a lot of their complaints about domestic service are focused more on their being treated like they are invisible. For instance, Rita, a very personable 23 year old who went into domestic service to save money for a college education, believes her female employer loads her with chores and pays her very low wages. But she does not complain about these at all. Instead she tells me that what hurts most about working for Mrs. Faenar is being treated constantly "...like we are not there."

She treats us like we are not there. She does not even really speak to us except when we make

mistakes, then she shouts at us like that. Sometimes I feel she does not see us as people too....
.....But what can I really do? I just cry.

In the first part of this passage, Rita sounds angry. She had that angry look on her face that revealed without a doubt her awareness of her invisibility and her dislike at being treated as such. Her statement that her employer “does not see us as people too” is very telling of her desire to be treated as a person and not just a fixture in her employer’s house. Her resignation at how powerless she is to change the situation is well communicated when she says at the end of the passage, “But what can I really do? I just cry.” Her voice breaks as she tries to stop herself from crying in front of me.

When I asked Rita for a specific situation in which she gets treated like a non person, she cites an incident with a peddler:

She does not hesitate to talk about us. Like there was a peddler who sold houseware. She just told him she cannot buy them because her servants are not responsible, and won’t know how to use them. For me, I do not like it because, I think if she does not want to buy those things, why not just say so instead of using us? But no, she makes us into some kind of conversation piece.

Rita hates the idea of being a “conversation piece”. But the invisibility of Rita and the other domestics in the household begins during the hiring process. Her employer, Mrs. Faelnar, does not want to meet or interview a would-be domestic. She does not care at all for the “person”. She has a dismissive tone in her voice when she says, “I do not choose. If they can adjust to what I want...”

When I pressed her about this she repeated that she has no interest in getting to know her domestics. When she explained her hiring and firing policies she added that she

does what she does because “...I do not have time to deal with someone else’s moods.” All she needs is that housework gets done. For Mrs. Faelnar, the person that is her domestic does not matter. Viewing the domestic as such validates her actions. It then makes it okay to disregard the domestic’s feelings and reactions to how she is treated.

The situation of Clara, a “kabulig” who was hired by Mrs. Bando to be the nanny of her newborn baby, is another example of how an employer treats her domestic as a non-person. Mrs. Bando herself admits that although she had told Clara at the beginning that she was to take care of her baby, she does not see any reason for Clara to complain about the additional duties she has been given. Mrs. Bando’s invalid father lives with them and she has since then added one chore for Clara to do – be the caregiver for Mrs. Bando’s father. Her voice and her facial expression does not show any sign of regret or even pity for Clara who has to throw away both the baby’s and old man’s bodily wastes several times a day. Her attitude shows through her words when she says:

She does not like taking care of my father. My father lives with us. He is very old. She does not like going into his room to dispose of his bodily wastes. She hates that....but.

Mrs. Bando says “but” with the shrug and nonchalant manner of someone who does not think much about what her domestic likes or does not like to do. Even if Clara was never told at the time she was hired about the presence of the old man and of her responsibility for disposing of his bodily wastes, this has not stopped Mrs. Bando from expecting Clara to do so. In my interview with Clara, she did not hesitate to say that she can hate the unpleasant chore all she wants but she has to do it. Clara does not like the situation but she feels powerless to change it. There is resignation in her voice when she explains:

I do not care really. I cannot do anything. I have so many problems that I just do not think about them anymore. Some times you know you can feel that you are taken advantaged of. Sometimes my body cannot take it anymore. But I do not know what else to do. I may not like what I am told to do, but I just work.

This situation with Clara and Mrs. Bando is very important for our discussion in this chapter. In an earlier chapter (i.e. *The Women and the Relationships*), I discussed that the relationship between Mrs. Bando and Clara is that of a supervisor¹ and had concluded that in this relationship there is more openness and trust between the two women. Mrs. Bando's words and behavior indicates that even in the most egalitarian of female employer-female domestic relationships, the employer still views her domestic as her property.

IV-Power Over Domestics' Personal Lives

An employer who believes that she can give away her domestic as a wedding present or as an inheritance won't see anything wrong with exercising control over her domestic's personal life. Mrs. Cortez for instance, has a ward who studies in another school. In the beginning of the school year, Violeta used to just go to a nearby cafeteria to have lunch since it was too far and too hot for her to walk from her school to where Mrs. Cortez works. But when Mr. and Mrs. Cortez found out that there were men who frequented the place they put a stop to the practice at once. Mrs. Cortez explains:

In the beginning since she is studying in another school, I thought it might better be for her to just bring her own lunch to school so she does not have to walk every mid-day to my office. But then one day when she told us that there were many males who frequented that cafeteria, my husband said that I should put a stop to that practice at once because he was sure those men

will be after her in no time.

It is possible that the employer's reaction in this situation came out of concern for the domestic's welfare. But it does not erase the fact that an employer believes that she has every right to control who her domestic associates with. Mrs. Cortez has not given Violeta, who is in college, the chance to make her own decisions.

Mrs. Dajoya, a college professor who takes pride in the fact that she has sent several domestics to college while they were with her, does not hesitate to dismiss a "ward" as soon as they displease her. If the ward "goes out of line" she has to go.

During my interview with her I found out that a year before my fieldwork she dismissed a "ward" because of "religious differences". She describes this particular ward as very industrious and very responsible. The ward was on her last year in college and would have gotten a degree, except for one single mistake. According to Mrs. Dajoya, her ward was becoming more and more carried away with her observance of religious practices, which were not Roman Catholic and therefore conflicted with what Mrs. Dajoya and her family believed in. This, according to Mrs. Dajoya was not acceptable. So she dismissed the ward, claiming that since she chose to go her own way about religion, then she might as well be on her own.

Had Marla converted to Catholicism she would have been able to continue pursuing a teaching degree. Since she did not agree with the religion Mrs. Cortez wanted her to practice, she did not get to graduate. To be sure that she gets a Catholic domestic, Mrs. Cortez now asks every potential ward, her religious affiliation.

As I went from interview to interview, their words, their facial expressions and their voices all indicated that these employers really believe they have every right to control the

lives of their domestic. Far from showing any embarrassment or hesitation, they were proud of it and talked with satisfaction in their voices. Mrs Nunez for instance, whose daughter is a professor in the university, while talking about a former ward, was sure that her daughter showed “the ingrate” that she cannot just do what she did without tasting their wrath. Her words are very chilling when she relates:

I have always sent them to school. The last one stayed five years here. Now she is a teacher. But when she finished her course work, that was in October, she wanted to go look for a job at once. But I told her no. She just decided that it was time for her to go. So one morning she just left. But she did not realize that we can stop her from getting a job. My daughter went to see her. She was already back in her mother’s house. My daughter told her, I came not to get you back but to let you know that you have made a big mistake. If you did this to a mere janitor... but now you will get a taste of my anger. Her mother was crying and asking for forgiveness. But my daughter was so mad, she went to the university and told all her teachers and the registrar not to release her grades and her transcripts. Well, her mother came. She came and asked to be forgiven. She told me she was willing to come back and be my domestic. I told her, you know you are an ingrate. I sent you to school. You were allowed time-off during the day. I sent her to my other daughter. They were so mad that she had the nerve to treat me like that. My daughter did what I could not do. She slapped her around and hit her several times while making her understand that she could not do what she did to any member of our family..... Well, in the end I did allow her to get her transcript. Now she is teaching in a school somewhere.

The intensity of the physical and verbal abuse is terrifying. This passage demonstrates an employer’s belief that she owns the domestic and has control over the domestic’s life. This particular domestic had already graduated by the end of the first

semester. She had asked permission from her employers if she could be released so she could apply for a teaching job. But her employer was only going to release her when she was good and ready to let go of her. This is a very good example of how an employer has unchecked powers over their domestic's personal lives. This is also a good example of how the society looks at the rights of employers to control their domestics. For the other professors to withhold her grades and for the registrar to agree not to release her transcripts, this group of educated people with graduate degrees must also believe that Mrs. Nunez was within her rights to do what she did.

I know Mrs. Nunez very well. If someone had told me this story I would have just told the person that she/he was lying. I thought the Mrs Nunez I know would never do such a thing to another human being. She goes to daily mass. Her daughter is a very respectable member of the college community where she works. People know her as very fair-minded. Given these traits the only conclusion I can deduce is that she views her domestic as her personal property over which she has absolute control.

Mrs. Nunez and her daughters told me the story. Mrs. Nunez, while narrating this incident, did not show any indication that she expected me to think otherwise. Her words made clear her belief that she was within her rights to treat her domestic the way she did, that her domestic deserved to be treated that way. Is it possible that if I did not leave the Philippines, I would have been a party to this treatment of another human being? These employers do not consider domestics as people but as property to be used in any way one pleases.

People behave within the realities of their lives. Maybe I would have agreed to withhold the domestic's grades had I been in the same situation. These people who agreed

to withhold the grades are my friends and colleagues and I remember them to be good and law abiding Catholics. As I reiterated many times in this chapter, the only way these employers and perhaps I myself can treat these domestics this way, is to view these women as non-persons and as one's personal property.

Another employer, Mrs. Ortiz, has become very strict with her domestics. She says that after one domestic ran away to get married, she has decided to have strict rules for boyfriends and going out on Sundays. She says:

This one has been here for more than a year now. They only leave when they get married. That is why I have restricted their going out.

When I asked her how the domestic that got married met her boyfriend here is what she says happened:

When one left because she eloped, my husband, ...you know he is very strict...he does not like any of them having boyfriends because they might get pregnant...so she just decided to run away....you know she just asked permission to go home for a visit...So I said okay. That is what I resented because she did not let me see any baggage....of course because she was planning to elope. Usually she lets me inspect her bag. That is a practice we have...I did have some suspicion because she had a boyfriend...I think she threw her other clothes out the window. I kind of got hurt. because you know..I treat them well....But on the other hand, I really do not blame her. ...because...you know...if she had come to ask permission that she was going to get married..you know I would not have allowed her to.

All I could think of as I listened to her during the interview and when I was listening to the tapes afterwards was, "When did an employer have the right to control a

domestic's life?" But that is precisely what this employer believes she has— the right to control her domestic's life. When she says that she felt hurt that the domestic did not tell her, she sounded resentful. But she immediately countered this by saying that she does not really blame her domestic because had she known, she would not have allowed her to get married. She is not the parent of the domestic and at that time the domestic was already 18 years old. She was old enough to get married without parental permission. But these two facts did not stop Mrs. Ortiz from believing that she had every right to stop the domestic from starting her own family.

Minda, who has been Mrs. Quito's cook for more than 21 years, feels that her employer has too much control over her but cannot do anything about it. During the interview she talks of being depressed and of having no meaning in her life. She sounds like a person who feels that life is just passing her by. She missed out on lifecycle stages that most women in the Philippines accept is part of what life is all about. She says:

If it is not a sin against God to ask for eternal rest, I do feel like I want to....sometimes I feel like my life has lost its meaning. I am so tired of living....I do want to farm if I could. I would like to buy a piece of land ...I want to raise pigs. so if I ask permission from her and she says yes, I will. But you know, every time I broach this topic, she gets irritated....I know she doesn't like it...So I stop talking about it. I do want to move on, have a family and piggery....because being a cook here ? ..there is no future in it....just forever a cook.

At this point, Minda's voice trails off while she puts up her hands in surrender. When she started crying I just waited for her to compose herself. When she was done she repeated her frustration at trying to talk to Mrs. Quito about her plans. Mrs. Quito, according to Minda, changes the topic or ignores that she has said something about

quitting, for the past 10 years. When I asked why she didn't just say she was quitting, she explained that her entire family actually owes a lot to Mrs. Quito and that Mrs. Quito has been the family benefactor forever. She explains:

She is good to all of us....When my mother died she paid for everything. She treats me well....When we have a misunderstanding, I apologize at once. Of course I humble myself because she and her sons are my masters.you do not try to get even even if you are right. Since you are the domestic you ought to know your place. Even if you have some solid argument, you just keep quiet so you do not have any problem.

Minda calls Mrs. Quito and Mrs. Quito's sons her masters. Mrs. Quito, for her part, has been very generous. In fact, Minda is the highest paid of all the 25 domestics I interviewed and has retirement and medical benefits paid for.

What is ironic about her retirement benefits is she probably will be allowed to retire when she can no longer farm or open a piggery or any of the other things she wants to do. Also, Minda does not realize that Mrs. Quito believes that she will stay with her forever. I gather that Mrs. Quito thinks that since she has provided for her domestic's retirement, Minda will keep on being her chief cook until she is too old to do it. In Minda's case, the added benefits are in reality effective tools set up by her employer to bar her from asserting her right to quit and move on with her life.

Another extreme case of control is that of Lucia. Lucia, whose husband got a job as security guard in a local bank through the largesse of her employer, Mrs. Pascual, is like Minda, not oblivious to her employer's control over her life. Through Mrs. Pascual's husband, who is a powerful politician in the city of Albay, Lucia herself has been given a regular paid job as janitor in the local market. Since she got the job a year ago, Mrs.

Pascual has stopped paying her for her domestic service, but her workload has doubled- janitor in the market and domestic for Mrs. Pascual and her family.

Mrs. Pascual can easily find another domestic to take Lucia's place. But she does not want to let go of her trusted domestic. Lucia wants to be able to just go home and be with her kids after she finishes her work at the market. She says that her wages as janitor plus her husband's salary as security guard is enough to keep her family fed and clothed. But she knows that she is risking Mrs. Pascual's ire if she stops coming to do laundry, ironing, marketing and cooking for the family. Mrs. Pascual even controls when she can call it a day so she can go home and take care of her own family.

My conversations with the female employers indicate that they are very much aware of their power and control over their domestics' lives. Despite such statements as "I cannot live without my domestics." or "My domestic is so precious to me." or "My day would be ruined if she left.", female employers do not hesitate to dismiss a domestic for such infractions as "talking back to me or my children.", "showing signs of rebelliousness..", "gossiping with the neighbors..", "staying at her church longer than I told her to..", "entertaining friends whom I do not know." Mrs. Faelnar puts this across very well when she says:

If a maid answers back, especially if it is like fighting back or rebelling against my wishes, I let her go home at once. That very moment I tell her to pack up and go. I do not ask questions anymore. I do not have the time to deal with someone else's moods. So, I do not beg anyone to stay. I just let them go at once.

Teresa, a ward working for Mrs. Kabesa sums up an employer's unchecked power over the domestic when she says:

Of course, even if your employer is good and she gives you this privilege of going to school, you can feel that

she controls your every action. Here, even if I am tired, of if I don't think the command is fair, I cannot really say anything. I just obey.

Teresa is a distant step-cousin who, being an "illegitimate" offspring of a liaison between a maid and a female employer's husband, was raised by the sister of Mrs. Kabesa's step grandmother. Before the step-grandmother died, Teresa was given to Mrs. Kabesa to be her female domestic. Part of the turnover arrangement was a promise by Mrs. Kabesa to send Teresa through college in return for services as a domestic in her household. Although it sounds like Teresa is better off than the ordinary domestic in terms of having a chance at a college education, in her own words in the quote above she realizes that she really is at the mercy of her employer.

Conclusion and Reflections:

The invisibility of the domestic as a person is crucial to the employer's belief that the domestic is her property. Although the domestics in Albay can be seen doing chores all over the house at all hours of the day, employers are so used to the results of their labor that they become oblivious to the domestics who work hard to do them. The house is always clean, meals appear at dinner time, and chores are done as if by magic. The domestics are like house elves of the Harry Potter books. They do their chores and then disappear into the furniture. Domestics become like furniture. They are there, yet they are invisible.

Most of these employers behave like their domestic has no capacity to hear, to feel embarrassed, or to get hurt. To the employer, the domestic is merely a tool that gets household chores done – devoid of feelings – a non-person. All that the employer needs is that housework is done. The completed task is as visible as the person who did it is not.

The crux of this invisibility is that employers do not see their domestics as people too. I recall my own childhood with the helpers in my parents' home. I never cared to get to know them. I knew their names. But beyond that I never knew where they came from and how they got there. To me they were always the "binata" who did the cleaning, the ironing, and the laundry. The house got cleaned and chores got done, so I knew the maids did them. But they might as well have been invisible. I did not care to see them as people like me. I had the same attitude as the employers I interviewed.

When I listen to the tapes over and over again, I find myself asking the very same question Rita and the other domestics have asked themselves when lamenting about being treated like they were not there. "What can I really do?" During my fieldwork there were many times when I just wanted to give each of the employers I interviewed a lecture on class inequalities and how they ought to treat their domestics. But I knew that my views would be strange to them. I also knew that I could not in my capacity as researcher advocate for the domestics. Acknowledging to the employers that I did not agree with how they treated their domestics would have jeopardized my ability to interview the employers and to gain access to their domestics.

I have gone out of the place and have seen the relationship between employers and domestics as an outsider. I have been exposed to other societies and to alternative views and reflections about social relationships. My reaction to the relationship between the employer and her domestic is informed by my exposure to discussions about class and gender inequalities not only during my coursework in sociology but also outside of the classroom with other graduate students and with my professors.

The behavior of these employers is inexcusable and I am not defending their treatment of their domestics. But the women I interviewed do not know any other way. Although some of these employers have gone to other countries for their graduate studies, two things are significant. First, their focus was either in English or Math Education, and second, they went back, got married to Albay men from their own class and settled down with their families in Albay.

The fact that all of these employers grew up and have lived most of their adult lives in Albay is important when trying to understand their relationship with their domestics. They have been socialized since childhood to view domestics as there to serve them. Although it was tempting to try to change their conception of housework, division of labor within the household, and domestics and domestic service, I had neither had the time nor the ability to do so. Had I tried, I could have jeopardized my access to the domestics, and to the employers. I don't think that these employers would have listened to me or been willing to give up their domestics and do their own housework. With husbands who see housework as the main responsibility of women, the idea of a family without a staff of domestics is certainly daunting and scary for women who never had to do housework since they were children. Had I stayed in Albay, I cannot say with confidence that I would be willing and able to have a family without domestics ready to do housework for me. It would be extremely difficult to change "the script of a lifetime" as one of my professors put it.

Employers believe their domestics would have nothing without them. This conception of themselves as benefactors gives the employers a sense of entitlement. They believe they are within their rights to exercise control over their domestics. Class

inequality allows them to see themselves, the members of the more privileged class, as the protectors of impoverished women who are dependent on them for survival.

There is no doubt that the poor woman who enters the employer's household as a domestic depends on her employer for her survival. But the employer is also dependent on the domestics. She would be doing her own housework without the presence of impoverished women willing to work for a pittance. Knowing this, the employer cultivates her domestic's dependency as a way of dealing with her own dependency. The next chapter explores the two sides to dependency in the female employer-female domestic relationship.

CHAPTER VIII

DEPENDENCY

Introduction:

In Albay women from the underprivileged classes often work as domestics for a pittance and under very exploitative conditions. Without other viable alternatives, they are at the mercy of female employers who have the resources to hire and fire them at will. Their dependency on their employers seems obvious. However, my interviews with the female employers and female domestics in Albay point to another dependency— the female employer's dependency on her domestics.

The situation of Rosa, a 55 year-old domestic and her employer, Mrs. Arce, a dance/theater instructor at a local college, illustrates the mutual dependency between female employers and female domestics. Rosa, who was working for Mrs. Arce's parents for 30 years before she became one of Mrs. Arce's domestics, sadly explains why at her age and even when she does not feel well, she cannot stop doing laundry (by hand) and ironing clothes:

Of course even if I really do not feel well I have to come Sometimes my..... body cannot take it... but I still have to wash and iron clothes.... What will my family eat if my monthly wages get deducted for taking the time off?... Especially that my husband does not have a steady job.

The number of sighs punctuating every sentence Rosa utters communicates strongly the powerlessness she feels about her situation. Her entire family's survival is dependent

upon her work as a domestic. She believes that if Mrs. Arce chooses to fire her or deduct her wages, her husband and children will go hungry.

What Rosa does not know is that her employer is not about to let go of her or any of the other domestics in the household. In fact Mrs. Arce sounds anxious and agitated when she talks about how she cannot cope if she does not have domestics. It is quite telling that the subject of her dependency on her domestics came up when I was not specifically asking about it. While describing the food and meal arrangement for her domestics, in the quote below, she reveals how dependent she is on her domestics:

I let them have whatever amount of rice they want. Big quantities I tell you. But I just let it go. They might leave. Then where will I be? I do not have the time to be looking for one. My husband? He does not have any idea about what goes on. As long as he is not bothered. So, it is all up to me. What can I do? You know, like they are my partners in crime. Imagine, I am a housewife and a career woman at the same time. When I have meetings and cannot come home early, who do I turn to to bathe my kids, feed them and put them to bed? My helpers!

This quote is not a translation. She was speaking in English and gesturing a lot when she was explaining how she needs her domestics. She is fully aware of her dependency and acknowledges that pursuing her own career would be very difficult without them. She is a dance and drama instructor at a local college and when she has meetings or rehearsals she cannot rely on her husband to take care of their three children. Therefore, she has to turn to her domestics for even such an intimate parental ritual as tucking her kids in to bed. She considers them as “my partners in crime”, her allies.

The words of Rosa and Mrs. Arce are illustrative of the mutual dependencies between female employers and female domestics in Albay. In this chapter I explore this

mutual dependency, for it is a key factor in understanding the relationship between these two women. In Section I- Domestic's Dependency (Consequences and Coping Strategies), I focus on the domestic's dependency upon her employer, the consequences of such a dependency, and the strategies a domestic uses to cope with her dependency. In Section II- Employer's Dependency Control and Manipulation), I look at the employer's dependency on her domestic and how she uses control and manipulation as a way to deal with it. I also look at the employer's dependency on her husband. Her access to resources that allows her to pass on the responsibility for housework to the underprivileged woman she hires as her domestic, in many cases, is dependent on her husband's wealth and class position. In **Section III – (Conclusion)**, I reflect on this mutual dependency and how it perpetuates gender and class inequalities.

Section I – Domestic's Dependency (Consequences and Coping Strategies)

In this section I explore the domestics' dependency on their female employers and the coping strategies they use. With their own voices these female domestics from Albay talk about how they use humor, criticism, psychology, solidarity, deferential behavior, and - as a last recourse – flight, to deal with their dependency, whether they are resigned to it in a negative way or accept it with a more positive attitude.

Negative Resignation versus Positive Acceptance

Domestics in Albay know that they are powerless. Being resigned to their dependency on their female employers is very well communicated by the domestics I interviewed. For instance, Rosa, a 62-year old domestic in Mrs. Arce's household, says in the quote at the beginning of this chapter that her entire family is dependent on her wages. She worries that without the wages for domestic work, her husband and children will have

to miss meals. Clara, another domestic with her own family, echoes Rosa's anxiety about food and supplies for her children when she explains why she does not have anything to look forward to in terms of wages, at the end of each month:

Even though I work every day, at the end of the month there is nothing left of my wages to receive. I always borrow money for food, for school supplies for my children. Everything has to come from my wages. I cannot wait till the end of the month. So I just borrow and borrow.

Domestics know that they are dependent on employers and that meeting the basic needs of their families would be impossible to do if their employers choose to fire them or cut their wages. For their own sake and their families, they understand that they must accept whatever conditions they work in and the treatment they are daily subjected to. However, these domestics do not react to their exploitation in a uniform way. Some adopt a negative view of their impoverished lives and, while complaining bitterly about the oppressive behavior of their employers, do not do anything to alleviate their conditions. Others take on the positive approach. While they accept that they are dependent on their employers and understand that it is very important that a domestic must know her place and must act like one, they find more positive ways of dealing with the oppressiveness of their situation.

I can still hear the bitterness and hopelessness in Ofelia's voice as she talks about how Mrs. Ibanez treats her:

I just finished grade 2, so this is where I can only be – a maid. Nothing more....So even when they use foul language on me what can I do? I get treated like an animal...but...what else is there? I just have to endure this to survive.

Ofelia's words "what else is there?" reveal her frustration with her powerlessness. For her there is no light at the end of the tunnel. When she says, "I just have to endure this to survive", her facial expression is that of someone who does not see anything positive about her situation. She is resigned to being "treated like an animal" and does not see what else she can do to make things better.

But not all domestics share Ofelia's feelings. For example, Charita, who works for Mrs. Nunez, says she does not mind when she gets scolded. She defends her employers' action by saying:

No, I don't mind when they get angry with me.
Of course I think they are within their rights to
scold me whenever I fail to do my work well.

While some observers may define Charita as someone who is in denial about her situation, she may just be the kind of worker who accepts that it is her responsibility to do her work well. In her own words she is willing to be scolded when she fails to do so. From the interview transcripts, I can surmise that in reality, Charita rarely if ever gets scolded because she is a good worker. Lucia, Mrs. Pascual's domestic shares Charita's belief when she explains:

I think a maid should not complain about being
scolded...especially if she cannot do her work well.
Since you are just a maid then whatever your
employer commands you obey. It is different
if you are giving the orders.

Lucia has the attitude that a domestic should know her place and not complain when the employer scolds her or gives all sorts of orders. In another paragraph in this section I quoted Lucia again talking about her strategy for avoiding conflict with her

employer and from being scolded. With her strategy Lucia has become Mrs. Pascual's most trusted domestic.

Deferential Behavior

Whether a domestic possesses a negative or positive view of her oppressed condition, she is fully aware that like it or not, her employer expects her to behave in a deferential manner. If she wants to keep her job, a domestic learns that one important coping mechanism that she can use to deal with her dependency on her employer is to adapt the persona of the submissive servant and to show deference towards her employer and every member of her employer's family. Even among the "wards" (domestics who go to school), the reality of their dependency and the deferential behavior the employer expects is daily made clear to them. Teresa, Mrs. Kabesa's ward does not have any illusions about this when she says.

After all, even if I am studying I am still a maid.
Just one click and you are out. That's how I feel.
If you want to study then you do not say anything.
If there is something you are expected to agree
on, you just nod your head and agree.

Teresa knows that if Mrs. Kabesa ever fires her, she won't be able to finish her education. Her family cannot afford to keep her. She would be just another extra mouth to feed if she goes back home. Her words "you can feel that she controls your every action", indicate that she is very much aware of her employer's power over her. But she knows how to deal with this. Since an education is an important goal she has set for herself, she has learned how to be the model "ward" that must always "nod your head and agree" and do what is expected even "if I am tired or if I don't think the command is fair." Her dependency on her employer actually makes her behave in a way that is not consistent with

her personality. From the interview, she sounds like a very articulate young woman with views of her own and sure of herself, but when she is with her employer, she behaves in a manner in keeping with her position in the household – the domestic. Teresa’s words not only reveal a domestic’s dependency on her employer, but also the consequences of such a dependency, as well as the coping mechanisms that a domestic adopts to use it to her advantage. In Teresa’s case, for instance, she must always project a submissive demeanor in front of her employer – the meek and humble obedient domestic. Her words, “if you want to study then you do not say anything”, indicate that her submissive attitude is a strategy. Deferential behavior is her defense against being fired and losing her chance at realizing her long term goal of getting an education and finding a better paying and more self-fulfilling job.

The words of another domestic, Dayday, who works for Mrs. Turalba, show that body language and quiet acquiescence are very important aspects of the deferential behavior that employers expect from their domestics:

When they scold me I don’t do anything. I just stay put. I don’t even so much as move any part of my body. And I don’t dare say a single word.

This posture of submissiveness is a coping mechanism that Dayday and the rest of the domestics I interviewed use to protect themselves. Otherwise they risk being at the receiving end of their employer’s anger. Carmen knows very well how angry Mrs. Zullea gets when they fail to show smiling faces to visitors. She explains:

When there are visitors in the house, we have to show smiling faces because she scolds us when she notices that we are frowning or have sour faces when visitors are around. So when visitors are here we are not allowed to frown. So we keep on smiling. When we are serving food we have to keep on smiling.

Carmen was laughing while describing the situation I quoted above. The other domestics who were working and listening nearby all nodded their heads in agreement and showed with as much sarcasm as they could, how they smile when there are visitors around. They were clearly making fun of their employer's command. They show deference to their employer in her presence and yet derive laughter and a much needed respite and relief afterwards when they are by themselves. This leads to another coping mechanism these domestics use as a temporary relief from their heavy workload and their oppressive working conditions.

Humor and Criticism

In some cases domestics who adopt this submissive posture really want to lash out at their employers. But they know they can only do so at the risk of losing their jobs. Not one of these domestics says that they have openly defied their employers. What they do instead is another form of coping strategy. When their employers are not around they either make fun of them or express anger and criticize their employer's behavior. This is a coping strategy that I saw played out in Mrs. Enriquez's household.

In an earlier chapter, I mentioned that Mrs. Enriquez chose her grandson's birthday for our interview. While I was there she berated one of the domestics for not knowing how to use the telephone. After our interview, she invited me to stay for the party. Since some of the other employers I interviewed were there I found it difficult to decline. I soon realized that it was a good opportunity for me to watch the interaction among this group of employers. I saw it as a chance to see all of Mrs. Enriquez's domestics in their crisp white uniforms attending to the needs of the guests. Her domestics had the ever present smile on their faces while they were serving the guests and even when Mrs. Enriquez started to

make fun of them and talk badly about them to her guests as if they (the domestics) were not present, they continued to keep the smile.

However, in my conversations with Mrs. Enriquez's domestics they revealed to me their feelings about how they are treated. Sylvia is very candid about her anger. She is agitated and alternately raises her fist and throws up her hands while she talks:

O dear God. Yes, we are exploited. But that is a long story. It is difficult. A domestic is always trampled upon.....No, I do not think they treat us well. They even make us the topic of conversation....She even tells her visitors that her domestics do not know anything. That makes us feel so low. We don't even know why she has to talk like that about us...because if we are only allowed to I really will answer back....You are already very tired, your body is already collapsing, and then that's what you get, being talked about like that. What kind of treatment is that ?

When she says "what kind of treatment is that?" she sounds very critical of her employer's behavior. She says this with her eyebrows raised and her chin and shoulders up communicating very clearly that she believes her employer is out of line. Her words, "if we are only allowed to I really will answer back", leave the listener in no doubt of her anger and frustration at not being able to do so. However, although she can never say this directly to her employer, being able to speak out to whoever will listen is a form of coping strategy that Sylvia and other domestics use to keep their dignity despite their dependency.

Sometimes, Rita and her fellow domestics take refuge in humor and laughter. Here is what she says when I asked what they do when their employers get angry with them:

We, the domestics here? All we can do when it happens is to just tell each other silly stories about her and her family. We laugh about it afterwards. But what else can we do ?

Psychology

Another strategy that I found being used by the domestics I met in Albay, is to get to know their employer's personality. Lucia, who has been with Mrs. Pascual for a long time exemplifies this. Listen to her words:

No, they do not scold me...because I am used to them... I know their idiosyncrasies. I know what they like and what they do not like.

With this strategy, Lucia avoids conflict with her employer and actually has become the most trusted domestic in Mrs. Pascual's household. This is confirmed by Mrs. Pascual herself when she says:

She is trusted...Because she knows already what I want...that I want it that way... She knows me... She knows the family. She knows my nature.....
...She knows all of us..Maids come and go but she has stayed.

This strategy has been a very good one for Lucia. Getting to know the employer's personality, including what she likes and does not like and other information, will help a domestic in her interaction with her employer and her employer's family. Lucia has done just that. She is a live-out domestic with her own husband and kids. Through the largesse of her employer, her husband got a job as security guard in a local bank. She herself works in the early morning hours as a janitor in the local market and has a steady monthly salary from it. In fact, she says that their two incomes together is enough to keep the family up from a hand to mouth existence but she understands that she cannot stop doing domestic work for Mrs. Pascual. Otherwise she will be perceived as an ingrate and could damage

her relationship with her employer's family. She is aware of her dependency on them and knows that both she and her husband can lose their jobs otherwise.

Solidarity with Other Domestic in the Household

Solidarity is a strategy that is most popular among domestics and one that is most admirable. This is common in households where there are three or more domestics.

Instead of competing with each other for whatever resources are available to them, be it food or time or space, domestics bond and help each other out. Rita, who works for a lawyer Mrs. Faenar, reveals this bond and solidarity when she describes the food and meal arrangements for domestics in this household:

The same as theirs...(then a shrug and laughter)...
when there are leftovers (she looks upward, raises
her hand in a gesture of resignation)...But when
there is none we find a way. We are used to it.
We just sauté vegetables. The other maids
and I ...we planted a small vegetable garden out
back of the house...alugbati...kamatis...like that.
We harvest when we need to and manage to come
up with a vegetable dish...Sometimes we have
dried fish..whatever we find in the pantry.

Notice that Rita uses “we” in this entire quote. The concept of “we” instead of “I” is important for a domestic's survival in the exploitative conditions that she finds herself. Like other employers, Mrs. Faenar never bothers to check if there is enough food for her domestics. Employers assume that whatever they do not consume from their own meal is enough food for all the domestics in their household. The fact that Rita and her fellow domestics took it upon themselves to plant a vegetable garden is very telling of the solidarity and spirit of cooperation that can develop among domestics who realize that there is a way to alleviate their situation. Rita is very proud of how the domestics in Mrs.

Faelnar's household cover for each other. This solidarity comes out again when she talks about her chores and her sick father who lives 2 towns over from Albay:

It's tiring here because there is no end to all the chores. It is always over and over again. But we...we help each other. That's how I get to have a rest period.. Also I like to visit my father now and then. But I am not allowed to. But sometimes (she laughs and whispers)...I just have to be sneaky...Like when my employer and her family leave for the day...But since we are good friends...they cover for me...So for about 2 hours ...But I see to it that I am back before my employers come home.

In another section of the interview, when I asked her what happens when she gets sick, the solidarity she feels with her fellow domestics is evident in her words:

When I feel sick ?.. I rest. You see my fellow domestics ...we are good to each other. They care...we are like sisters.

Rita and the other domestics in Mrs. Faelnar's household have found a very effective coping mechanism. By bonding together "like sisters" they have an excellent strategy for making their situation a little better. In fact when I asked Rita how she and her friends manage to have rest periods with all the chores that are in the list she talks of how they cover for each other. In this quote she talks about how she avoids moving from ironing with live coals the whole day to touching the cold water for dishwashing:

At 2 they leave so all of us rest for an hour. Then I iron clothes until 7 in the evening I come down to help serve the meal. I do not help wash the dishes because the water is cold and I have been holding something really hot. ...since I just did a lot of ironing.

It is a common belief in the Philippines that when you do a lot of ironing wherein your hands are exposed to a hot surface (from the old fashioned iron with live coals in most households), it is not good for your hands to then be exposed to cold water. Most employers do not pay attention to this belief. As long as the ironing gets done, whatever complaints their domestic have about their hands is not paramount in their minds. Rita gets away with not helping in washing dishes because her “sisters” cover for her.

Flight

One form of resistance that domestics in Albay use as a last resort is to quit working for the employer. When it becomes unbearable and they do not see that talking to their employer will help alleviate their situation, they leave. Clara, recalling a time when she was with another employer, explains why she left:

I hated it there. Mostly, I was given fish that was sometimes almost two weeks old. Even if we are just like this, we do know what stale and rotten fish is. I could not stand it. So I quit.

Employers are aware that domestics do have this very effective method of resistance. Domestics can quit and find another employer. Mrs. Arce acknowledges in the quote below that domestics, especially the good ones, do choose who they want to work for:

Oh yes.. well.. you know..these helpers..you can tell who really works hard. But nowadays it is difficult to find good helpers. The good ones ?.. they also choose the employers they want to work for.

Rosa, who I quoted at the very beginning of this chapter, relates one of many incidents when she left and went home. Although Rosa has a good relationship with her

employer, Mrs. Arce, she does not like Mrs. Arce's husband. Here is what she says happens when she has a conflict with her employer's husband:

She is a good employer. But her husband?
She would always ask us not to mind him.
No I really do not want to talk about him.
But he is her husband. Like for instance
during a meal, if you do not like the food
then you do not eat it. But he shoved it like this.
It was a left over from a previous meal.
I was busy with other chores and there was
still a lot of it.. good for another meal..so I
thought I would just heat it up and was
serving it at the table and ...her husband..
did this.....(she gestures with both hands)
....the whole thing scattered all over..
the place... so I went home at once.
Then she called for me and apologized for
him..Rosa, she says, please come back,
Please forgive him and come back.

The first part of the quote above makes it clear that, dependent as they are on their employers, domestics are able to make that ultimate decision. Domestics can quit and leave. The last part of the quote highlights another side of this dependency issue—the employer's on her domestics. Rosa relates how her employer, Mrs. Arce, actually called for her to apologize for her husband's behavior. An employer apologizing to a domestic and begging her to come back underscores the fear that employers have of a life without female domestics.

Section II – Employer's Dependency

It is ironic that with all the power and control they exercise over their domestics, female employers talk about being dependent upon them. In this section I explore this dependency. In the first part, I look at the reasons employers give for their dependency on female domestics. In the second, I examine how employers use control and manipulation

as a strategy of dealing with their dependency and how they accomplish their goal of keeping their domestics working for them.

Causes of Employers' Dependency

Mrs. Guzman, a dance instructor at a local college, expresses the absence of domestics in her household as “one of my greatest fears.” Her voice conveys how serious she is and how her day would be ruined without them:

I cannot imagine a life without a maid. First, I do not know how to cook. I won't be able to eat. Oh my God! That is one of my greatest fears - if there were no more helpers on earth. My day would be ruined specially that I am a working woman.

Her admission that “I do not know how to cook” seems unbelievable. But I grew up with Mrs. Guzman and over the years I have not seen her do any chores at home. I have not seen her lift a broom, wash a single dish, or steam a pot of rice. She does not know how. She is an only child and everything was done by the domestics with her stay-at-home mother attending to her every need.

Mrs. Guzman's situation is not uncommon among the employers I interviewed and this is one reason for their being dependent upon their domestics. Many of these employers grew up in homes with a retinue of servants. They saw their mothers, aunts and grandmothers giving orders to the female domestics. These were their role models. They learned and accepted early in life that although the women in the family were responsible for housework, they never had to do it. Housework was not done by the housewife. Mrs. Lopez, the director of the cultural center at a local university, articulates this view very well when she says:

I must always have a helper. I hate housework.

I need someone who will do everything I am supposed to do as a housewife.

Mrs. Lopez accepts that she is a “housewife” and as such she is responsible for seeing to it that housework is done. However she expects her domestic to carry on all the duties associated with her being a housewife. Mrs. Reyes, a government accountant, thinks the same way. Carrying “all that load of being a housewife” has to be on the shoulders of her domestic. She makes it clear in this quote that she cannot be a housewife without a maid:

The way I see it a maid is a must in every home. Otherwise how else can you carry all that load of being a housewife? As for me I cannot do without one.... I think I'd die if I have to do all that housework myself.

Besides hating housework or simply not knowing how to do it, there are employers who think that doing housework is not in keeping with their position in life. I get this message from Mrs. Hermoso, a professor of literature and drama at a local university, when she explains:

I don't think I can do without maids. Somebody has to do these things. I am very particular about neatness and tidiness. And so if there are no helpers I don't think I could put myself to do it....besides I am a working mother. I'm very busy.”

She goes on to say that “..the maids do the dirty job..” although “the housewife is behind it.” This quote from Mrs. Hermoso also points to another reason for employers' dependency on their domestics. Employers are either working in jobs that keep them outside the home most of the day or they have a full social schedule. Mrs. Pascual, for instance, is the wife of a top politician in Albay. She has to attend social and political events with her husband. She says in the quote below that she is lucky to have Lucia:

With my duties as the wife of Mr. Pascual, it cannot be helped that I have to be out of the house early. I am lucky I have Lucia. She is my anchor in the house. . . .In fact I can just leave the running of the house to her. I don't worry. Do you know that she trains any new helper that comes in?

In the quote below, Mrs. Enriquez, whose family belongs to the business and political elite of Albay, acknowledges that because of the presence of domestics, she can attend to her social obligations without worrying about the upkeep of her household and the meals for her children.

As a wife, because we have maids I don't really feel rushed at all despite all the social obligations we have to do. I really do think that it is because of the helpers that I don't feel the pressure.

She and her husband are out most evenings attending social gatherings or giving a dinner party at home. They often host benefit dinners and fundraisers for politics and charity. Her house needs to be immaculately clean and ready for entertaining at a moment's notice.

When I asked her what she does when her domestics do not do their work well, her response, which I quote immediately below (in Control and Manipulation), underscores the extent to which an employer will use control and manipulation to keep her domestics. This is the focus of the second part of this section.

Control and Manipulation

In her own words, Mrs. Enriquez explains what she does to keep her domestics. Although there are times when she gets so irritated with domestics who do not learn fast enough about what needs to be done, she has to remember that if her domestics leave, she

is responsible for the housework and not her husband and kids. She explains why she has learned to cajole them when her domestics have conflicts with the rest of her family.

I get irritated because they have a hard time learning things. But most of the time I let it pass because I remember that if I keep scolding them they might leave and it would be me again who has to go through the trouble of training one. But of course my maids have been with me for years because I know how to deal with them. My husband would fire them. But the following day I try to cajole both my husband and my helpers so I can hire them back. It is difficult really but I do end up as the mediator in this house. But I think I have to do so because it is because we have maids that we don't feel the pressure. Their presence makes life easier.

Mrs. Enriquez not only has to deal with domestics who she says are slow in learning how to do chores correctly, she also has to pacify a husband who is quick to interfere with the management of the domestics. Since she is the person responsible for the housework, she feels she has no choice. She ends up being the mediator between her family and maids. Otherwise she could end up doing the household chores herself. Mrs. Enriquez's situation is typical. The husband fires the domestics and the female employer hires them back.

Mrs. Arce, whom I quoted at the very beginning of this chapter, understands what Mrs. Enriquez is going through. She is a working mother who has a very busy work schedule and must rely on her domestics to do all the housework and sometimes be the surrogate parent and tuck her kids to bed. She also has a handicap— her husband, who at the time of the interview was in between jobs, does not help with housework, does not want to supervise the household domestics, and has a terrible temper. He also does not want to be bothered with the daily routines related to their kids. Mrs. Arce therefore must rely on

her domestics to do everything for her. She has to bear with all their shortcomings. She talks candidly about her dependency in this quote.

I bear with all their faults and shortcomings
because they make my life convenient and
I avail of more comforts because of them.
When they say they have a headache or something
and need to rest I let them. I give in and let them...
...just so they won't leave. If they do who loses?
Me! I have to take time out to find another one.
It's inconvenient when you are a working mother
with a household to attend to.

For most employers like Mrs. Arce, who I quoted at the very beginning of this chapter, allowing the domestics to have as much food as they want to eat is one way of keeping them. Another employer, Mrs. Hermoso, sees the meals as a big concession.

Besides the fees, I give her other things and then
privileges. I think the big concession is the meals.

When Mrs. Ureta's domestics go home for their town fiestas she sees to it that they go with foodstuffs for their parents. She specifically talks of Glenda in this quote below.

Besides the 250 monthly I give her, I also give her
other things. Sometimes when she goes home to
their town fiesta, I let her bring some foodstuffs
for her parents.

Mrs. Ureta sounds like she wants to help out Glenda and her parents. She might be very sincere about this. But the continuation of this quote reveals that even the giving of food and gifts is a manipulative device. In the second part she talks of being careful not to give a lot at a time.

But of course I do not give her a lot at a time.
Otherwise, she might start expecting more and
abuse my goodwill. That will not do. So just
very little things at a time. Some leftovers for
the kids.

When some employers talk of gifts they most often mean their family's discarded old clothes and leftover or unwanted food. Mrs. Ibanez uses this technique of handing out used garments and leftover food to keep her domestics loyal to her. She explains:

I give them a lot of gifts besides their wages...old clothes, underwear, bras, my old bags, and also whatever food is not used up during lunchtime. I give it to the married ones for their kids. That way they are loyal to me.

When Mrs. Ibanez talks further about the salaries of her domestics, she points out that giving domestics good salaries and helping them out with other things insures her good service. She says:

I give them good salaries because I know they have families they are providing for. I also give them clothes. I give them things because I see that they need help. Very pitiful. Especially the live-out, I try to give them some transportation allowance if they cannot be fetched by my car. But you know it pays to be good because they give me good service back.

Mrs. Ibanez is one of those employers who use positive incentives to keep her domestics and to get good service from them. This is also what Mrs. Guzman does to her domestics. She not only gives her domestics gifts and bonuses but also allows them to get cash advances. In this quote she is talking about Aleta and the other wards.

When she likes a dress or pair of pants from my business I let her get it on credit. I don't mind even when she gets cash advances. That way I know she will stay longer. During Christmas time I also give them bonuses or clothes for gifts. These days you have to do these things to keep them. Otherwise you lose. You have to get a new one and you get to retrain again.

Notice the part where she says, "...these days you have to do these things to keep them. Otherwise you lose...". Mrs. Guzman knows how to keep wards happy. Although

in the quote below, she admits that she gives them rather low salaries, she compensates by letting them earn cash in some other way.

Their wages are I would say a little bit low. Each get 250 pesos a month. They get their tuition and other expenses from that. But they have free board and lodging. And I involve them in my RTW business. It's for them and for me. They can earn extra cash and with the incentives they work extra hard to sell my clothing collection and helps my business is successful. I also allow them to do laundry for the student boarders as a sideline.

Mrs. Guzman, the dance instructor at a local college, whose husband inherited his family's palatial estate, takes in student boarders as a sideline business. She also has a very successful ready-to-wear line of clothes that is manned by her wards. She does a very good job of manipulation here. She does not need to pay her wards huge salaries since they get commissions from selling clothes for her. She also saves money she would have paid in wages to someone solely in charge of her ready-to-wear business. With commissions as incentives she is also assured of steady turnover of her clothing line. Besides that she ends up with happy and satisfied domestics who work hard in both their household chores and the clothing sales for their employer.

Conclusion and Reflection

The discussion in this chapter show that female domestics are in no doubt that their survival hinges on doing housework for other women. They understand and accept their dependency on their employers. They are very much aware of how exploited they are but they also know that they have very little recourse but to accept the oppressive working conditions associated with domestic servitude.

By their own accounts these female domestics deal with their dependency in different ways. While some react in anger, many become proactive about their situation. They are experts in coming up with creative ways to alleviate their situation. All of these women adopt the deferential behavior of the domestic in the presence of their employer and their employer's family. Although their quiet acquiescence in front of their employers is forced on them for fear of being fired, they get some respite when, in the absence of their employer, they share some comic relief by talking about their employer's idiosyncrasies. They also find satisfaction, however fleeting and temporary, in criticizing their employer's behavior when they are left to themselves. Many domestics have also learned to study their employer's personality and work with their knowledge to gain some concessions in wages, time off and generally ease up, albeit in a way miniscule, the oppressive working conditions they find themselves in. As a last resort female domestics who find that they cannot take any more of the oppressiveness of their situation do what a regular working person will ultimately do. They quit. They leave with or without their employer's knowledge or permission and start looking for another female employer to work for.

One coping mechanism domestics adopt, especially in households with three or more domestics, is bonding—solidarity with the other domestics. The domestics who are fortunate to be in solidarity with other domestics in the household, experience the benefits of cooperation, with each one sharing and covering for each other in their workloads and time off; in rest periods; in whatever amount of food is left for them and in caring for each other in times of sickness.

The other type of dependency discussed in this chapter is that of the employer's on the female domestic. This dependency is mitigated by the employer's class membership—

employers belong to the more privileged classes in Albay. Although female employers do not deny that they are dependent on the presence of female domestics to do the housework for them, they also know that they are not as powerless as their domestics. With ample resources at their disposal and an almost inexhaustible pool of poor women in need of domestic work to survive, these female employers are able to deal with their dependency to their advantage. They control the working conditions and adopt different manipulative strategies to keep their domestics as dependent on them as they possibly can. Employers in Albay consciously cultivate and maintain their domestics' dependency so they, the employers, always have these women doing housework for them.

The mutual dependency that female employers and female domestics experience and accept is a powerful force for maintaining and perpetuating class and gender hierarchies. Female employers are too busy, whether it is with their careers or social engagements, to question why housework is gendered work relegated to women. Furthermore, since these women are dependent on their husbands for their political, economic and social position in the community, they believe that it is but fitting that it is their responsibility as the housewife to take charge of housework. These women do not feel it necessary to change the gender hierarchy in their households. Their husbands may not lift a finger to do housework. But these female employers know that they can pass the actual dirty work called housework on to the impoverished women who are dependent on them for their survival. The entire situation— the female employer's dependency on the husband and her dependency on the female domestics and in turn the female domestics' dependency on the female employer, only serves to cement the class and gender relations within the household and in the wider society.

CHAPTER IX

DEFERENCE

Introduction

In the chapter on Dependency I discussed deferential behavior as one of the strategies domestics use to alleviate the effects of their dependency on their employers. In this chapter I examine deference in more detail, focusing on how the employer's sense of entitlement gives her the idea that she has every right to expect deferential behavior from her domestics. For their part, the female domestics I encountered understood that deference is an important aspect of their work. Working from the symbolic interactionist perspective, Erving Goffman describes deference as a ceremonial act that "functions as a symbolic means by which appreciation is regularly conveyed to a recipient (Goffman, 1969)." In his article on "The Nature of Deference and Demeanor", he looks at deference as being varied in character. According to Goffman, deferential behavior can be linguistic. It can be articulated in the structure of communication. It can be task-embedded. It can also be gestural or spatial.

This chapter is divided into 4 sections. The first section looks at the deferential behavior of the domestic. It includes deference in language focusing on how the two women refer to or address each other; the structure of communication, especially in the pattern of questioning between employers and domestics; and spatial deference as imposed on the domestic through limited access to and use of household space including her work area, sleeping quarters and eating arrangements. In Section 2 I look at the female employer as a deferential worker herself in terms of her relationship with her

husband, father, or brother, and how her position vis-à-vis the males in her family informs her own expectation of her interactions with her domestic. In the last section, I include in my Conclusions and Reflections some thoughts about whether or not the true deferential worker really exists.

Section I- The Domestic as Deferential Worker

A-Deferential Behavior

I begin this discussion with events at a dinner party that one of the female employers invited me to. Mrs. Enriquez comes from one of the wealthiest and most politically powerful families of Albay. The female employers who were there belong to the very elite circle that she moves around with. I was thankful to be invited because the evening gave me an opportunity to observe an interaction between an employer, Mrs. Enriquez, and her female domestic Sylvia, as well as a group of the employers I had interviewed.

Mrs. Enriquez has a staff of domestics that includes a security guard cum butler, a gardener, a chauffer, a cook, a laundress, a cleaning woman, a nanny, and a maid of all work. When I arrived, Mrs. Enriquez was talking to Sylvia, the maid of all work, whom I had interviewed three days earlier

Mrs Enriquez: "Sylvia, go and call Mr. Salvo. Ask him if he could bring the lechon right away."

Sylvia: "Yes, madam. What is his number?"

Mrs Enriquez: "Why, don't you know his number? It's....."

Mrs Enriquez: "What is taking you so long? Come on. Call now. What is taking you so long? Do you or do you not know how to use that phone? Why don't you say so? Stupid! You really are so stupid, aren't you?"

(Then addressing me...)

"See, I don't have any high expectations from them. As long as my house is clean and in perfect order I don't care really. I just have to keep telling myself that if they leave the burden simply falls on me and not my husband. Actually when you think of the money you pay them, so you don't have to do it yourself. It is really a pittance, but I guess for them it is better than starving...."

When this happened, most of her guests had already arrived and all could hear Mrs. Enriquez scolding Sylvia. What struck me as quite significant about this incident was the matter of fact way Mrs. Enriquez berated her domestic. There was no hint of embarrassment about having her guests be a witness to her behavior. Her demeanor was more like "see, how stupid she is..?" There was no sign of concern for whether or not her domestic was going to show any overt sign of resentment or rebellion in front of her guests. Mrs. Enriquez went about scolding Sylvia with the air of a master, assured of total deference from her slave.

Looking around, I noticed the nonchalant reaction this scene elicited from Mrs. Enriquez's guests. They were either trying to be polite about it or her friends also share her view about how domestics should be treated. Perhaps an incident like this is just too common for them to pay attention to. Earlier in the week, these women were in a conference where they were very articulate in voicing their concern for the "dignity of Filipino Women". Judging by their actions, one can only conclude that in their thinking, their female domestics do not belong to that category. In their minds, a domestic is a non-person.

Despite the insult and humiliation that she was subjected to in front of the other domestics and the dinner guests, I did not detect any change in Sylvia's facial expression or in her demeanor. Not a single sign of defiance or embarrassment was ever conveyed. She just nodded submissively and once dismissed by her employer, went back to the line of domestics like nothing had happened. Together with the rest of the household staff in their well-pressed starched white uniforms, she proceeded to cater to our needs with a smile on her face. From the symbolic interactionist perspective, Sylvia's actions make perfect sense. Blumer explains, "the human being is not a mere responding organism but an acting organism- an organism that has to mold a line of action on the basis of what it takes into account instead of merely releasing a response to the play of some factor on its organization (Blumer,1969)."

From the beginning of her entry into domestic service Sylvia has taken note of what behaviors are frowned upon and what are expected from her as a domestic. Sylvia, over the years, has taken into account that employers expect their domestics not only to accept and recognize the employer's superior position, but also to show, through their every action, confirmation of the employer's

Superiority and of their domestics' own inferiority. Based on her interpretation of employers' actions, she formulates a line of action that is not an immediate reaction to her employer's behavior, but instead is a result of her own interpretations. She chooses a line of action that she believes is best for her present position. In my encounters with them, every single domestic seemed to be aware that this kind of behavior was an important aspect of her job performance.

After a full day of washing (by hand) and ironing clothes, she must be ready to collapse, yet Sylvia managed to keep a smiling countenance and a pleasant demeanor as she catered to her employer and her employer's dinner guests. The deferential behavior that Sylvia exhibited is task-embedded. It is her "task" as a domestic to cater to her employer and the employer's guests, and deferential behavior is embedded in her duties. Her deferential behavior is also gestural. Domestic, in whatever type of female employer-female domestic relationship, are expected to be deferential especially when they are catering to their employer's and their employer's guests. Statements made by some of the other domestics during the interviews indicate that the female domestic must wear her "badge of inferiority" and express it in her demeanor and attitude towards her work. "... the subservient demeanor of the domestic servant is expressed not only through her unchallenging stance, her practical and deliberately unattractive clothes and her controlled speech. She is further asked to convey a certain attitude toward her work: that she is more than willing to undertake assigned tasks and she takes pleasure in serving (Rollins, 1985)."

Carmen, a domestic in Mrs. Zullea's household talks about how her employer scolds them if they are seen frowning while catering to the needs of the houseguests:

When there are visitors in the house we have to show smiling faces because she scolds us when she notices that we are frowning or have sour faces when there are visitors around. So when the visitors are here we are not allowed to frown. So we keep on smiling. When we are serving food we have to keep on smiling.

Carmen's statement suggests that to a great extent the female domestic is forced to adopt an ingratiating behavior with her employers for her own survival. aware that they cannot present their "real selves". From the symbolic interactionist perspective, Carmen and her fellow domestics are able to recognize, through orders from their employer, what they are expected to do. A look from their employer indicates to them that they must present smiling faces to the visitors or they get scolded by an irate employer. If both employers and domestic understand what the expected behavior is then there is no conflict. Domestics understand that an integral aspect of their job performance is their ability to put on a "subservient personality". Otherwise they risk further reminders of their inferior position by their employers, which means in the ultimate case, losing their jobs.

Among the women in Albay, the domestics always stood at a considerable distance away from their employers unless they were commanded to move nearer during the times they were being introduced to me as my interviewees. The domestic remained standing in a very clearly deferential posture. From the symbolic interactionist perspective, the behavior of the domestic demonstrates her recognition of the meaning of the employer's action as she revises her own actions based on her assessment of her employer's indications.

B-Deference in Structure of Communication

This section on structure of communication includes who starts a conversation, the pattern of questioning, and the domestic as confidante.

Between the domestic and the employer, there is a very well entrenched practice whereby the former never at all starts a conversation. Employers are the only ones allowed to initiate speech. As Rosa explains in her words below, domestics are aware of this deferential behavior that is expected of them as the subordinate:

No, we do not join in their conversation.
If we are not asked any question we do not usually say anything. We know our place.

These women perceive themselves very much lower than their employers in social standing and are quite cognizant of the higher position their employers occupy. Yolanda, in her words below, states that domestics feel they have no right at all to join in any conversation unless they are asked a question. Then of course they have to answer politely in a deferential manner. She explains why:

No, I never join in their conversation. They are highly respected people in the community, so I have no right to join in their conversation.

Dayday, a surugon who works for Mrs. Turalba, describes how she keeps very quiet when her employer is not pleased with her. I quote her words below.

When they scold me I don't do anything.
I just stay put. I don't even so much as move any part of my body. And I don't dare even say a single word.

Employers do not expect and do not want their domestics to be joining in the conversation. Mrs. Ibanez, the business woman whose family owns a hotel and a catering service, does not hesitate to reprimand a domestic who tries to join in the conversation while serving their meal. She says:

When my family eats they serve our meals. Sometimes

especially the one who has been here longest, tries to join in the conversation at table. When that happens I tell her to go to the kitchen at once and never to join in.

Mrs. Ibanez says that she does not even want her cook of 20 years, who has become her most trusted housekeeper, to join a conversation. Another employer, Mrs. Faelnar, does not tolerate any familiarity of speech from her domestics either. She does not hesitate to impose sanctions against any domestic who crosses the boundaries of speech, especially if she perceives this to be back talk. She tells them to leave her household at once:

If a maid answers back, especially if it is almost like fighting back or rebelling against my wishes, I let her go home at once. That very moment I tell her to pack up and go.

Another aspect of the structure of communication is the right to ask questions about the other. There is asymmetry in the pattern of questioning between these two women. While the employer believes she has every right to ask about even the most intimate aspects of her domestic's life, she would never allow her domestic to ask her questions about herself and her family. Although the domestic is privy to a lot of what goes on inside the home of her employer, she knows that if she wants to keep her position she keeps her questions to herself. This excerpt from my interview with Rosa, a maid Mrs. Arce inherited from her father's house, demonstrates how much of the employer's family life a domestic sees, and how much a domestic understands that she can not ask any question about what she sees. I had just asked how much Mr. Arce does around the house when he is home when she proceeded to relate an incident involving him:

I do hesitate to talk about her husband. But I have seen ...but it is difficult....You know for example when...one time he did something really bad. I am loyal to Mrs. Arce. But like one time, I left because of something. Like at dinner time. This food was in the fridge...some leftover from their own previous meal. So I heated it up . But I really did not know that he wouldn't like it. I thought it was still good. So I served it to him. He suddenly threw it all over the place...It exploded.. Imagine that... But you know... she makes apologies for his behavior. I do not ask questions..... I really don't know.

After the incident mentioned above, Rosa left but Mrs. Arce sent for her and apologized for her husband's behavior. She went back to her employer's household but, as she says in the quote above, with no questions asked. Based on what she says in other parts of the interview, Rosa does not think it is her place to ask questions.

Although a domestic may never ask questions, she still can be knowledgeable of the most intimate features of her employer's life. Employers will deem it an affront to their position as the superior if the domestic asks personal questions. But it is perfectly all right for her, the employer, to initiate stories about her own life. In this case the domestic has no choice but to listen like she is her employer's confidante. In relating to the domestic intimate information, the employer may appear like she is bringing down the barriers between them. The employer's action, however, is part of what Goffman describes as deference in the structure of communication (Goffman, 1969). The domestic is expected to listen politely but is not allowed to ask the questions. Whatever the employer wishes to impart the domestic should just politely pay attention to.

When an employer talks to her domestic about her life, the action highlights the social distance between these two women. Since her domestic is from the lower classes and does not and never will be able to circulate in the employer's own family circle or social group, the employer is assured of two things. First, her secret is safe with her domestic, who even if she cannot keep a secret has no access to the employer's elite circle, the group that matters to the employer. Secondly, the employer does not care what her domestic thinks of her. After all, how can a "mere domestic" affect her superior position? Therefore she can tell her domestic anything

C- Deference in Language

Among female domestics and female employers in Albay, linguistic deference is evident in the words they use to refer to or to address each other. Domestic never call their employers by their first names. Such familiarity is allowed only to employers. Some employers prefer to be addressed to by the English term "Madam" while others opt for its Spanish translation "Senora". Some use the dialect honorific "Mana" or "Manang", or the English "Mrs." or "Ms" followed not by the first name but by the last name of the employer.

Although they must address their employers using the most polite terms, domestics must answer with deference to whatever their employer prefer to call them. Besides calling their domestics by their first names, they also refer to them using derogatory and demeaning terms that only serve to put domestics in their place and remind both parties of the domestic's subordinate position. This list of terms in the Chapter V (Women and Relationships), pages 106 to 180.

The power of language to define the proper place of domestics in the social structure is clearly seen in the employers' use of these terms. The word *surugon*, which means someone who is at your beck and call, who is there to fetch and carry for you, underscores the oppressive nature of this type of linguistic deference. *Binata* is equally oppressive in the sense that, as I have stated in previous sections, the domestic enters as a child and is expected to remain a child, forever powerless and dependent upon the employer (Whisson and Weil, 1971). *Kabulig*, which means aid or helper, is not as derogatory as *binata* or *surugon* but still connotes someone of inferior standing. Even the ward that mentors allow to get a college degree while doing housework is not free of this taint. A ward is someone who is under one's protection. Wards are obviously seen as incapable of protecting themselves or seeing to their own welfare since they need of people to see to their welfare.

The language used by their employers to refer to them must be so imbedded in their minds that domestics themselves refer to each other using these derogatory terms. Rollins explains this very well when she refers to Fannon's concept of the colonized mind. "Language, like other socially constructed systems, usually serves the interests of the powerful. Even when one is conscious of oppressive elements in a language, it is difficult to eliminate them from one's vocabulary (Rollins, 1985)."

The powerless may accept some of the vocabulary and definitions of the dominant society even when degrading and inaccurate. (Rollins, 1985)

D-Spatial Deference

Spatial deference is articulated in the domestic's access to household space. The actions of Rufina, a maid working for Mrs. Marabe, illustrate this type of deference.

Although her employer's family was out and I found her working in the living room, when I sat down on the couch and motioned for her to sit with me. She literally jumped away from the couch saying that her employer gave her firm instructions never to sit in the living room especially on the couch.

Like Rufina, domestics are directed from day one how much of the household space they are allowed to have access to. Following Goffman's description of the spatial character of deference behaviors, Rollins describes those that occur in the domestic-employer relationship as related to the "unequal rights of the domestic and employer to the space around the other's body, and the control of the domestic's use of house space (Rollins, 1985)."

In the household of Mrs. Bando and Mrs. Pascual, age and political exigency may be behind eating arrangements where the domestic eats with the employer. Mrs. Bando's domestic for instance, happens to be old enough to be her mother or grandmother. She is only in her early thirties while Rufina, her domestic is in her late 50s. An excerpt from her comments about her interaction with Rufina includes eating arrangement for her *kabulig*:

Nothing really... We are friends. She is very much older than I am. She behaves like a mother sometimes...she treats me in a motherly sort of way...but I do not mind. We are kind of are working together in the house most of the time.....especially after I come home from work. ..you see my husband studies law at night. So when I come home and I am hungry, I just say to her come on Rufina, let's eat. Especially when my baby is already asleep when I come home.

Although Mrs. Bando refers to Rufina as her *kabulig*, when she calls her she adds an honorific before Rufina's name that is used by younger people in Albay to show respect for an older person.

For Mrs. Pascual, who is the wife of a high ranking politician, the eating arrangement has to be informal since for political reasons she and her husband must welcome to their dinner table would-be voters in upcoming elections. So this political family is used to sitting down at the dinner table with people from all economic levels of Albay. In this excerpt she describes why she does not see anything wrong with Lucia eating with them.

For me ?.....because my husband is a politician we can eat with anybody. Even now my friends would ask me why my maids eat with me. Of course they have their own place, but I don't really mind when they eat with us.

Most domestics, however, do not feel they should eat with their employers. Rita, a maid who is in the household staff of Mrs. Faelnar explains why in the quote below.

We eat our meals later. We don't eatwith them because it is shameful to do that. But isn't it always like that ? That the maid is always last ?

Mrs. Hermoso, a professor in a local university, who has also a staff of maids, agrees with Rita about eating arrangements for domestics when she explains:

Of course they don't eat with us. It seems not really correct for maids to sit with us. Not so much that they are down below, but because you want to talk to each other may be about private matters.

Spatial deference associated with eating arrangement, access and use of house space and unequal rights of two persons to the space around the other's body mostly take the form of avoidance rituals that Goffman referred to in his article. Quoting Simmel, Goffman stated that "avoidance rituals...refer to those forms of deference which lead the actor to keep at a distance from the recipient and not violate what Simmel has called the "the ideal sphere" that lies around the recipient:

Although differing in size in various directions and differing according to the person with whom one entertains relations, this sphere cannot be penetrated, unless the personality value of the individual is thereby destroyed. (Simmel,1950)

The employer uses eating arrangement as a way to maintain the social barrier between her family and the domestics. Mrs. Marabe in the excerpt below explains that although her domestic eats the same food they do, she does not allow her to eat with them.

She eats what we eat but she does not eat with us.
I've always maintained some kind of distance. I
like to have a barrier between the maid and my family.

This social barrier is maintained not only at the direction of the employer, but also because of the domestic's own self-evaluation of her position in her employer's household. Blumer explains that "Human beings in interacting with one another, are forced to direct their own conduct or handle their own situations in terms of what they take into account (Blumer,1989)." Marla, one of the wards who works for Mrs. Dajoya, may be given the opportunity to study by her employer, but she takes stock of the fact that she is the domestic and as such must act in accordance to her place in the household. She explains why she does not like eating with her employer:

Sometimes I really don't eat my meals with them. We would eat together but most of the time I feel it is shameful to eat with your employer. I really feel ashamed to do so.

She feels ashamed to eat with her employers because she takes into account what she has learned from the actions of other employers and domestics and the fact that her education is in exchange for doing housework, that eating with the employers is not what domestics do.

Even Minda, the highest paid domestic among the 25 domestics I interviewed, does not eat with her employer. She has been the chief cook in Mrs. Quito's house and enjoys health insurance and retirement benefits that other domestics do not have. But Minda has not eaten with her employer even once. This excerpt from our conversation illustrates her deferential behavior:

A maid should not try to be at par with them because we are not. They are up there and we are down here below. Since I am the maid I should always put myself below them. Even if you have something to say about a situation you just keep your mouth shut so you won't have any problems with your employer.

Part II- Defrential Behavior of Female Employer

Our view of deference as a component of the interaction between these two women would be too simplistic if we focus merely on the domestic's deferential behavior. Data from my interviews in Albay strongly indicate that the female employers' efforts to extract deference from their female domestics comprise only one side of the situation. In describing their relationship with the domestic these employers reveal their own deferential position vis-à-vis their husbands, fathers, and other males in their families. Mrs. Ortiz wants to give her domestics time relax like going to the movies or going shopping. But in the excerpt below, she expresses her fear of being scolded by her husband if they are not around when he needs them.

Actually I allow them to go out on times that I know my husband won't need them to fetch things for him, because when he gets home and he wants something done and they are not around, oh boy, does he scold me!

Mrs. Ortiz has to answer to a “higher authority” (aka her husband) for her domestic’s behavior. She has to defer to her husband’s wishes about how she manages the domestics in the household. Her husband demands deferential behavior from her or else she gets scolded. This is the same situation that Mrs. Cortez finds herself in with her ward, Violeta. In a previous chapter, (Ch. VI, page 131), Mrs. Cortez explains how she had to tell Violeta to stop going to the same place she goes to for lunch because her husband wants her to go to another place.

Although Mrs. Cortez thought it was a good idea for Violeta to pack her own lunch and eat at the cafeteria near where she studies, when her husband told her to put a stop at once to the arrangement, she (Mrs. Cortez) changes it at once. She told Violeta in the quote that they have to obey her husband. She told her domestic that her husband had the last word.

Just like her domestic whose dependency and powerlessness forces her (the domestic) to show deference to her employer, the female employer, who depends on her husband for the resources that allow her to maintain her privileged lifestyle, is forced to show deference toward her husband or other male heads of the household. To do otherwise would mean to risk losing her access to the privileges of her position.

Therefore, whether their deferential behavior results from an acceptance of the legitimacy of their positions in the social structure, or a mode of adaptation to shield their real inner selves that do not at all accept that the present class and gender hierarchies are natural and that their location in the social order is legitimate, both female domestic and female employer recognize that deference is a very important aspect of their daily interaction with each other and with the significant males in their lives.

Section IV-Conclusion and Reflections

In this chapter I explored deferential behavior focusing first on the domestic and then at the female employer. I have explored several instances indicating that deference is a significant component of the interaction between domestics and employers. However, although all of the domestics I interviewed always showed

deference towards their employers, their statements during the interview reveal negative feelings about being expected all the time to be deferential.

For example, Sylvia, the domestic who showed no overt sign of resentment or rebellion when she was being severely insulted by her employer in front of both her fellow domestics and the guests had this to say during our interview. However, later, when she knew her employer was not within earshot, she reveals how angry she was at being treated that way.

Statements like these from other domestics call to mind what social science researchers have asked about deference. Is the deference exhibited by the person in the inferior position genuine or is it simply a disguise to shield her true feelings because to be open about one's resentment is to risk the sanctions one knows the superior always has the option of enforcing? Rita, for example, was the perfect "deferential worker" serving us tea in the most polite manner while I interviewed her employer. However, in our interview, and without her employer nearby, she becomes more candid about her extreme resentment at being treated like she is ignorant or stupid. Her exact words can be found on page 219.

From what Rita says, it is clear that she does not like how Mrs. Faelnar treats her and her fellow domestics. She believes she is not an ignorant person and knows what she is doing in terms of housework. Rita's assessment of her abilities and intellect does not jibe with her employer's views. However, she has learned over the years of being a domestic that she cannot react to every single act of humiliation. She understands her own position and her employer's expectations. She has developed a line of action that allows her to survive as a domestic. This line of action is the deferential behavior she

projects when her employer is around.

There are a variety of explanations for a domestic's deferential behavior (Rollins, 1985; Cock, 1981; Young, 1987; Tellis-Nayak, 1983; Whisson and Weil, 1971; Romero, 1990; Rubbo and Taussig, 1983; Jelin, 1977; McKinley, 1969; Smith, 1971). One view characterizes the domestic's deference as more apparent than real. Cock, one of the researchers found this to be the case among domestics in South Africa. She argues that the genuine deferential domestic does not exist. The deferential worker according to this view performs in a deferential manner because she fully accepts that her subordinate position is natural and legitimate. Although deferential behavior is integral to the job performance of a domestic, domestics make use of deference as a protective disguise to cover up their actual feelings of resentment and dissatisfaction with their subordination. As a strategy of accommodation and adaptation to the powerlessness and dependency of her situation, the domestic puts on a "mask of deference" to protect and maintain her inner self. In effect the domestic consciously performs with deference without necessarily accepting the premises associated with her deferential behaviors.

The opposing explanation states that there really are workers who can be categorized as deferential. Based on this argument, domestics then are deferential workers who accept without question that being a domestic, powerless and dependent is their rightful place in the societal structure. Hence her deference is real and genuine. She performs her chores with the attitude and demeanor of the deferential worker and believes that deference rituals are necessary components of her relationship with her female employer. Years of subservience have led her to accept the legitimacy of her subordinate position in the social structure and therefore she can be categorized as a real

deferential worker.

In the highly personalized relationship of the female employer and the female domestic, deferential rituals oftentimes become rituals of exploitation, extracted and demanded by employers from their domestics. The female domestic aware of her powerlessness and dependency upon her female employer has no choice but to show deferential behavior. To do otherwise would be to risk having her female employer impose whatever sanction a superior can use against a subordinate.

CHAPTER X

CONCLUSIONS AND REFLECTIONS

This research focused on what can be learned about the intersectionality of class and gender and of the relationality of women's lives by examining the relationship between a female employer and her female domestic. I have analyzed the different types of relationships between female employers and female domestics in the Philippines. I have examined what is unique about the Philippine example and at the same time what makes it universal and possibly generalizable to other types of relationships in other societies and at different time periods. The bases for my analysis are interviews in 1989 in the Philippines with 25 female employers- female domestics dyads with each woman interviewed separately at an average of 2 hours each.

This final chapter presents a summary of my findings and a discussion of the contributions of the results to what is already known about the intersectionality of class and gender relations as it impacts on the relationship between the female employer and her female domestic. I discuss the relevance of my findings to the on-going dialogue on relationality in the lives of women from different classes in society. I present the limitations of this study including my biases and the possibility that had I done the interviews today or had a different researcher done this study today and in another society the findings may be different. I look at the possibility that in a study I would do today the interview process and the set of questions could be different. In particular I discuss why I did not ask questions related to sexual abuse. Then I go back to my role as researcher and reflect on how the interview itself may have affected the lives of my

interviewees, lessons I have learned from each encounter, things I would do differently knowing what I know now, and how the process of doing this study has affected me as a native to the culture I had chosen to study.

Limitations of this Study and Suggestions for Strengthening Future Studies

Datedness of Data,

It has been 20 years since I conducted these interviews. Since then, the world has seen a rapid globalization of domestic service with more and more Filipino women and other women from poor economies of the Third World leaving their families behind to become domestics in richer First World societies. Recent studies (Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2002) have explored such issues as why women leave, what effect their migration has on the families and children they leave behind, what their relationships are with their female employer in the receiving countries, and what has happened to the pool of female domestics in their countries of origin. Although it is tempting to say that aspects of this study may have generalizability to female employer-female domestic relationships today, it is important to be fully aware of the datedness of my data and the changes and transformations in domestic service from 1989 to 2010. The only way to resolve this limitation is to do another series of interviews today and perhaps strengthen the results of this present study by comparing and contrasting the answers of the women I would interview today from the answers of the women interviewed in 1989.

Sample Size and Geographic Specificity

Fifty interviews with female employers and female domestics is a small sample. Although the results and conclusions I made in this study may reflect those of other

female employer-female domestic relationships in other societies and other time periods, the small sample size and the fact that the women in my sample all came from the same small geographic area limits its generalizability to other types of such a relationship. Generalizability to other female employer-female domestic relationships in other societies can be enhanced by repeating the study in multiple geographic locations and by increasing the number of women interviewed.

Class Membership of Researcher

The society in which this study was conducted is my own. I grew up in the city where this study was conducted. I grew up a member of the employer class and have seen the interaction between the female domestic and the female employer and the employer's family. I consider myself a de facto participant observer. However being a native to the society comes with having loyalties and subsequently biases that could have affected the way I approached the fieldwork experience and data gathering procedures. Although there are a lot of benefits from having a researcher native to the society being studied, biases and constraints from being an insider to the culture could be kept in check by using a team of interviews and field researchers that includes both insiders and outsiders.

Absence of Questions on Sexual Abuse

One issue that must be discussed is the impact of my membership in the employer class on the questions that I asked the employers and the domestics. An important question relates to whether any of the female domestics were ever subjected to sexual abuse or sexual harassment. The absence of questions related to the issue of sexual abuse is a significant limitation this study.

Any relationship with such a fundamental imbalance in power begs the question of whether or not the women on the low end of this imbalance are sexually abused. One reason why this never surfaced in the interviews may of course be my class membership and the taboo associated with the topic. But as previously noted the near total absence of men in the equation may in this instance have the effect of making sexual abuse far less an issue.

But why didn't I ask? As a member of the society with a lot of shared values with the employers there is a sense of propriety that would cause one to hesitate to bring it up. The question then would be, would I have done so had I done the interviews in 2010? I would still hesitate. This reluctance stems from the fact that I know that to try discuss the issue of sexual abuse of domestics with people of my own background would be considered inappropriate in my culture and to elicit this from the domestics would be very difficult. The domestics knew that I was a friend of their employer. To ask questions about sexual abuse would be difficult and verifying the truth or falsity of their answers would also be problematic. I suspect that the domestics would have been very reluctant in sharing any instance of sexual abuse with me since they knew that I was a friend of their employers. Fear of retaliation by their employers would have been uppermost in their minds. This is a serious lack in this study. Especially in the light of the fact that in the literature on the globalization of domestic service, there are an increasing number of studies that indicate the presence of sexual abuse. Some of these studies reveal a rise in the number of women who are subjected to sexual harassment and or sexual abuse by the males in the household of their employers (Eirenrich and Hochschild, 2002).

Based on the literature that indicates an increase in the number of reports of sexual abuse of domestics in the households of their employers I strongly recommend that in a future study the interviewer needs to include questions dealing with the issue. As I stated in the previous section, I strongly suggest that in a future study there should not just be one interviewer. Perhaps two interviewers could work with one being a native of the culture and other an outsider. Another method that I could use which may give me answers to questions on sexual abuse and insure the veracity of the domestics accounts would be to do group interviews of 3 to 4 domestics. Domestics who otherwise would fear retaliation may be empowered to talk if she feels that she is not alone. Since there are other domestics around perhaps one domestic can attest to the truthfulness of whatever is shared by another in terms of sexual abuse.

Despite all these limitations, it is still plausible to say that although there are limits to their generalizability, the findings and conclusions in this study about the relationship between the female employers and female domestics in Albay may reflect those of other women in other societies and in other time periods,

Discussion of Major Findings

The semi-structured interviews I conducted with the female employers and their female domestics were guided by these research questions: 1.) What kind of relationship exists between the female employer and the female domestic? ;
2.) What dynamics in these relationships make one different from or similar to another? ;
3.) What makes the relationship between Filipino female employers and female

domestics unique to the Philippines and what makes it similar to those of women in other societies? ; 4.) How are the intersectionality between class and gender relations and the relationality in the lives of women from different social classes played out in the relationship between the female employer and her female domestic?

What kind of the relationship exist between the female employer and the female domestic?

Among the 25 dyads I interviewed there exists 4 kinds of relationships between female domestics and female employers. I identified these relationships through the terms that employers use to refer to their female domestics. Although there are several terms used by the people in Albay, the interviews revealed that the term that an employer prefers and uses over all others is symptomatic of the relationship that she has with her domestic.

I gave each relationship a name using a compound word consisting of the term the employer prefers to use and my analysis of what the employer sees as her role in their relationship. Using this nomenclature I came up with the following types of relationships: 1.) the “sergeant –surugon”; 2.) the “supervisor-kabulig”; 3.) the “queen-maid”; and 4.) the “mentor-ward”.

In Albay employers who use “surugon” to refer to their domestic behave like a “sergeant” who daily must give out orders and expect the domestic to obey without question. The “sergeant” does not trust her “surugon” to do things on her own or to have the intelligence to do things correctly without being told daily how to do them. The “supervisor” on the other hand trusts her “kabulig” and sees her as having the creativity and the intelligence to do accomplish her chores with the least amount of supervision.

The employer who refers to her domestic as her “maid” behaves like a “queen”. She has the most number of domestics among the employers I interviewed. It is in this group where one can find maids wearing uniforms. The fourth type of relationship is rather anomalous as far as employers and domestics are concerned. This involves college and university professors who view themselves as the “mentors” of their domestics and who insist that the underprivileged young women in their homes who do housework for them while studying for a college degree are “wards” and not domestics.

What dynamics are common to all the relationships I encountered between the women in Albay?

Although these women’s descriptions and stories about their lives point to four different kinds of relationships, these relationships are similar in the components that characterize them as that of employer and domestic. There are four dynamics that bind these relationships together. These includes the use and abuse of the family analogy, the employer’s view of the domestic as her property, the mutual dependency of the two women on each other and the deference the employer feels she is entitled to get from her domestic.

Family Analogy

Use of the family analogy is universal among the 25 dyads in Albay. Since many of them left their own families at a very young age, domestics use the family analogy to satisfy their desire to belong to a family. They understand that their position is not like those of the employer’s children but as they really are- the household help. However, saying they are “like part of the family” can be one way domestics try to make sense of

the oppressive working conditions they are subject to. They convince themselves that this is the sacrifice they have to make as part of the family.

When employers say that domestics are “ part of the family” what they really mean is that the domestics are part and parcel of the definition of attending to the needs of their families. They view domestics as necessary appendages, emphasizing the fact that they cannot run their households without domestics to do the housework for them. To the employers in Albay, raising a family cannot be done without domestics.

The use of the family analogy is also related to “compandrazgo”, a patriarchal system of patronage based on inner and outer kinship rings that Filipino use to relate to each other (Holnsteiner, 1963). The Filipino navigates her or his society through this system of patronage that dates back and got firmly entrenched in Philippine society throughout the 300 years of Spanish colonization. In this system the domestics and their families occupy the outer rings of the employer’s kinship circles. The domestic and her family may occupy the outermost periphery but to the domestic being in the outskirts does not matter. For as long as she is included in that kinship ring, she understands that to be related to her employer in any manner is the only way the impoverished can survive in a society that is predicated on very strict rules and rituals of patronage.

Through “compandrazgo” the employers see themselves as the protectors of their domestics. As patrons they take control of every facet and phase of the domestic’s life. This system opens up the domestics to a lot of abuse. Considered as the patron’s “muchacha” (child) yet not really related to her by blood, she gets to be the recipient of extreme measures of “parental control’ but without the priveleges that only a real child of the employer is entitled to.

The Domestic as Property

Compandrazgo not only obscures the exploitation a domestic suffers in the employer's household, but it also gives rise to an employer's sense of ownership over her domestics. Since they see their domestics as property, employers do not hesitate to "discard" them any time they want to and for the slightest of infractions. Employers do not see domestics as persons with their own lives and histories. The person with her moods, feelings, needs, and desires is rendered inconsequential and invisible. As property they are disposed of at the whim of the employer. Domestics are never consulted when they are given away as wedding gifts, or inherited from one generation to the next, shared among households, or borrowed by a daughter from her mother's house. They are property.

Dependency

The next dynamic that is present in all four kinds of relationships I saw among the women in Albay is dependency. Domestics are dependent on their employers for their survival. They do not have any other alternative but to endure the oppressive working conditions they find in their employer's household. Employers cultivate their domestics' dependency to their own advantage. They control the working conditions and utilize manipulative techniques to keep their domestics. Otherwise they will have to do the chores themselves. Employers are therefore as dependent on the domestics as the domestics are to their employers.

However, domestics are not oblivious to their employers' machinations. Knowing that they are powerless to openly rebel or defy their employer's wishes, they adapt a variety of survival strategies. Humor and criticism of their employers when they

are among themselves, are ways they vent their humiliations and anger at how they are treated. Solidarity and cooperation among domestics is also common. They cover for each other when the need arises. When nothing else works domestics use a final more permanent strategy – flight. When they feel there is nothing they can do to alleviate their working conditions most domestics simply quit.

Deference

Domestics learn early on and over the years that one survival strategy they can use is one that is actually part of their job description as domestics. They are expected to show deference to their employers. They understand that part of their job description as domestics is to sustain their ever-pleasant faces, their deferential posture and gestures and the distance they maintain unless they are ordered to come closer. They must show deference in the language they use when allowed to speak. As part of the structure of communication, domestics cannot ask questions without permission but must listen when employers decide to make the domestic their confidante.

In the highly personalized world of the female employer-female domestic relationship, deferential rituals become rituals of exploitation. Domestics, aware of their powerlessness and dependency, have no choice but to show deference or risk the anger of their employer.

The Intersectionality of Class and Gender Relations in the female employer-female domestic relationship

The interviews suggest that the female employer-female domestic relationship is a power relationship. It is an asymmetrical interaction between a woman from the privileged class and one from the impoverished sector of Philippine society.

These two women are basically worlds apart. But because of housework and the division of labor in the household that strongly puts the burden of accomplishing the household chores on the shoulders of women, they come together to forge a relationship as female employer and female domestic.

The intersectionality of class and gender relations in Philippines society is articulated in the relationship between these two women. The woman from the privileged class understands that she will have strong opposition were she to question why it is women who has sole and primary responsibility for housework. Her husband, brother, and father have not been expected to do housework all their lives. Years of socialization would be too difficult to undo. Although gender relations dictate that she does the housework, class privilege gives her the resources at her disposal to buy her way out of doing it herself. She simply turns around and hires an impoverished woman to fulfill her responsibility for housework. Since it is through class privilege that she can pass her own housework to a woman from the lower classes, then she understands that she has to do whatever is necessary to maintain that class privilege. Furthermore, the exploitative nature of the daily interaction between employers and domestics demonstrates the relationality in the lives of women. The privileging of one group of women results in the exploitation of the other.

What makes the female employer-female domestic relationship among the women in Albay unique to the Philippines and yet similar to those in other societies in the world?

The method through which Filipinos define their kinship systems plays a major role in the relationship between the female employer and her female domestic. This

system called “comandrazgo” is what makes the relationship between the employer and her domestic unique to the Philippines to a certain degree.

“Comandrazgo” defines who is and who is not a member of ones “family”. In the Philippines ones family is not just ones nuclear family. The family includes almost everyone in the village or even a town because they see their groupings as clans. Members are grouped into kinship rings. In the innermost circle is the immediate family. Followed by several kinship rings of near to distant relatives related by blood. However the kinship rings do not end there. In the outer rings are the so called “family” who are defined by the innermost circles as members of the family although not related by blood. This outer ring is very important for us to see uniqueness of the relationship between the Filipino female employer and the female domestic. The outer ring includes the godparents at baptism, the godparents at weddings, the godchildren, the tenant farmers, and any person who become members by debt of gratitude including people who have been at the receiving end of the largesse and patronage of the family in the innermost ring.

“Compangrazgo” is a system of patronage that dates back to the beginning of Spanish colonization in the Philippines in the 1500s (Holnsteiner, 1963). At the onset of colonization the Filipinos had in place a class system that consisted of the Datu (princely class) and the different levels and categories of slaves and freemen. The Spanish conquistadores and the friars, utilized what was already in place between the different classes in Philippine society when they arrived and used it to develop a patronage system that made it easier for them to control the Filipino communities or “barangays”.

Many young daughters of tenant farmers become the domestics of the landowner or business owners because the latter prefer them since they are already “family” by virtue of their location in outer kinship rings. The other way also works. When a young girl becomes a domestic then her family becomes members of the female employer’s outer ring of kinship. As explained in an earlier chapter this relationship lasts for generations and generations of both the domestic’s family as well as those of the employer’s family. Since their relative positions in the rings are based on “utang-na-loob” (debt of gratitude that cannot be repaid) then the patronage is forever sealed with the employer and her family as the superordinate with near absolute control over the lives of the domestic and her family who are the subordinate in the relationship.

Although it may seem obvious that “comprandrazgo” allows the exploitative working conditions that the female domestic is subjected to as soon as she enters her employer’s household this system also gives the domestic and her family a tool with which to navigate the society that does not allow them to do so except through patronage.

In the literature on domestic service, the “compandrazgo” does make the female employer-female domestic relationship in Albay unique to the Philippines. The bonding between the employer and her family on one side and the female domestic and her family on the other side lasts for generations and actually becomes a debt bondage ripe with a lot of opportunities for abuse by the employing family. This relationship gives rise to aspects of the relationship that I saw in Albay. This includes the domestic without her consent being given away as a wedding present, shared between sibling families, included as inheritance when her original employer dies, and generally being treated as the property of the female employer.

Although patronage system is found in other societies, its effect on the female employer-female domestic relationship is not as profound as the influence of “compangrazgo” on the relationship between the women in Albay.

Reflexibility Revisited

Throughout the research process I struggled with issues that derived from my being a native to the society I was studying. I grew up in the city where the interviews were conducted. In every step I took throughout this research I always asked myself this question: Can I approach the subject without bias and what impact does my relationship with the community have on my data? I knew before going into the field that my subjectivities could get in the way if I do not subject myself to a careful monitoring of my subjectivities.

Although I found considerable advantages to my being a native and as an insider, I struggled with trying to believe in the veracity of the domestic’s responses. Since the domestics were in the household when I was interviewing the employers, I knew that they had associated me with the employer class. In truth I am because a majority of the employers were friends of mine or of my family.

Throughout the interviews I struggled between my research pursuit and a need to alleviate the working conditions of the domestics I met. I kept asking myself what exactly was my research for. Although there was no doubt in my mind that I was interviewing the women for my dissertation and that the production of new knowledge

and contribution to existing knowledge were important goals I could not stop wondering what ultimately is social research for.

I wondered what role I needed to play in producing certain kinds of knowledge and what then? How does the result of my study help to make for a better world for the domestics and employers whose lives I intruded into in the pursuit of knowledge?

At some point in the field I became so concerned with how my presence affected how the employers were treating the domestics it became increasingly difficult for me to separate my social activism with my research goals. I specially became uncomfortable when I started interviewing the domestics. Since I left it to the employers to choose which of their domestics I could interview I did not ask permission from the domestics. This continued to haunt me throughout the data analysis and the writing process. I had a hard time dealing with the fact that I subjected an already disadvantaged group of women to coercive interviews.

While I was listening to the interview and when I was choosing quotes from the women during the writing process I was amazed at the power of the researcher over what gets asked and what gets written. The choices a researcher makes at every step of the research determines what new knowledge gets produced. This to me is a great responsibility. I see that a significant aspect of any research is for the researcher to reflect more on his/her research practices and the power she has over what gets written and gets left out. In the wrong hands research certainly can be very harmful to the people who are subjects of the research and to the audience the researcher is writing for. Erroneous knowledge can be easily transmitted to future generations of social scientists

unless the researcher carefully monitors the power she has over the whole research process.

Concluding Statements

“Most days I don’t even have time for breakfast. It is rather difficult. But I guess that’s what our life is, us poor people. If I had money I would never work like this. But there’s just no other way...”

“I let them have whatever amount of rice they want...But I just let it go. They might leave. Then where will I be?...My husband? He does not have any idea about what goes on. As long as he is not bothered....What can I do? You know...like they are my partners in crime. I am a housewife and a career woman at the same time.”

Explicit in these two excerpts are the class and gender issues that bring two women, one from a privileged class and the other from the impoverished segment of society, into a relationship that involves housework- a gendered activity that at all times and in most societies in the world has been designated as the primary responsibility of women. This dissertation has explored the relationship between 25 female employer-female domestic dyads in Albay, a medium sized city in the Philippines. Analyzing 50 ethnographic interviews from a symbolic interactionist perspective and in the tradition of qualitative methodology, I focused on how the interaction between the female employer and the female

domestic maintains the class and gender hierarchies that forced their relationship to come into existence.

In this research I have examined the impact of class and gender relations on women's lives not as separate entities but as intersecting forces. By analyzing the poverty stricken sectors in a society I have demonstrated the relationality in the lives of these women. The female employer-female domestic relationship demonstrates that the privileging of one group of women is related to the exploitation of another.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

THE WOMEN

In this Appendix I introduce the female domestic with her female employer in order to have a basis from which to view how they relate to each other as domestics and employers

Part I – The Dyads

1.) Mrs. Arce and Rosa

Mrs. Arce is a 37-year old music and dance instructor at a local college. She has a master's degree in music education. Her husband is a sales representative who is between jobs. They have 4 children, the youngest of which is 7 years old. She usually has a minimum of 4 female domestics in her household. They are all live-in with an extra live-out cook and laundrywoman. She belongs to one of the oldest and richest families in Albay. Her domestics, one of whom is Rosa, are all inherited from her parents' household. She calls them maids.

Rosa is 52 years old. She started working as a domestic when she was only 9. She has been with Mrs. Arce's family since the latter was a baby. She is a live-out domestic whose duties include washing, marketing, cooking and supervising all the other domestics. She does the marketing and cooking for 3 households – Mrs. Arce's and Mrs. Arce's 2 married siblings'. She lives with her

husband who is a seasonal carpenter and their 5 children the youngest of whom is 20 years old. She works every day of the week from 7 in the morning till 7 or 8 in the evening.

2.) Mrs. Bando and Clara

Mrs. Bando is 35 years old, married for 3 years with 1 child who is only 3 months old. She has a bachelor's degree in business and works as a bank employee. Her husband who works in the same bank is also a business graduate and studies law in the evenings. She has 3 domestics in her household and she calls all of them "kabulig". Being the youngest of 4 children, she has the added responsibility of taking care of her invalid father who is living with them.

Clara is 52 years old but started working when she was 10. She is a live-in who goes home every weekend. Her main responsibility is marketing, cooking and taking care of the 3 month old baby. She is paid 500 pesos a month and has been with Mrs. Bando for 3 years. She is married but her husband has been jobless for many years. All her 5 children including the youngest, who is 17, work as domestics in Albay and in Manila. She likes her employers except for one thing. She was never told at the beginning that she would eventually take care of Mrs. Bando's invalid father. She hates cleaning him and disposing of his bodily wastes.

3.) Mrs. Cortez and Violeta

Mrs. Cortez is a 55-year old college professor with a doctoral degree in education. Her husband is an engineer with his own contracting business. They have four children who are all either married with their families or away at

college or working in other parts of the country. The only other family member in their household is their 7-year old grandson, whom they agreed to raise so his single-mom can pursue her career in Manila. She usually has a maximum of 2 domestics who are “wards”. Instead of salaries for her domestics, she pays for their education and provides them with supplies and gives them time off during the day for their classes.

Violeta is an unmarried 27-year old “ward” from another island. She decided to be a domestic so she could go to college and get a degree in Hotel and Restaurant Technology. She was recruited by another “ward” 5 months ago to work for Mrs. Cortez. Although she is very busy from 5 in the morning to midnight doing both her chores and her schoolwork, Violeta is determined to get her education. Mrs. Cortez thinks very highly of her skills and intelligence. She is one of the domestics who eats regularly with her employers.

4.) Mrs. Dajoya and Marla

Mrs. Dajoya is a 44-year old college instructor with a Masters degree in education and working towards her Ed D. She is married to a government employee who is studying law. She has been married for 17 years and has 4 children, the youngest of whom is 9 years old. She herself worked as a “ward” to get an education. She is on her 3rd “ward”. Since her husband cooks most of their meals and she herself does a lot of the cleaning during the weekends, she usually has only one “ward” at a time in her household.

Marla, who is 19 years old, was already working as a domestic for 2 years before she was recruited and recommended by her cousin to work as a “ward” for

Mrs. Dajoya. Her day begins at 5 in the morning and her main duties are washing the dishes and doing laundry and ironing. She is studying as an apprentice radio operator but will start on her Bachelor's degree in education as soon as she passes the NCEE (National College Entrance Exams).

5.) Mrs Enriquez and Sylvia

Mrs. Enriquez is 52 years old and has a college degree. She is among the select few in the inner circle of the wife of one of the highest ranking elected officials in the Philippines. She has 2 children and one grandson. She does not actually work except in advising her husband in the running of their family business. Besides her 6 female domestics who she calls "maids", she also has a security guard and a chauffer. She inherited Sylvia when her mother-in-law died. She thinks her maid Sylvia and all the other maids in her house are stupid. She does not think very highly of their skills. Her maids do not think very highly of her either but they always manage to be perfectly deferential when she is around.

Sylvia is 51 years old and a high school graduate, married but separated from her husband. She has a daughter who is in high school. She has 4 siblings and was orphaned when she was very young. She has worked as a domestic for 38 years, having started when she was 12. Her day begins at 5 am and ends at around 10 pm, mainly doing the food marketing and cooking meals for Mrs. Enriquez's family. She considers her monthly pay of 500 pesos very small for what she does but does not think she will get anywhere if she talks to her employer about it. She was the personal maid of Mr. Enriquez's mother before working for the present Mrs. Enriquez.

6.) Mrs. Faelnar and Rita

Mrs. Faelnar is a 45 year old District Attorney who has been married for 22 years. Her husband is one of the highest ranking elected officials of Albay. She has 5 children, the youngest of whom is 11 years old. She calls her 3 female domestics, “maids”. She is one of those employers who does not want to be bothered about household chores or supervision because, as she says, she is very busy attending to her career the whole day.

Rita is a 23 year old high school graduate who has been a domestic for 4 years, all with Mrs. Faelnar. She is responsible for food marketing and cooking but helps the other domestics with the laundry and the household cleaning. Her workday begins around 5 in the morning and ends around 9 pm. Her jobless and ailing father lives in the next town. She has a very good relationship with the other domestics in the household and they cover for her when she needs to go and attend to her sick father.

7.) Mrs. Guzman and Aleta

Mrs. Guzman is 34 years old with a Masters degree in education and is a dance and P.E. instructor at a local college. She has been married for 2 years and has 2 children the youngest of whom is only 6 months old. Her husband’s family is one of the landed elite in the city and has a lot of tenant farmers working for them. She only has to go to one of the tenant families whenever she needs a domestic. However, every domestic who works for her gets a chance to go to school. She has 3 “wards” working for her. Her “wards” get free board and lodging and time off to go to school. Mrs. Guzman schedules their domestic work

load and their schoolwork so that they could do relatively well in their studies without having a single chore left undone at the end of the day. She also allows her “wards” a chance to earn extra money from doing laundry for the students who board with them, and by giving them commission for every clothing item they sell from her Ready-to-Wear business.

Aleta is 20 years old. She started domestic service when she was 16. She has been with Mrs. Guzman for 4 years but was already in the employ of Mr. Guzman’s family before being inherited by her present employer. She takes evening classes at a local college. She does the marketing, cleaning, and assists Mrs. Guzman in managing the student boarders. She begins her household chores at 5 am and ends at 4 pm. She comes home from her evening classes at around 9 and does not have any other chores except when very necessary. Otherwise she spends the rest of the evening studying. She and the other “wards” of Mrs. Guzman get Sundays off, 15 days vacation with pay, 13th month pay and bonus and commission from every dress they sell in the RTR business.

8.) Mrs. Hermosa and Yolanda

Mrs. Hermosa is a 56-year old Literature professor at a local university. She got her graduate degrees from the United States and Europe. Her husband owns his own lumber business. They have been married for 30 years and have 2 grown children, and 2 grandchildren. She is one of the employers who calls her domestics “maids” and has usually 2 to 3 in her household at a time. She gives her domestics time off during the weekends and allows them to go to dances and

date. However, Mrs. Hermoso does not like to deal with married domestics, so as soon as a domestic decides to get married, she dismisses that domestic at once.

Yolanda is 18 years old and started domestic service when she was 16. She finished 6th grade. She would have continued to go to school in her hometown but her parents pushed her to get out and go to Albay because there was chaos in their place. Bands of single young men would go around at night raiding houses and raping women with nobody, not even the local police force able to stop them. The only solution was to send her away for her own safety.

9.) Mrs. Ibanez and Ofelia

Mrs Ibanez is a 54 year old who has a Bachelors Degree in Home Economics. Besides a hotel and a restaurant that she runs with her husband, she also has her own catering service. She has been married for 38 years and has 8 children the youngest of whom is 24 years old. She belongs to one of the oldest families of Albay and is one of the closest friends of the wife of one of the highest ranking officials in the Philippines. She calls all of her retinue of domestics (7 or 8 at a time) her “kabulig”.

Ofelia is a 35 year old who started domestic work when she was 9 years old. She has a 2nd grade education and is from another island. She has been with Mrs. Ibanez for 3 years and has become the most trusted domestic in the household. She is a live-out whose primary duty is cooking for both Mrs. Ibanez’s family and for the catering business. Her workday begins at 6:30 am and ends at 8 in the evening. She then goes home to her carpenter husband and their 5 children. When her children were little Mrs. Ibanez allowed her to bring them to

work. She was able to feed them lunch taken from the meal she prepared for Mrs. Ibanez.

10.) Mrs. Josol and Fe

Mrs. Josol is 58 years old with a doctorate in Education. She is a college president who has been married for 30 years. She and her husband, a government employee only have one child who is 19 years old. She allows all her “wards” to get a college education. She only has 2 “wards” at a time. She pays for their tuition and school expenses and gives them allowances for clothing and other needs.

Fe is a 19 year old “ward” who is in her 3rd year of college with a major in elementary education. She has been with Mrs. Josol since she started domestic work during her 1st year of college. She does not get any monthly wage but her tuition, school expenses, books, clothing and transportation are all paid for by her employer. She is from the southern tip of the island where Albay is located. She is the 5th of 8 children. Her father is a tailor and her mother helps her grandparents with processing coconut meat into copra. Her workday begins at 5 in the morning during which she prepares breakfast for Mrs. Josol’s family. After she washes dishes and cleans up she is off to school. Right after classes she comes home to do more cleaning and cook supper. Only when the dinner plates have been washed and put away can she do school assignments. She does most of the laundry and ironing during the weekends.

11.) Mrs. Kabesa and Teresa

Mrs Kabesa is a 60 year old single college professor with a doctorate in education. She has no children but she has been sending nephews and nieces through college. She also pays for the education of her “wards”. Being a member of the elite inner circle of close friends of the wife of a very high ranking elected official in the Philippines, she leads a very busy social life besides her academic responsibilities as the dean of college at a local university.

Eighteen (18) year old Teresa worked in a bakery before becoming a “ward” of Mrs. Kabesa. Teresa was orphaned when she was very young and was cared for by her grandmother. She was transferred to Mrs. Kabesa’s household to honor the dying wish of her grandma. She started domestic work when she was 16 and is actually a distant relative of her employer of 1 and ½ years. She is reviewing for the NCEE (National College Entrance Exams) so she can go to college as Mrs. Kabesa has promised. During the summer when she first started working for Mrs. Kabesa, the latter sent her to cosmetology school. Now one of her duties is to attend to her employer’s nails, hair and facial needs. Although she starts working at 5 in the morning and has no days off, she actually thinks her workload is very light. When her employer leaves for school, she is left to divide her time between household chores and reviewing for the college entrance exams. She eats meals with her employer and although she enjoys a lot of privileges in the household, she takes care not to ever displease her employer so she can be assured of continued employment and finances for her college education.

12.) Mrs. Lopez and Delia

Mrs. Lopez is 40 years old, married for 19 years with 5 children. Her oldest is in college but her youngest is only 6. She has a Masters degree and is working on her doctorate. She is the director of the fine arts center of a university in Albay. Although she and her husband are both born of privilege, they do not socialize with the Albay elite. Instead they spend most of their free time working for a born again Christian group that has a reputation of demanding a lot of time and money from its members. She has three (3) “wards” all of whom she encourages to become members of her religious organization. Her “wards” eat meals with her and her family. She gives them weekends off. Besides sending them to school she also gives them allowances for personal expenses. She apologizes that she is unable to give them more monetary compensation.

Delia is 19 years old and is the 3rd among 8 kids. Her father is a logger and a farmer. She has been a domestic since she was 14 and hopes to get out of domestic work as soon as she finishes college. Her day begins at 5 in the morning. She and the other wards prepare breakfast and clean up before 7:30. Delia spends most of the day in school but as soon as she is off she starts helping with the dinner preparation and the laundry and ironing. Although she likes her employer she does not really like domestic service but has to do it to go to school.

13.) Mrs. Marabe and Rufina

Mrs. Marabe is a 29 year old college instructor in hotel and restaurant management. She is married with 3 children and expecting another baby. Her

oldest is 8 years old and the youngest is 6 years old. Her husband is an architect with his own construction company. Her domestics are trained by her mother. She has 4 in her household – the regular all-around domestic named Rufina, a laundry woman who comes 1 or 2 times a week, a chauffeur who also is in charge of taking the kids to school, and a cook on loan from Mrs. Marabe's mother's household. She thinks domestics are stupid but has to put up with them because she hates doing any household chore.

Rufina is 16 years old with a 1st year high school education. She is one of 4 domestics in Mrs. Marabe's household. Her day begins at 5 in the morning and ends late at 11 or 12 midnight. Her duties include cooking, cleaning and bathing the children. The live-out laundry woman comes only 1 or 2 times a week, so Rufina does the children's clothes. She gets Sundays off which she spends going to the movies. She thinks that her employer treats her badly but has to endure it since she does not see any other future for herself but domestic service.

14.) Mrs. Nunez and Charita

Mrs. Nunez is a 59 year old housewife with a college degree. She has 8 grown children and 6 grandchildren. Her husband of 40 years has his own construction business. She has 2 domestics in the household and 1 live-out laundry woman. She and her 2 daughters share and rotate domestics between their households so her experiences with female domestics also include those of her children's households.

Charita is 14 years old with a 4th grade education. She has been a domestic for a little over a year. Her day begins at around 5:30 and ends close to midnight. Her duties include cleaning, helping the cook, and taking care of any grandchild left with Mrs. Nunez for the day or the week. She really wanted to continue studying but her barrio was raided by the NPA (New People's Army) so her parents sent her to Albay to escape the chaos.

15.) Mrs. Ortiz and Pamela

Mrs. Ortiz is a 44 year old housewife with a college degree. She has 3 children the youngest of whom is 13 years old. Her husband of 19 years is a judge in another town. Both she and her husband belong to one of the oldest elite families in Albay.

She usually has 2 or 3 domestics in the household. She thinks that domestics should ask their employer permission about every aspect of their lives including who to date and when to get married, and said she was quite hurt when one of them eloped. However she said she does not blame the domestic for doing what she did because she would have said no had she known about it.

Pamela is a 13 year old who started domestic work when she was only 10. She finished 5th grade. Her day begins at around 4 in the morning and ends between 11 and midnight. Her main duties include cleaning, washing and ironing clothes, and helping the cook. Besides the hour or 2 she spends to go to mass on Sundays, she does not have any days off. She does get a rest period during the

middle of the day. Like the other domestics, she comes from the town where Mrs. Ortiz's husband is a judge. What she does not like about domestic service is that her mother and older sisters keep going to her employer to borrow money against her monthly wages. At the time of the interview she was working for monthly wages that were already spent by her mother.

16.) Mrs. Pascual and Lucia

Mrs. Pascual is 58 year old housewife with a degree in law. She is the closest friend of the wife of one of the highest ranking elected officials in the Philippines. Her husband of 39 years is the most powerful politician in the city. She has 10 grown children most of whom are married with their own households. She has a very busy social life so she must depend on her 4 domestics to do all her household chores.

Lucia is a 45 year old domestic with a 6th grade education. She started working as a domestic when she was only 12 years old. She is married and has 7 children. All her kids are in school and she has one boy who will be graduating from high school. She is a live-out domestic who has been working for Mrs. Pascual for 20 years. She is the most trusted domestic in her employer's household. Mr. Pascual secured jobs for Lucia and her husband. He is a security guard in a local bank. Lucia herself works for 2 hours each early morning as a janitor in the local market. Although her income would allow her to quit domestic service, she does not because she knows that Mr. and Mrs. Pascual can take away their city jobs any time they want to. Besides training any new domestic, she is

the main food marketer and cook for Mrs. Pascual's household. She also does the same service for the household of Mrs. Pascual's daughter who lives in the city.

17.) Mrs. Quito and Minda

Mrs. Quito is a 57 year-old millionaire widow with a high school diploma. She was a domestic herself when she met her husband who happened to be the owner of a large department store in the city. Now she and her sons manage three department stores in Albay. She has a retinue of 10 domestics. Having been a domestic herself, she understands how it is to be one. She is one of the few employers who have Social Security Insurance for their domestics besides paying them the highest monthly wages. All her domestics have time off during the weekends. Her most trusted domestic, Minda, actually has a 1 to 3 hours break during the middle of the day.

Minda is a 44 year old domestic who has no formal education. She started working as a domestic when she was 17. She is a very distant relative of Mrs. Quito, her employer of 21 years. She is the chief marketer and cook for the family and staff of her employer. Her day begins at 5 and ends at 10 in the evening. However, since she does not do the dirty dishes, after lunch she actually has a free period until 4 in the afternoon when she starts cooking again for the evening meal. She is the highest paid of all the domestics I interviewed. Over the years she has been able to send all her 6 siblings through school. Now, she feels that life has passed her by. She wants to get married, have a family of her own, quit domestic service and have her own small piggery farm. She has asked Mrs.

Quito several times if she could leave, but so far the latter has said no. Minda feels obligated not to quit without her employer's express permission because her employer has done a lot for her and her siblings.

18.) Mrs. Reyes and Gloria

Mrs. Reyes is a 27 year old management graduate who is an administrative assistant at NEDA (National Economic Development Authority). Her husband of 3 years is a member of the technical staff at the same workplace. They are both taking evening classes at the law department of a local university. Mrs. Reyes has 3 domestics in her household including one whose main responsibility is to take care of her 3 year old daughter. Her domestics are all recruited by her mother who lives in another town.

Gloria is a 17 year old who started domestic service when she was 11. She studied only up to 4th grade. She comes from her employer's hometown and was a personal maid of Mrs. Reyes's mother before she joined the latter's domestic staff 3 years ago. Her main duty is to take care of the 3 year old but she also helps in cleaning, cooking and doing laundry. Her workday starts at around 5 and ends at 10. She does not get any time off during the weekends and is not allowed any vacation at all except for one Sunday afternoon each month.

19.) Ms. Samonte and Linda

Ms. Samonte is a single 39 year old training officer at the Bureau of Forestry. She has a Bachelors degree in education and is working for her masters.

She has her blind mother living with her. She travels a lot so she relies on her only domestic to take care of her mother and do all the chores in the house including marketing, cooking, cleaning and laundry. She wants to send her domestic to school but says there is no way to do that since someone has to be there every minute of the day for her blind mother.

Linda is 14 years old and started domestic work at 12. Ms. Samonte is her first and only employer. She finished Grade 5. She comes from another town where her parents have a small farm. She helps her parents with her wages (300 pesos/mo) since it is only her mother who works because her father is chronically ill. She has 4 siblings the youngest of which is only 3 months. Her day begins around 5 in the morning. Although she is the only domestic in the house, she finds cleaning, cooking and doing laundry for 2 people not heavy at all. She has a lot of rest periods especially when Ms. Samonte's mother is asleep or resting in her room.

20.) Mrs. Turalba and Dayday

Mrs. Turalba is a 39 year old doctor of optometry whose clinic is attached to her house. She has been married to a college professor for 10 years and has 2 children, a 9 and a 10 year old. She has 3 female domestics in the house. However, she does not really supervise them. Since she is an only child her widowed mother lives with them and has the responsibility of managing the household and the domestics.

Dayday is 21 years old. She started working as a domestic when she was 16. She has been with Mrs. Turalba for 3 years. Her day begins at 5 in the morning and ends around 11 in the evening. Her duties include assisting Mrs. Turalba's mother in preparing the meals, dishwashing, and cleaning the house. She is paid 500 pesos a month. Her only time off is 1 hour every Sunday to go to church. She is able to take 1 or 2 rest periods during the day.

21.) Mrs. Ureta and Glenda

Mrs. Ureta is a 29 year old pediatrician who has her own practice. Her clinic is attached to her house so she is able to check on her domestics and her 2 very young children in between patients. She has been married for 5 years to a management graduate who runs his own business. The 3 domestics in her household were recruited and trained by her mother-in-law. She does not have any high expectations from her domestics. She complains about their not being able to follow simple directions but says she must put up with it because not only does she not like housework, she also does not have the time to do it.

Glenda is a 16 year old domestic who started working when she was only 8. She finished the 4th grade. She was working for Mrs. Ureta's mother-in-law before she joined Mrs. Ureta's household 3 years ago. Her day begins at 5 in the morning and ends at 10 in the evening. Her main duty is to take care of her employer's 2 young kids. But when the kids are asleep she helps in cleaning the house and in washing and ironing clothes. She is paid 250 pesos a month and has her own room and bed in her employer's house.

22.) Mrs. Villa and Ester

Mrs. Villa is a 35 year old dress designer who runs her own dress shop. She is a business school graduate and comes from one of the oldest and richest families in the city. She has been married for 13 years and has a 14 year old daughter who has been raised and has lived with her (Mrs. Villa's) mother since birth. She has a dress shop staff of 3 who live right in the shop. One of the women is also Mrs. Villa's domestic who does the cooking, cleaning and laundry in the main house.

Ester is 16 years old and has been a domestic since she was 12. She finished 6th grade. She has been with Mrs. Villa for 5 months and is paid 300 pesos a month. Her mother left her when she was very young and her father is in the south of the Philippines with his new family. Ester has 3 siblings but she does not see them at all. She does the marketing, cooking, cleaning at the dress shop and also at Mrs. Villa's house. When the shop gets busy with dress orders she helps in sewing buttons and hemming skirts. Her workday begins at 5 and ends late into the evening. She does not get any days off but has several rest periods during the day.

23.) Mrs. Warabe and Lorna

Mrs. Warabe is a 43 year old optometrist who only works part time in an optical clinic. She spends most of her workday as a secretary to her lawyer husband who has his own law office. They have been married for 19 years and

have 6 children the youngest of which is 1 year and 6 months old. The 2 domestics in her household are distant cousins who are the children of her mother's personal maid who went with her and her sister to be their domestic when they were in college.

Lorna is 18 years old and has been a domestic for only 8 months. She joined Mrs. Warabe's household because she has been promised that her employer will allow her to go to school. She complains, however, that so far the school year has started and her employer has not kept her promise. She was actually planning to go to school in her own town but when Mrs. Warabe came to see her (Lorna's) mother asking for a domestic, she was told to go and be Mrs. Warabe's domestic. She is paid 350 pesos a month. Her own brother is a houseboy in the same household. After years of working for Mrs. Warabe's mother, Lorna's mother has retired from domestic work and stays at home. Her father drives a commuter jeepney in Albay. Lorna is very busy from 5 am to almost midnight catering to the members of Mrs. Warabe's family. She cooks, cleans, washes and irons clothes the whole day long. She does not get any time off during the week, but manages to get rest periods in between chores. She is allowed to go home for a week during the period of her town's fiesta. She does not like working as domestic but sees no other alternative. She would much rather go to school to get a college education.

24.) Mrs. Yulo and Loida

Mrs. Yulo is a 30 year-old commerce graduate who works as an auditor at a government agency. Her husband of 7 years is a policeman who is trying to finish a law degree. She has 3 children, the youngest of which is only 3 months old. Besides her 2 sisters living with them who help in the housework, she also has 2 domestics.

Loida is 26 years old and started domestic work at 16. She finished high school.

She has an off again on again relationship with her employer. When Mrs. Yulo fired her, Mrs. Yulo's mother took her in. Then Mrs. Yulo took her back. When she got sick Mrs Yulo's mother got her again and nursed her back to health. She was brought back to her employer as soon as she was able to. Her main duty is to take care of the baby but she also helps the other domestics in cleaning, cooking and in doing laundry. She starts working at 5 in the morning and goes to sleep close to midnight. She does not have days off but is able get enough rest periods during the day.

25.) Mrs. Zullea and Carmen

Mrs. Zullea has a Ph. D from a university in the United States. She is the president of a local college. Her husband of 18 years is a millionaire corporate lawyer. They have 3 children, the youngest of whom is 10 years old. Mrs. Zullea and her husband are well traveled and have worked in other countries besides the Philippines. She works as a language teacher for foreigner volunteers. She has a domestic staff that includes a security guard cum butler, a nanny for the

kids, a cook, an-all around, a washer woman and one whose main task is cleaning and taking care of the garden. She is one of the employers who insist on white uniforms for all her female domestics. She is also one of those who actually provide domestics with their own rooms and baths and give them vacation leave with pay every year.

Carmen is 20 years old and has been a domestic since she was 10. She never went to school. She is from the hometown of Mrs. Zullea and was recruited by her employer's sister. She is paid 210 pesos a month and has been with her employer for 4 years. Her day begins at 5 in the morning and ends only when her employers go to bed which she says can be 12 midnight, especially when they are entertaining, which Carmen says they do on a regular basis.

APPENDIX B

In Part II, I present an overall picture of the domestics and the employers to get each group's demographic profile. These profiles are presented through bar graphs that show for the domestic, their current ages, the age they started domestic service, their education, and marital status, and for the employers, their ages, their education their marital status, the occupation, and the husband's occupation if married.

Part II – Demographic Profiles

In this section, I present an overall picture of the domestics and the employers. I show these demographic profiles in the form of bar graphs. For the domestics, the profiles include their current ages, the age they started domestic service, their education, and their marital status. The profiles for the employers show their ages, their education, their marital status, the occupation, and the husband's occupation if married.

Section A - Demographic Profile: Employers

Figure 1 presents the Education Profile of the female employers. Of the 25 employers, 2 (8%) have a High School Diploma, 8 (32%) have college degrees and 15 (60%) have graduate and post graduate degrees.

Figure 2 shows the Educational Profile of the husbands of the employers who are married. The graph includes only 22 husbands since only 22 of the female employers are married. One (1) employer is a widow and 2 are

single. Twelve (12 or 54%) of the husbands have college degree. The others (10 or 46 %) have graduate degrees either in management or law.

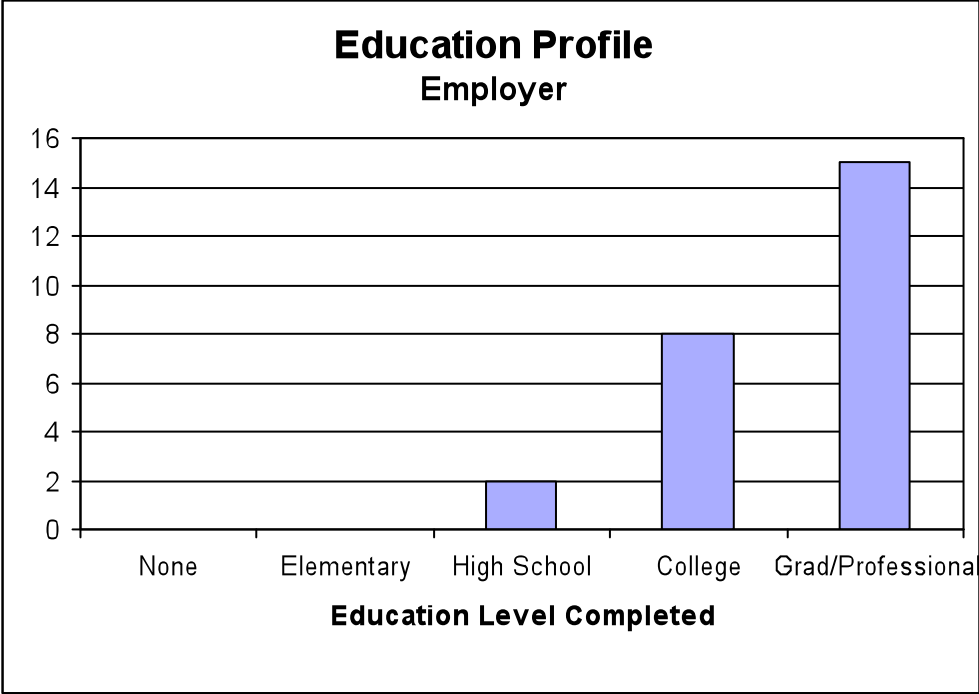


Figure 1 – Employer Education Profile

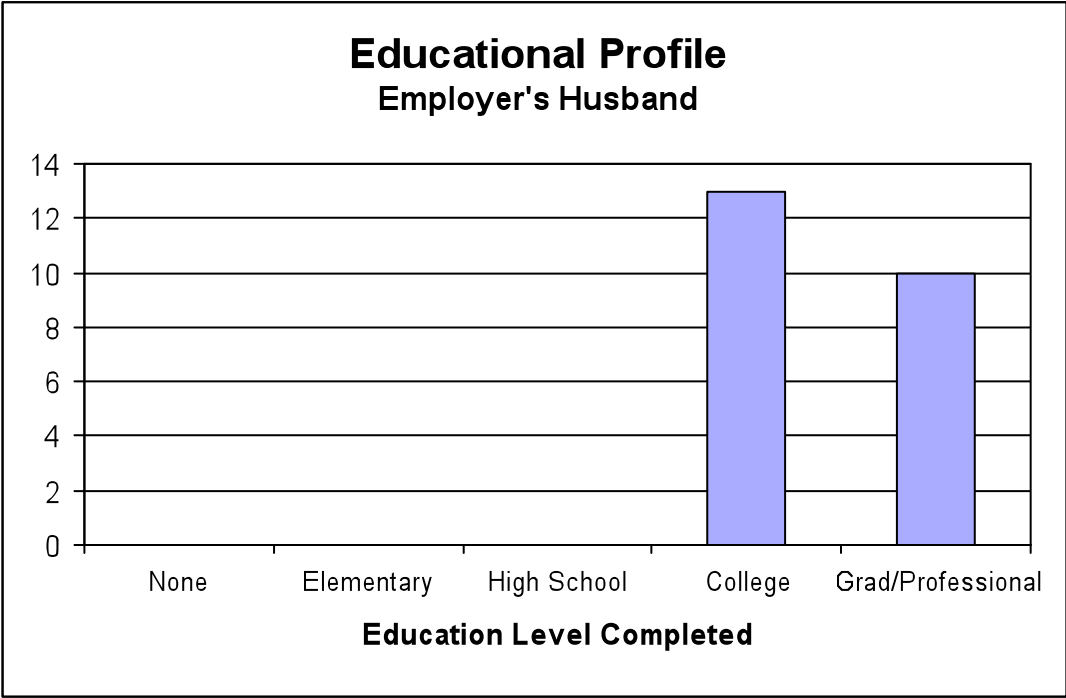


Figure 2 – Employer’s Husband Education Profile

Figure 3 is the profile for the Employer’s Occupation. The graph shows that 4 (16%) are full-time housewives, 3 (12%) are working or involved with a family owned business, 1 (4%) is the owner of a private company, 3 (12%) are government employees, 1 (4%) is a lawyer, 3 (12%) are in the medical professions (1 MD and 2 Optometrist with their own clinics), and 10 (50%) are working in the local colleges and universities (8 professors, 1 college president, 1 university president).

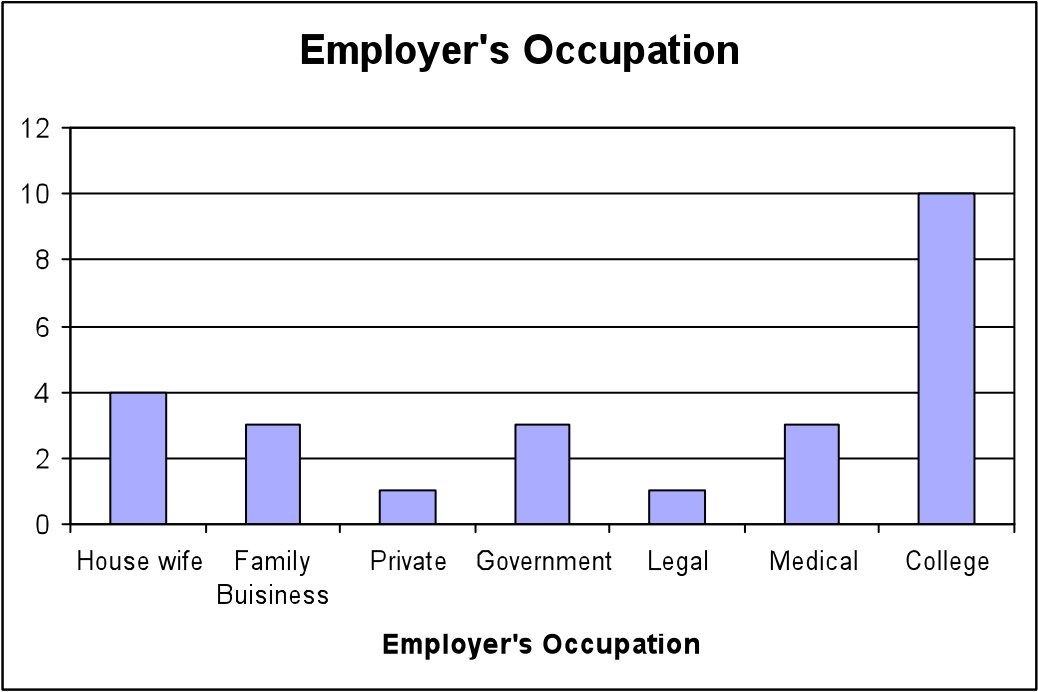


Figure 3 – Employer’s Occupation Profile

In **Figure 4** the Marital Status Profile of the Employers shows that 2 (8%) are single, 1 (4%) is a widow and 22 (88%) are married.

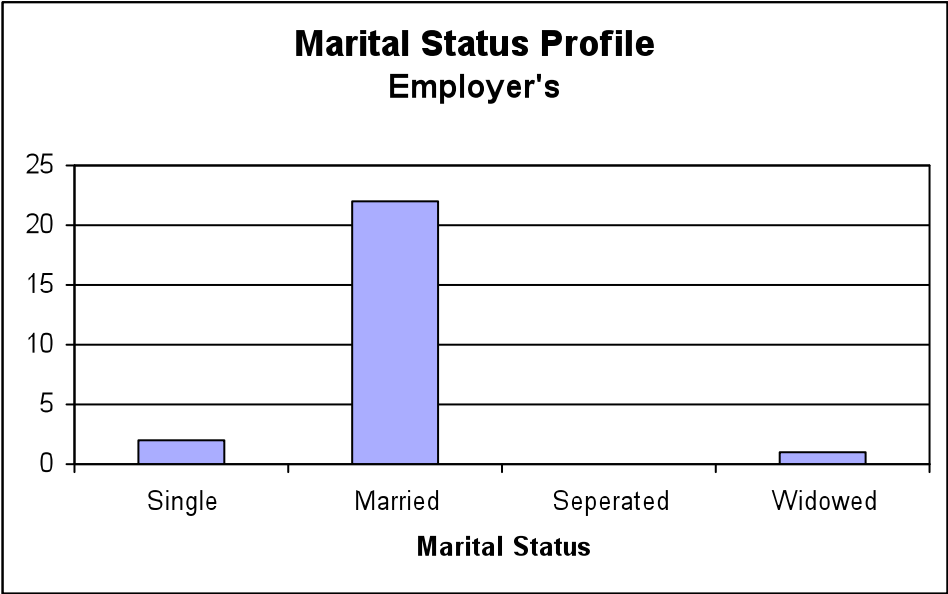


Figure 4 – Employer’s Marital Status

Section B –Demographic Profile: Domestics

Figure 5 shows the current age of the domestics at the time of the interview. **Figure 6** shows the age when they started domestic service. **Figure 7** combines both current age and age when they entered domestic service.

Ten (10) of the domestics were only 12 years old or younger when they started domestic service. Fourteen (14) started when they were 13 years old or older but not over 19 years of age. One (1) started when she was 20 years old or older.

At the time of the interview, 13 were from 13 to 19 years of age, 6 were from 20 to 29 years old, 1 was in the 30 to 39 years group, 2 in the 40 to 49 age group, 2 in the 50 to 59 age group and 1 in the 60 to 69 age group.

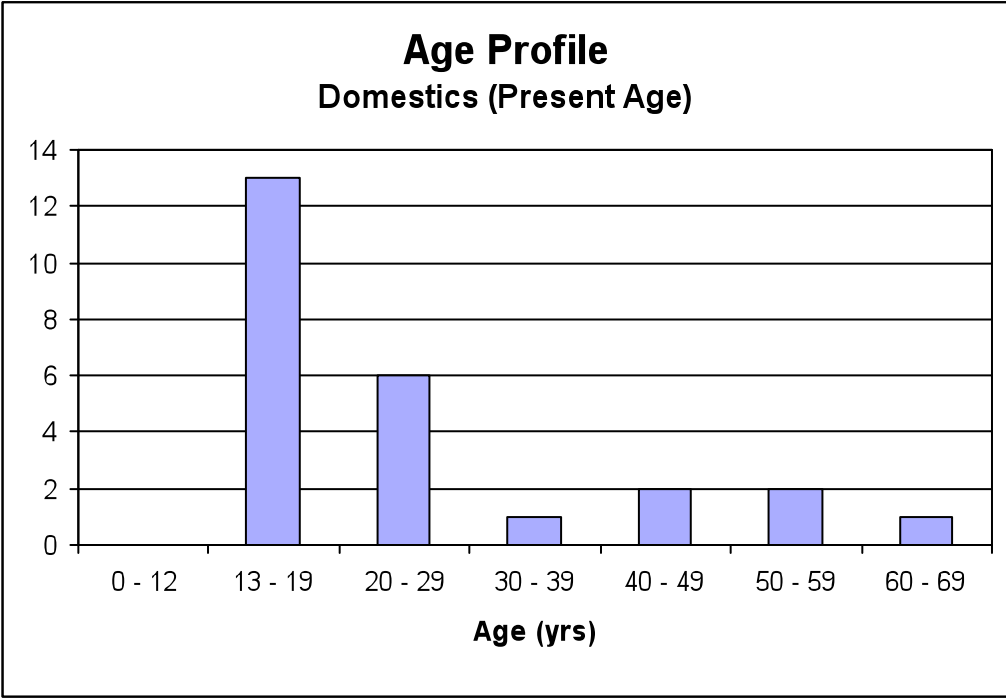


Figure 5 – Domestic’ Age at Time of Interview

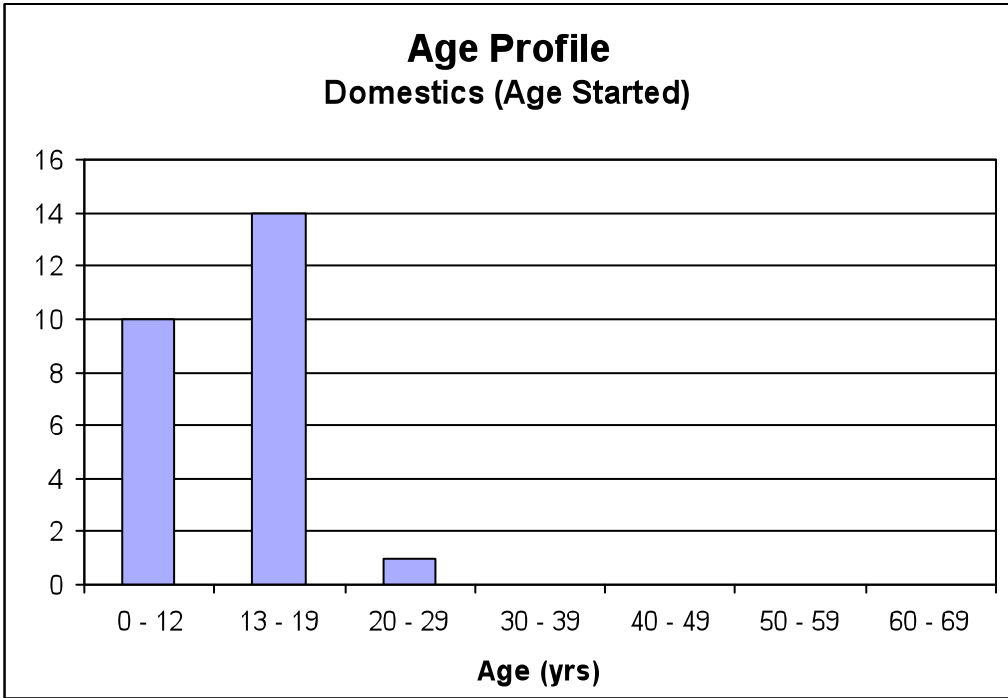


Figure 6 – Domestic’ Age at Start of Domestic Service

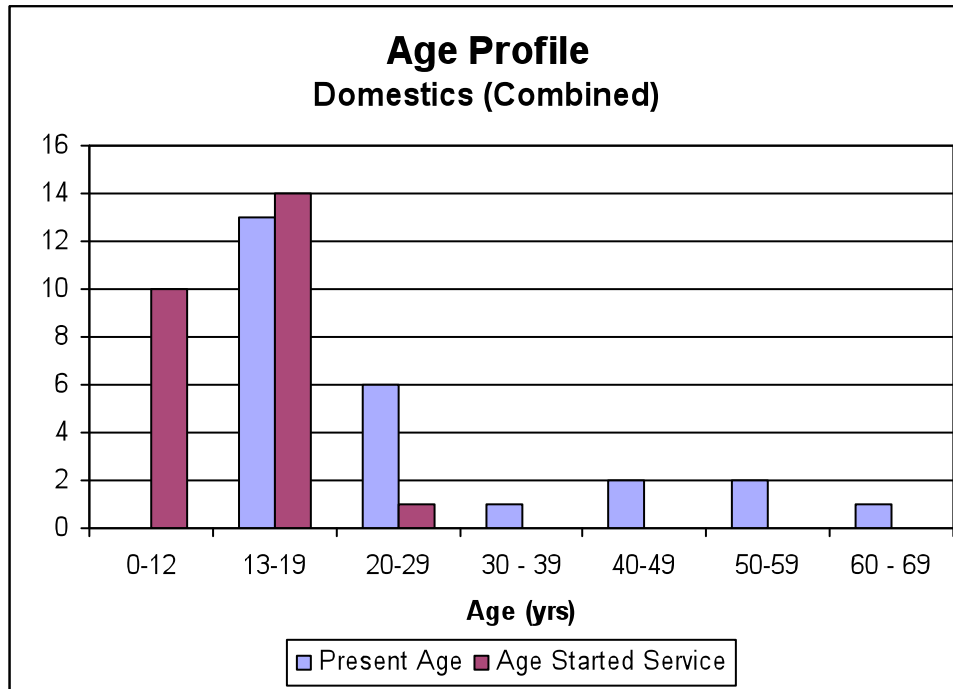
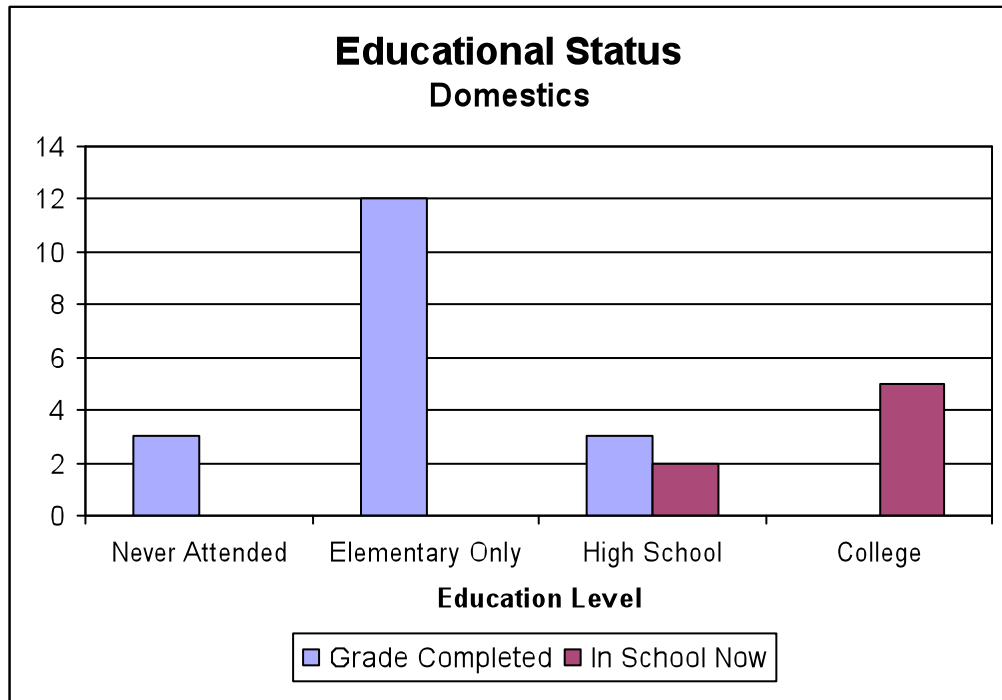


Figure 7 – Domestic’s Age Profile Combined (Age Started Service and Present Age)

Figure 8 shows the Educational Status of the domestics. This graph combines 2 sets of information – i.e. the completed educational levels of the domestics who have stopped studying and the educational level at which those who are currently in school are studying. The educational levels in the Philippines are different from other countries. The elementary grades go from Kindergarten to 6th grade. Then there are 4 years of high school, followed by 4 years of college.

The graph illustrates that three (3) of the domestics never had any schooling. Twelve (12) of the 25 domestics earned their Elementary School Diploma. Three (3) have a High School Diploma. Of those who are currently in school, 2 are in high school and 5 are in college.



**Figure 8– Domestic’s Educational Status
(Grade Completed and Domestics in School Now)**

Figure 9 shows the Marital Status of the Domestics. A majority of the domestics are single (20 or 80%). Three of the 25 (12%) are married. One (4%) is separated, and 1 (4%) is a widow. These percentages

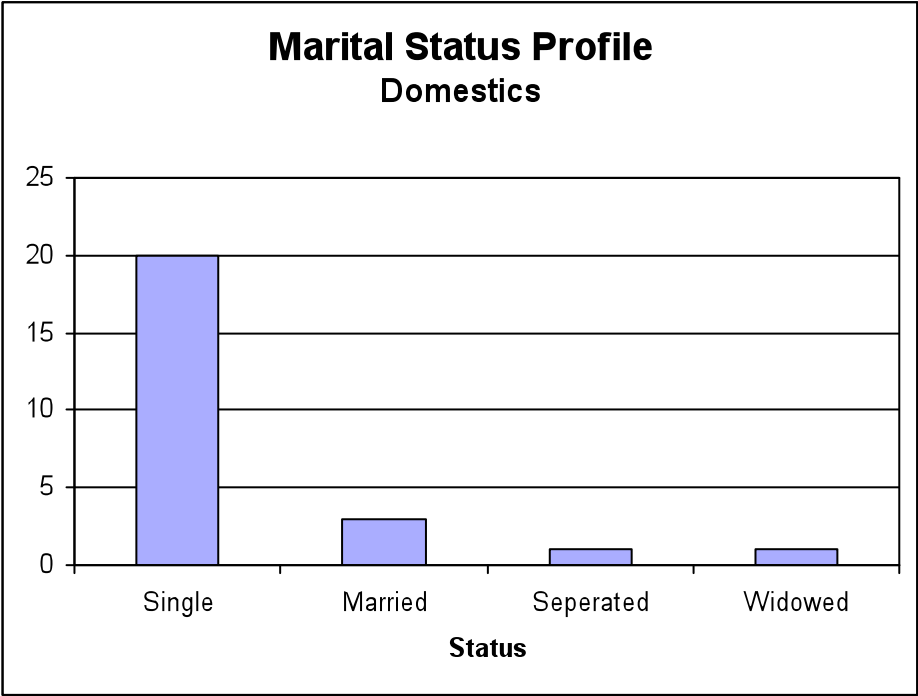


Figure 9 – Domestic’s Marital Status

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