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Recommended Citation

Shah, Bianca () "A Private Solution to a Public Problem: Domestic Migrant Workers," *Discussions*: Vol. 8: Iss. 1, Article 3.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.28953/2997-2582.1137>

Available at: <https://commons.case.edu/discussions/vol8/iss1/3>

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A PRIVATE SOLUTION TO A PUBLIC PROBLEM: DOMESTIC MIGRANT WORKERS



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Abstract

Economic structural reforms used in order to pay off foreign debt have increased women's unpaid labor in economic south countries. With few occupational opportunities available, even for women who are highly educated, migration becomes one of the few options for women to ensure economic survival for their families. This review examines the push and pull factors that influence a woman's decision to migrate and to attain a job as a domestic worker. Additionally, this review focuses on the definition of transnational motherhood, its components, and the conflicting class status, which results from being a domestic migrant mother. A discussion of possible solutions for economic north and south countries to consider is also included.

Introduction

The United States is known as the "melting pot" of cultures. It is a country in which people, cultures, and ideas are constantly flowing from all corners of the globe. It is also a country in which people migrate to increase their quality of life. These trends of migration have been present in the U.S. since the beginning of the country's history. A more recent trend, however, is the feminization of migration. Over half of all international migrants are women (Chang, 2009). The feminization of migration results from the effects of globalization, which can make economic survival extremely difficult in economic south countries, which are less developed nations with low-income economies. Many women leave their families and friends, in their country of origin, to migrate to economic north countries, which are wealthy and more developed, in hopes of obtaining financial stability for their families. Through various push and pull factors, women migrants often work in jobs that reflect their traditional gender roles, such as domestic work. In the past, research has focused on physical and verbal abuse and exploitation of domestic migrant workers. In comparison, less research has focused on the social and personal effects of geographic separation of women from their families. This literature review aims to discuss the various push and pull factors in economic north and south countries that influence a woman's decision to migrate, identify and further explore the meanings

-Acknowledgments-

I would sincerely like to thank Susan Hinze, PhD, for her guidance, support, and encouragement while conducting my research.

of transnational motherhood, explore the personal, social, and familial consequences resulting from being a domestic migrant mother, and identify possible solutions to decrease the need for women to migrate.

Women's Work in a Global Economy

In the past few decades, countries have experienced economic globalization to move towards a more cohesive global economy. Economic globalization refers to the "integration and rapid interaction of economies through production, trade, and financial transactions by banks and multinational companies" (Burn, 2005, p. 167). In this new global economy, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) play an important role in lending money to developing countries (Enloe, 2006). Due to the global recession in the 1980s, economic south countries experienced a decrease in exports, high global interest rates, and a depletion of foreign exchange reserves (Burn, 2005). As a result, many developing countries could not make payments on foreign development loans in a timely manner. As interest rates rose, loans became more expensive to pay off, forcing these countries to ask the IMF and other economic north countries for money (Burn, 2005).

Push Factors in Economic South Countries

To ensure that developing countries would pay their debts, new loans prescribed preconditions, or a series of reforms to be implemented in the country asking for the loan. These reforms, known as structural adjustment programs (SAPs), were imposed by local governments to raise money (Chang, 2009). Although SAPs sound reasonable in theory, they strike women in Third World countries the hardest (Chang, 2009). Side effects of SAPs and globalization increase women's unpaid labor in multiple ways. SAPs directly affect women by cutting wages and government expenditures for social services, such as schools, hospitals, and public transportation (Burn, 2005). Production of goods for local use is discouraged. Instead, goods for export and "cash crops" (crops grown for profit) are strongly encouraged. Rising food prices combined with wage cuts result in women and young girls sacrificing their own health and nutrition in order to feed the men and boys of the family (Chang, 2009). Because women are in charge of providing food for the family, women who have to find water or grow food are at a disadvantage. Cuts in transportation and utilities result in women and/or children having to travel longer distances to obtain these necessary resources (Burn, 2005). Additionally, the number of transnational factories in economic south countries has increased. Transnational factories are production facilities run by large corporations, which are centralized in countries outside of the one of the factory location. The rise of transnational

factories often results in pollution of local resources and land, due to relaxed environmental laws. These laws are used to attract foreign resources to help create jobs (Burn, 2005). All of these factors increase women's unpaid labor in economic south countries.

Economic structural reforms, resulting from globalization, make survival in home countries very difficult. Therefore, migration becomes the one of the few viable options for women to ensure a better life for their families. According to Ehrenrich and Hochschild (2002), there are four major paths of migration: 1.) from Eastern to Western Europe, 2.) from South America, Latin America, and Mexico to the U.S. and Canada, 3.) from Africa to Europe, and 4.) from Southeast Asia to the Middle and Far East (Ehrenrich & Hochschild, 2002). Globalization has resulted in the migration of millions of women from economic south to economic north countries. The total number of international migrants has increased from 99 to 190 million between 1980 and 2005 (Siddiqui, 2008). In addition to this increase, the percentage of all international migrants who are women has also increased since 1960, as shown in Table 1 (Siddiqui, 2008).

There are two main methods of migration. The first is through word of mouth and personal contacts. Women who have relatives or friends that have gone abroad and brought back stories and money find the move appealing. Knowing individuals who have successfully completed the migration process and can help them to migrate heavily contributes to women's migration decisions. Having a contact also helps with finding a job, arranging travel documents, and settling into life in a new country (Hochschild, 2002).

The second common method of migration is through government support. Governments in Sri Lanka and the Philippines, for example, encourage women to migrate, because the remittances, or migrant income sent back to families in countries of origin, contribute to reducing poverty and stimulating the economy. The World Bank estimated that in 2005, \$167 billion, out of the total migrant income of \$232 billion, was formally transferred to developing countries (United Nations Population Fund, 2006). The actual amount of income transferred is higher as this figure does not take into account remittances transferred through non-formal methods (United Nations Population Fund, 2006). In the Philippines and Sri Lanka, government policies are in place to provide low-interest loans and minimal insurance coverage in order for women to relocate (Siddiqui, 2008). Chang (2009) states that "Instead of selling coconuts and sugar, the Philippine government is now engaged in the sophisticated practice of selling its own people to industrialized countries" (p. 591). The exportation of labor has now become a part of the structural

Table 1: *Female migrants as percentage (%) of all international migrants*

Year	Female migrants as percentage (%) of all international migrants
1960	46.8
1965	47.1
1970	47.2
1975	47.4
1980	47.2
1985	47.2
1990	49.0
1995	49.3
2000	49.7
2005	49.6

Source: Siddiqi (2008)

adjustment plan, called the Labor Export Policy (Chang, 2009). This means that the government relies on the remittances to help pay off national foreign debt. In Sri Lanka, government funded pre-departure skills training programs for future migrant workers also encourage women to consider migration as a viable option to support their families financially (Vachani & Kalambakas, 1995).

Language barriers, gender, and migrant status are negative factors that make obtaining a job difficult in new affluent countries (Rajman et al., 2006). Some women who migrate leave school to support their families at a young age. The lack of qualifications in addition to the other factors listed increase the likelihood that a migrant woman will find a job in the low-wage sector (Rajman et al., 2006). Even women who do have appropriate qualifications are unable to get better paying jobs solely based on legal migrant status and language barriers alone. Therefore, once a woman migrates to an affluent country, she is often restricted to occupations that are traditionally “female,” such as domestic work.

Pull Factors in the United States

Although migrant women are often relegated to what are considered to be low-wage jobs in economic north countries, labor demand for domestic services, especially in the care sector, combined with government training and assistance from their home countries pull women to migrate to economic north countries. According to Hochschild (2002), the growing care sector makes

up 20% of all American jobs. The structural constraints that lead many migrant workers toward domestic service are due to the care deficit. In the U.S., the number of employment opportunities and the number of women with children entering the workforce are increasing. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the percentage of mothers, with children younger than 18, who were employed or looking for work has increased from 47% in 1975 to 72% in 2002 (Pugh, 2005, p.731). The increase in the number of mothers in or entering the workforce has contributed to the societal transition from the male breadwinner/female caregiver model to the dual breadwinner/female caregiver model (Boris & Lewis, 2006). This current model illustrates that the current institution of work still assigns a full-time caregiver role to women.

For working mothers, trying to be a full-time caregiver poses a challenge, because “good mothering” implies “doing it all” (Garey, 1999). To be considered a good mother, women must spend quality time with their children doing intense mothering. Intense mothering is quality time that is packed with activities to make up for time spent at work rather than with the children (Hochschild, 1997). Because caregivers are marginalized at work, they face a maternal wall (Williams, 2000). The maternal wall prevents women from further upward job mobility due to a woman’s motherhood status. According to Williams (2000), the “ideal worker” is one who is free of family responsibilities and is able to be available 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. Therefore, many mothers find it difficult to balance

the demands of being a good mother and an ideal worker. Women who try to balance both work and family often lose out on leisure time (Crittenden, 2001).

Although men's contributions to family work have doubled since the 1960s, the time that women spend on the second shift has only declined by one third (Coltrane, 2007). Although fathers spend more time being involved with caregiving and household tasks, time at work often competes with family time for fathers (Daly, 1996). Embedded in the institution of work is the idea that being an active member of the paid labor force, or a breadwinner, is one of the main components of being a good father (S. Hinze, SOCI 372 lecture, November, 8, 2010). This has resulted in the lack of workplace supports for fathers to be more involved in the raising of children. Mandatory overtime, lack of paid sick leave, limited vacation time, and the inability to rearrange work schedules to care for a sick child or attending a school function are major impediments to the amount of time that both parents can spend with their children (Coltrane, 2007). Conversely, workplaces that offer on-site childcare, paid family leave, paid sick time, and flexible scheduling are often not taken by men. Men are reluctant to accept these initiatives or acknowledge the need for workplace supports in fear that they will be perceived as a less committed worker.

This second shift of unpaid caregiving and housework, poses a problem for working parents, because the current caregiving public policies and facilities are not adequate enough for adults to fulfill and balance wage earning and caregiving responsibilities. The United States is one of the few First World countries that does not offer paid maternity or family leave. The Family and Medical Leave Act allows workers to take "up to twelve weeks of unpaid leave in any 12-month period for the birth of a child or an adoption, to care for a child/spouse/parent with a serious health condition or for the worker's own serious health condition that makes it impossible to perform a job (Hinze, 2010)." The lack of paid government family and maternity leave policies can force working parents to look for alternate sources of care for children, ill family members, or the elderly. However, approximately 80% of child care centers and over 90% of nursing homes are substandard (Drago, 2007). The lack of good public child and after-school care leaves working parents with few quality options. Immigrant women's desperation for work combined with the lack of adequate care facilities, in the U.S., make hiring a domestic migrant worker a possible solution to allow parents, especially mothers, the ability to work. Hiring a domestic migrant worker can be cheaper than placing children in other forms of childcare. Additionally, in the U.S. it is more popular to hire an illegal immigrant over a legal immigrant, because it costs three times less (Chang,

2006). Hiring a domestic migrant worker is a private solution to a public problem.

The male breadwinner/female caregiver model is the dominant model present in countries with high percentages of women emigrating from them, such as the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Mexico (Lan, 2003). In this model, the men are expected to financially sustain the family, or be the "breadwinner" of the family. Women are responsible for the housework and taking care of children, the elderly, or any ill family members. In countries with strict gender rules, sex segregation and wage gaps in jobs are difficult to avoid (Lan, 2003). A women's income is considered to be secondary to a man's income. Women's jobs are less valued and therefore less profitable. Employment opportunities for women are limited to options resembling wife-and-mother roles, such as household work, teaching, and nursing (Lan, 2003). For this reason, women accept domestic jobs in First World countries, as they are easy to find and fit within the expected roles that they were socialized into in their home country (Lan, 2003).

In many situations, the men of the family migrate first to fulfill familial obligations as breadwinners (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997). Scarce job opportunities for men often lead to women migrating to join family members who have already migrated. When mothers decide to migrate, they are often criticized for abandoning their role as primary caregivers. Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila (1997) state that when women migrate, the act is regarded as a radical gender transformation. In contrast, when men migrate, they are still considered to be fulfilling their role as breadwinners. Because migration involves a geographical separation from children, spouses, and country of origin, women have to cope with the guilt and stigma associated with trying to make a better living for their families (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997). In addition, paid carework is considered incompatible with unpaid primary care that is expected of a woman to provide for the family (Lan, 2003). The shift in status, associated with switching from unpaid home labor to paid domestic work, and the geographic separation of mothers from their children results in mothers redefining their construction of motherhood.

Redefining Social Constructions of Motherhood from Countries of Origin

Transnational motherhood involves redefining social constructions of motherhood from home countries to fit the lives of domestic migrant mothers. Usually this means abandoning the expectation of biological mothers being present at home daily in order to raise their children (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997). Transnational motherhood emphasizes the role of women as breadwinners instead of men, which is contrary to the convention that women

should not combine employment and caregiving (Raijman et al., 2006). Transnational motherhood still places an emphasis on mothers to care for their family; however, these mothers change their method of care to include employment. In other words, in order for these mothers to support their children and other family members, they almost have no other option than to leave home and migrate. Rocio is a mother of a four-year-old daughter, who is left staying with other family members in her home country while Rocio works in Israel (Raijman et al., 2006). Rocio says that, "Very few mothers are ready to make the sacrifice of those women who go abroad and leave their children behind. It takes a mother to do so. Many women don't do anything in order to overcome the difficult situations. Instead those who leave their children really give their best for them. One feels more of a mother" (Raijman et al., 2006, p. 156). This new construction of motherhood emphasizes that taking economic responsibility to support the family is equally or more important than the mothers' daily presence at home (Raijman et al., 2006.). Migrant mothers see themselves as being better mothers by being able to financially support their children. Therefore, migration is viewed as a sacrifice that also strengthens their commitments to motherhood.

Components of Transnational Motherhood

Before leaving to work abroad, there is a transfer of caretaking that occurs. In countries where the separate spheres ideology is strong, many women feel that role reversal between who is the breadwinner and caregiver that results from migration is no guarantee that men will take over domestic duties. Because men often feel ashamed of being unable to financially support their families, women fear that the men will drink or gamble away the money that is sent home for the children (Lan, 2003). If he is willing to take over the caregiver role, the migrant mothers choose the father of the children to care for them. Most often, migrant mothers choose their own mothers or close female relatives to care for the children (Lan, 2003). Migrant mothers hope that by transferring the responsibility of care to a trustworthy family member will decrease their apprehension regarding their children's proper nourishment, schooling, and mental health (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997). To show their appreciation, migrant mothers send money or gifts to the guardians of their children.

Similar to American cultural constructions of motherhood, transnational motherhood maintains the importance of "quality time" with children. Recall that working American mothers engage in intense mothering, qual-

ity time that is packed with activities to make up for time spent away from their children at work (Garey, 1999). In addition to the time constraints that American mothers experience while trying to balance work and family, migrant mothers have a geographical barrier separating them from their children. Migrant mothers try to ensure that their physical absence does not affect their children's mental health (Lan, 2003). To distinguish transnational motherhood from abandonment in the eyes of their children, migrant women try to establish firm emotional bonds with their children, through "quality time," and by showing maternal visibility when they visit their home countries (Lan, 2003). "Quality time" entails regular phone calls, letters, and pictures to maintain mother-child relationships. Maternal visibility can be indirect. Migrant mothers may use extra earnings to send their children to better schools or buy them gifts (Lan, 2003). Migrant mothers also try to go back to their home country whenever possible. Migrant mothers hope that making the effort to maintain relationships with their children will result in bonds that do not have a material basis.

Personal, Social, and Familial Consequences Resulting from Being a Domestic Migrant Mother

The large distance between a migrant worker's home country and country of employment can result in separation anxiety and stress (Parrenas, 2000). Although these women are trying to support their families by working abroad, the distance denies them the daily bonding between friends and family that comes from living in the same country. Caring for the aging parents or children of employers while unable to be physically present to care for their own family members can add to the strain that migrant domestic workers feel (Parrenas, 2000). Additionally, living in a country, such as the U.S., in which the expectations for women's roles in society differ from the migrant worker's home country, may result in the migrant worker feeling disconnected from socialized cultural expectations and practices found in the home country. Parrenas (2000) found that "displaced mothering/caretaking" is a consequence of the separation from the home country (p. 576). "Displaced mothering/caretaking" is the treatment of individuals, who domestic migrant workers are being paid to care for, as members of their own family (Parrenas, 2000). For many migrant mothers, this method of mothering helps them to maintain their identity as a mother while their own children are being cared for by other family members. However, migrant mothers have to be careful to not get too attached to the children they care for. Jeal-

ously by the actual mothers of the children can cost migrant mothers their jobs. Despite this fact, “displaced mothering” can be emotionally rewarding and ease the separation between migrant workers and their families (Parrenas, 2000).

A second consequence of migration is upward social mobility in the migrant worker’s country of origin. Remittances sent to families in the country origin help to bring families out of poverty. In general, more than half of female remittances are used for better healthcare, nutrition, and education for children (Siddiqui, 2008). An additional sign of upward social mobility is the hiring of the services of a low-wage domestic worker in the home country by the now class-privileged migrant workers (Parrenas, 2000). Hiring a domestic worker to care for family members is a relief for many migrant workers. They feel that they have the power to critique the care that a hired domestic worker provides, which is not always respectful to do to a family member caring for children. The transfer of caretaking responsibilities among women in different countries is known as the international transfer of caretaking (Parrenas, 2000).

Although migrant workers experience upward social mobility from higher wages, educated migrant workers often feel embarrassed by their occupation, due to the characterization of domestic work as a low-wage job in their country of origin. Contrary to the popular belief that most migrants come from the poorest populations, emigrants are usually better educated than those who are left behind; this is especially true for migrants from the Philippines and Sri Lanka (United Nations Population Fund, 2006). In general, over a majority possess a high school (secondary) education or higher. According to Siddiqui (2008), 45% of Sri Lankan migrants completed a secondary education, and 25% had received a college education or higher. Parrenas (2000) found that many women who had finished college or postsecondary vocational training earned higher wages as a migrant domestic worker than in a job in their field of study in their home country. Carmen’s story illustrates the emotional consequences resulting from downward mobility to a lower-status job (Parrenas, 2000). Carmen is a Filipino woman in her mid-40s. She worked as a project manager of a military food service at an U.S. Air Force Base in the Philippines for fifteen years. When the military base closed, Carmen was unable to find a comparable job in the Philippines. Consequently, Carmen migrated to Rome to work as a domestic worker. Carmen says the following:

My life is difficult here. Would you believe that here I am a ‘physical laborer’? When I was working in the Philippines, I was the one supervising the supervisors... sometimes I would just cry. I felt like I was slapped in the face. I resent the fact that we cannot use our skills, espe-

cially because most of us Filipinos here are professionals. We should be able to do other kinds of work because if you only do housework, your brain deteriorates. Your knowledge deteriorates. Your whole being is that of a maid. (Parrenas, 2000, p. 574).

Carmen’s story illustrates conflicting class mobility as experienced by many domestic migrant workers. The discrepancy between actual educational training and role as a domestic worker reflects a decline in occupational status. This decline in status conflicts with the increase in class status as obtained from the international transfer of caretaking. The increase and decrease in class status results in migrant domestic workers feeling conflicted about being in the middle of this labor division (Parrenas, 2000).

On a larger scale, the discrepancy between level of education and available occupations in the country of origin results in “brain drain” and “brain waste” (United Nations Population Fund, 2006, p.8-9). Carmen’s story illustrates “brain waste,” which occurs when professionals are unable to find outlets for their profession and skills in their home country. As a result, neither the country nor the professional can obtain many benefits if the individual stays in their home country (United Nations Population Fund, 2006). The loss of highly trained individuals can be detrimental to developing countries. This phenomenon is known as the “brain drain.” The “brain drain” can result in continued economic stagnation (United Nations Population Fund, 2006). Although remittances are helping to balance losses from the “brain drain,” a cycle of migration is emerging. Migrant mothers are now seeing their daughters, nieces, and other female relatives in the next generation following their same path of migration (Vachani & Kalamakas, 1995). The continuation of the migration cycle within families indicates that very little progress is being made to increase economic opportunities in developing countries.

Solutions

When thinking about solutions to ease the consequences experienced by domestic migrant workers, steps can be taken by both economic north and south countries.

Solutions for Economic South Countries

Recall that structural adjustment programs (SAPs) were imposed as preconditions for loans to help economic south countries to reduce their foreign debt. While SAPs sounded reasonable, in practice they increased women’s unpaid labor. SAPs and other development projects were constructed with a gender-blind perspective. By ignoring and devaluing women’s labor inside and outside the home, faulty assumptions were made regarding solutions to stimulate economic growth. SAPs increased women’s

unpaid labor by cutting funding for social services, rising food prices, and increasing time needed for water and food collection (Bum, 2005). These structural reforms can make economic survival difficult, causing migration to become a viable solution for many women.

In order to reduce the need for migration, women's status and power need to be improved. A proposed solution is to reduce the impact of SAPs on women. This can be accomplished if economic north countries could forgive some of the economic south countries' debt (Bum, 2005). If some of the debt could be reduced, more money could be used toward funding for social services that were cut, improving access to healthcare, increasing access to education, and increasing agricultural yield for the community. A small-scale grassroots approach would be applicable, in which women were included in development projects. By taking into account women's labor and daily routine, women can help to develop an economy in which migration is no longer necessary and work to make structural changes that reduce gender inequality.

Solutions for Economic North Countries

Due to the isolating nature of being a domestic migrant worker, women are vulnerable to varying degrees of physical, psychological, and sexual abuse. Migrant workers often work long hours, up to 20 hours/day, and have no access to health care (United Nations Population Fund, 2006). Isolation can also make organizing into unions difficult in countries where it is legal to do so. The United Nations has developed a document to protect the human rights of all migrant workers, regardless of legal status, known as the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families. These provisions include: protection from enslavement and violence, rights to cultural identity, freedom of religion, the right to join trade unions, access to medical care, education for the children of migrant workers, access to housing, adequate working conditions, and informing migrant workers of their rights (United Nations Population Fund, 2006). The Convention encourages the facilitation for family reunification when wanted. Additionally, the Convention restricts migration to occur only through government agencies or authorized private agencies (United Nations Population Fund, 2006). This comprehensive document has been in development since 1990 and became available for ratification in 2003. Currently, the U.S. and most developed countries have yet to ratify the document. The U.S. has been slow in the past to ratify human rights treaties, with ratification still pending on the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The United Nations Population Fund (2006) states that the United States has not seriously exam-

ined ratification of the Convention, because it is focusing on ratifying other human rights treaties first. Other reasons for the delay in the ratification are equally vague, including potential inconsistencies with immigration laws. These delays may have valid causes, however, it is essential that as international citizens, migrant workers are given the basic human rights that they are entitled to.

The State of New York has taken steps towards ensuring certain rights and protections for domestic migrant workers. On November 29, 2010, the "Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights" took effect in New York. This law provides domestic workers with the right to minimum wage, overtime pay at time and a half after 40 hours of work per week, one day off per week, three paid days of rest each year, insurance coverage when injured, and protection from harassment (New York State Department of Labor, 2010). The law has a great potential to improve the lives of migrant workers in New York. However, methods of enforcement for this law are unclear. The law does not address the isolating nature of being a domestic migrant worker. How are migrant workers informed about this law if, for example, their employer restricts their access and communication outside of the employer's family? The law states that the employer cannot abuse or exploit migrant workers (New York State Department of Labor, 2010). Additionally an employer cannot retaliate if a migrant worker files a complaint. Despite the beneficial nature behind these provisions, the steps to educate migrant workers about how to take steps towards filing a complaint or taking advantage of the law's provisions are missing. Although there are holes in this law, it is a step in the right direction to improve the working and living conditions of migrant workers in the United States.

In terms of policy, the United States should take steps to decrease the care deficit in order to decrease the need for domestic migrant workers. Possible solutions that can reduce the care deficit in the U.S. include federally supported programs with leave benefits, such as those in place in certain European nations. In Sweden, parents of infants and young children are supported by government programs. These parents are given paid family leave for up to 16 months (Zimmerman et al., 2006). Parents of young children are entitled to paid leave to care for a sick child or family member for up to 60 days per year (Zimmerman et al., 2006). Parents in Denmark are eligible to take up to an entire year of leave to care for a seriously ill child with two thirds wage replacement (Coltrane, 2007). Additionally, the Swedish government guarantees preschool for all children ages 1-6 and after school care for children ages 7-12 (Zimmerman et al., 2006). Programs in Denmark and Sweden encourage fathers to alleviate the strain of the second shift for working mothers. These European nations

reserve paid parental leave days especially for use by fathers, in which the days are nontransferable and lost if not used (Coltrane, 2007). These public programs have helped to decrease the impact of the second shift on women and are great models for the United States to look toward when thinking of solutions for government supports.

Conclusion

The purpose of this review was to more closely examine the reasons behind women's decision to migrate from economic south to north countries, the factors influencing the number of women working in the domestic care sector, and the personal, social, and familial consequences of migration. It was found that economic structural reforms, resulting from globalization, increase women's unpaid labor in economic south countries. With few occupational opportunities, regardless of educational status, migration becomes one of the few options for women to ensure economic survival for their families. Once a woman decides to migrate, she often obtains a job that reflects traditional gender roles. Migrant workers often find jobs in the care sector because of the care deficit in many economic north countries. In the U.S. inadequate care facilities, poor family leave policies, minimal contributions of men to the second shift and the increase in women joining the formal employment sector all contribute to the widening care deficit. The availability of jobs due to the care deficit often lead migrants towards obtaining jobs as domestic workers.

Although domestic work in an occupation that reflects traditional gender roles, the migration, in general, is viewed as a radical gender transformation. Women have to cope with the guilt and stigma that stem from being separated geographically from children, spouses, and other relatives. The result for migrant mothers involves the redefinition of cultural constructions of motherhood from the country of origin to fit their current role as a transnational mother. This new definition of motherhood emphasizes that taking economic responsibility strengthens a woman's commitments to being a mother. Additionally, the transfer of caretaking from a domestic migrant worker to another family member or hired domestic worker in the country of

origin is a major component of transnational motherhood.

Steps can be taken in economic north and south countries to reduce the need for women to migrate. Efforts to reduce the impact of SAPs on women's unpaid labor combined with debt forgiveness by economic north countries could result in more money available to be used to improve social services and access to healthcare, food, and education. Using a gender perspective to apply this money towards community development, at a grassroots level, could improve the overall quality of life in economic south countries. Using a similar gender perspective, government support to reduce the care deficit would reduce the pull for domestic migrant workers in economic north countries. Additionally, the ratification of the International Convention will guarantee basic human rights to migrant workers. These solutions combined can result in ensuring that migrant workers are protected under international law and help improve the status and power of women in economic north and south countries.

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