Women's Transnational Migration and Global Care Chains: The Impact of Nicaraguan Women's Migration to Costa Rica on their Families and Communities of Origin

By

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Abstract

An increased demand for domestic care, and consequently domestic care workers, has occasioned an increased migrant flow of women to meet this demand. This has led to the emergence of what is known as *global care chains; "*a series of personal links between people across the globe based on the paid or unpaid work of caring" (Hoschchild, 2000, p. 131). South-South migration of Nicaraguan women to Costa Rica for work in the domestic and care sector has led to significant changes in family and community relations in Nicaragua. This thesis explores the ways in which Nicaraguan migrant women continue to provide care for their children across borders and examines of impacts on Nicaraguan families and communities.

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Acknowledgements

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List of Acronyms

AECI – Spanish Agency for International Development
ASTRODOMES – The Association of Domestic Workers
CIA – Central Intelligence Agency
CIDA – Canadian International Development Agency
ECLAC – Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
GAD - Gender and Development
GCCs – Global Care Chains
GDP - Gross Domestic Product
GNP – Gross National Product
GEM - Gender Empowerment Measure
GII – Gender Inequality Index
GRI - Gender Related Index
HDI – Human Development Index
HDR – Human Development Report
IADC – Inter-American Development Bank
ICTs - Information Communication Technologies
ILO - International Labour Organization
IMF - International Monetary Fund
INEC – National Institute of Statistics and Censuses
IOM - International Organization for Migration
MDG - Millennium Development Goal
NGO – Non-Governmental Organization
OECD – Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
SAPs - Structural Adjustment Programs
SLA – Swiss Labour Association
UN – United Nations
UNDP - United Nations Development Program
UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF – United Nations Children's Fund
UN-INSTRAW - United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNRISD – United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
WID - Women in Development
WAD - Women and Development
WB - World Bank

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Poverty, systemic high unemployment, government debt, the bankruptcies of firms

and shrinking state resources all contribute to an economic context for the emergence

of what Sassen (2000) terms "alternative circuits of survival," or cross-border livelihood

or profit-making strategies which have been "developed on the backs of the truly

disadvantaged" (p. 503). These circuits are strengthened by broader structural

conditions such as the formation of global markets, the intensification of transnational

and trans-local networks and the development of communication technologies (Ibid.).

One of these alternative circuits of survival is transnational migration. Transnational

migration streams described by Orlandina de Oliveria as "the manifestation of a process

of unequal development among regions, sectors and social groups" and as a "population

phenomenon closely linked to the socio-economic, cultural and demographic

transformations taking place within regional, local and family domains" (in Jelin, 1991, p.

102).

Transnational migration can take the form of domestic labour migration. An

increased demand for domestic care, and consequently domestic care[1] workers, has

occasioned an increased migrant flow of women to meet this demand. This has led to

the emergence of what is known as *global care chains;* "a series of personal links

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[1] Domestic work typically involves the provision of personal care to household members and can include housekeeping duties such as cooking and cleaning.

between people across the globe based on the paid or unpaid work of caring" (Hoschchild, 2000, p. 131). Global care chains are an inherent component of women's transnational migration (UN-INSTRAW, 2010).In his 2002 report on the 'Strengthening of the United Nations,' former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan identified migration as a key issue for the international community (Yeates, 2005). Indeed, a growing percentage of the global population, now amounting to over 200 million people, migrate internationally each year (UN-INSTRAW, 2010).

Migration has often been portrayed as a means to development, or heralded as a pathway out of poverty. This thesis will question this assumption by looking at the social dimensions of development. An economy is not only made up of monetary exchanges, it also involves the process of sustaining life and satisfying human needs – one of which is care. This thesis brings the social aspects of development to the forefront. It questions development models which solely promote economic growth as development, asserts the inclusion of vulnerable or disadvantaged groups in the market as something which advances development, and, ultimately recognizes the hidden consequences of employment which require trans-border migration. It will also draw attention to the extraction of human resources from one country to another.

Classic development models have looked at the transfer of resources such as gold, ivory, rubber, and even human slaves, from the developing world to the developed. People around the world are linked through the exchange of goods and services, forming what can be referred to as global commodity chains. Global care chains follow the same

process; however, the commodity involved is care. Ehrenreich and Hochschild (2004) point to a new era in which the main resources extracted from developing nations are no longer gold or ivory, but love and care. Global care chains are essentially social reproduction happening on a global scale in which women and their care-giving labour are transferred from the developing world to the developed world; love and care have become the "new gold" (Ibid.). In sum, global care chains are a result of the combination of 1) a care "gap" in the North as a result of larger numbers of women there joining the labour force; 2) the commodification of reproductive labour, and 3) transnational migration of women to obtain employment in the domestic care sector.

More and more of the world's migrants are mothers from the weak economies of the South who leave their families to care for the young, sick, disabled and elderly in the stronger economies of the North. This has happened in the context of the changing gender composition of the labour force in the economies of the North, with women obtaining jobs in paid employment, and a neo-liberal economic system characterized by a shrinking welfare state (Yeates, 2005). A global care chain situation typically entails a woman in a rich (or relatively speaking, richer) country who purchases the care-giving labour of another woman who tends to be from a poorer household either locally, or, as is increasingly the case, from abroad (Yeates, 2005). The woman hired may also be married with dependent children, and has often migrated to work in the domestic sector due a lack of employment opportunities in her own community. As she is geographically distant from her children, she needs a substitute to provide care for them.

The formation of global care chains has had a strong impact on households of origin, and it is recognized that the international migration of such a large number of women overall (over 100 million each year globally) has serious implications for the societal organization of care in sending countries (UN-INSTRAW, 2010). Much of the existing analysis on migration still focuses on economic development and the effects of remittances on the countries of origin, however there is a clear lack of research on the social impacts of migration, particularly on families left behind (Piper, 2005). Households are required to reorganize tasks and responsibilities, maintain relationships across borders, and work out new ways of providing care for children despite physical distance (Parreñas, 2005).

This thesis will focus on the impact of global care chains on families and communities of origin. When mothers migrate to provide care for another family, a care gap is left in their own families and communities. The task of care for the children of these migrant women may fall to the oldest daughter of the household, a sister, grandmother or other female relative. (Piper, 2005, Isaksen, 2008).[2] Occasionally, the family may hire another woman to provide care, who would likely be drawn from an even poorer household, furthering the so-called "chain." Global care chains can be composed of numerous links in several different countries, with the last links containing those who are most poor or vulnerable. Essentially, this exchange of care could be

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[2] While in some cases male relatives or husbands may provide care or fulfill domestic duties, these tasks usually fall to women due to traditional patriarchal and culturally entrenched gender roles. Males may have also migrated to find employment, or, for varied reasons, have simply not provided economic or social support to their families.

referred to as the 'commodification of reproductive labour,' motherhood, or care-giving, seeing that women sell their domestic, mothering, and care-giving labour as a product. This is usually in response to difficult economic circumstances.3

1.2 Thesis Statement

This thesis addresses the impact of women's transnational migration for care-giving and global care chains on families and communities of origin. The particularity of my case study of Nicaraguan women migrating to Costa Rica for care provision consists of 'South-South' migration. Such studies are few, and underscore the argument that the global south is not an undifferentiated whole.

This thesis asks the following questions: What are the social and economic benefits and costs of South-South care chains? In what ways do these socio-economic impacts affect familial and community relations in Nicaragua? Assisted by a network of recruitment and remittance-sending agencies, Nicaraguan women are migrating in ever-increasing numbers to find employment as domestic workers in Costa Rica. I will look at the extent to which women continue to provide care for their children across borders and the ways in which Nicaraguan family and community of origin are impacted. Nicaragua is a worthwhile country to study in relation to global care chains for two reasons. First, the labour migration of Nicaraguan women to Costa Rica has increased over the years,

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[3] Reproductive labour refers to "the labour needed to sustain the productive labour force," and includes the care of children, youth, adults and elders, household chores like cooking and cleaning, and the maintenance of social ties in the family" (Parrenas, 2001, p. 61). Motherhood or mothering refers to the qualities characteristic of being a mother, including raising a child and providing post-natal care.

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especially to domestic sectors, thus forming care chains between the two countries. Second, focusing on this migration affords an opportunity to look at 'South-South' care chains, while many migration studies have previously centred on 'South-North' care chains (such as studies on global care chains stemming from the Philippines).

I often refer to the Philippines as a primary example of global care chains throughout this thesis because of the vast amount of research on this country, as well as its similarity to Nicaragua in terms of the high numbers of mother that migrate to work abroad in the domestic employment sector. However, one key difference between the two countries is the fact that the care chains between the Philippines are 'South-North,' while care chains between Nicaragua and Costa Rica are unique in their 'South-South' nature. The case of Nicaragua is not a conventional situation of women migrating to the global north for employment. Ratha and Shaw (2007) assert that South-South migration and the issues surrounding it "remain poorly understood" (p. 1). DeParle (2007) writes that migrants move to other poor countries across the developing world almost as often as they migrate to rich ones, "yet their numbers and hardships are often overlooked" (p. 1). Although ignored, these South-South migrants help to sustain and support some of the poorest people in the world. This study offers further understanding on this phenomenon, and is able to avoid some of the post-colonial concerns regarding portrayals of Southern issues from a Western perspective because this type of care chain is located solely in the global South, exclusively involving women from the global South.

The case of South-South care chains between Nicaragua and Costa Rica suggests that the term 'global care chains' may not be entirely accurate to describe this phenomenon, because these care chains are forming in a specific regional, South-South context. The term global care chains will be used through the literature review to refer to the broader concept of global care chains, but the term 'South-South, transnational care chains,' or simply, 'care chains' will be employed when referred to the more specific case of care chains between Nicaragua and Costa Rica.

While existing research shows that care chains are forming between these two South countries, more research is needed on the impact these care chains have on the families and communities left behind. This thesis puts forward the argument that the South-South migration of Nicaraguan women to Costa Rica for work in the domestic and care sector has led to significant changes in families and communities of origin in Nicaragua. Some of these changes include 1) financial benefits which extend to living conditions and education; 2) positive and negative changes in mother-child relationships, and 3) impacts on family and community relations in terms of gender and class.

1.3 Structure of Discussion

The general layout of this thesis is as follows. The thesis is divided into eight chapters. The first chapter outlines the context and objective of this study, including an introduction to the problematic and the central thesis statement. Chapter two

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introduces the theoretical debates surrounding women, gender and development. It explores theories such as Women and Development (WAD), Women in Development (WID) and Gender and Development (GAD) in order to understand the theoretical connections between gender and development. The literature review examines and explains concepts such as the commodification of reproductive labour, domestic labour migration, and global care chains, expanding on how the combination of the commodification of reproductive labour with transnational migration, in the context of increased industrialization and women of the North joining the labour force, has led to the formation of global care chains. The links between gender, development, the commodification of reproductive labour and migration are explored, followed by an examination of Regional South-South Transnational care chains between Nicaragua and Costa and the impacts of these chains on Nicaraguan families and communities. Global care chains and women' transnational migration are then conceptualized as a contemporary method of extracting and transferring resources from the less developed to the more economically developed countries. I then present a summary of the theoretical position on which this thesis will build.

In the next chapter I present the methodology of the study and justify the research design and methods. I discuss the merits and challenges of these methods and explain the reasons for their use. I also include personal reflections on my fieldwork as well as interview participant profiles which help to personalize the 20 persons who participated in this study. The fourth chapter provides the historical and current socio-

economic context of Nicaragua, as well as information on the socio-economic context of Costa Rica, focusing on the issues of transnational migration and domestic labour. Chapters five through seven present the findings of the study and discuss them with reference to relevant literature. The data is compared to the theories and concepts discussed in chapter two, highlighting the similarities and differences while offering an analysis on what can account for these. Chapter five specifically traces the journey of transnational migration by Nicaraguan women to Costa Rica, outlining their reasons for migration, how they find employment, their experiences as domestic workers, and how they provide care for their children from abroad. It also raises key issues facing women, such as the transfer of reproductive care from one female to another, and single parenting. Chapter 6 presents a discussion of the benefits of care chains between Nicaragua and Costa Rica, including economic benefits, improved living conditions, education and personal independence, as well as "the other side" of migration, including challenges such as discrimination and insecurity in Costa Rica, the misuse of remittances, community depletion, difficulties associated with transnational parenting, and the reinforcement of traditional gender ideology. Chapter 7 focuses solely on familial relationships using three 'ideal-types' as a measurement tool to capture the most essential components of the impacts of care chains on mother-child relationships.[4] Chapter eight presents final conclusions and recommendations.

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[4] Defined by Weber an ideal type, "is formed by the one-sided accentuation of one or more points of view and by the synthesis of a great many diffuse, discrete, more or less present and occasionally absent concrete individual phenomena, which are arranged according to those one-sidedly emphasized viewpoints into a unified analytical construct" (Weber, 1949, p. 90). They are meant to help interpreters depict reality, but do not represent reality directly.

Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW: LINKING GENDER, REPRODUCTIVE LABOUR, INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Introduction to Women, Gender and Development

This thesis focuses on the transnational migration of Nicaraguan women to provide domestic labour and care in Costa Rica, and the subsequent formation of South-South transnational care chains between these two countries. This transnational migration and labour contributes to sustaining families in Nicaragua. Women and gender are at the centre of global care chains, as women comprise the majority of migrant domestic care workers and are the primary domestic work and care providers for their families. One cannot explore the development impacts of this phenomenon without examining the theories which explain the connections between women, gender and development. Development practitioners and theorists alike recognize that development cannot take place without the adequate involvement and participation of both women and men (Laurie, 2007). However, early development theories equated development with economic growth, measured by indicators like the rise of national savings or gross domestic product (GDP). While this basic premise holds value, women were often excluded from early development discourse because their labour was unpaid, and therefore not considered an economic asset to development. Other schools of thought emerged with the assertion that the notion of development should be expanded (Ibid., Sen, 2000, Ul Haq, 2004, UNDP, 2010)..

2.1.1 WID, WAD, and GAD

There are three major phases in women, gender and development theory, which include a focus on Women in Development (WID), Women and Development (WAD) and finally Gender and Development (GAD). The WID approach evolved in the early 1970s, and sought to highlight the significance of women's economic contributions to development, increase women's access to resources, and enlarge women's inclusion in the market (Baden and Reeves, 2000). The approach also promoted the integration of women into development policy and process. However, it failed to challenge Western gender stereotypes, and saw the incorporation of women as a logical problem to development, rather than something which required a deep re-examination of gender ideology and relations (Marchand and Parpart, 1995).

The WAD approach emerged as a response to criticisms of WID (Ibid.). This approach was quite influential in the gender programming and policy of several NGOs. It emphasizes development outside of patriarchal structures and women-only projects. However, concerns regarding the growing poverty of women, combined with frustration about the lack of progress made in policy, resulted in calls for another new approach in the 1980s. In contrast to earlier theories, GAD focused on the need to analyze the socially constructed relationships between men and women, to increase awareness of other factors such as age, class and personal agency, and to challenge existing gender relations and roles (Baden and Reeves, 2000). Laurie (2007) summarizes the key differences between these three approaches as being a shift from "the perception of

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women needing special consideration within the development project (the 'add women and stir' option); to seeing women's issues as parallel and indispensable to the whole of the project; and finally an outlook where 'women's issues' are viewed in terms of the larger set of relations between the genders" (p. 9).

Gender has several definitions and aspects. Scott writes that gender broadly refers to "the conceptualisation of all forms of social relationships and knowledge about sexual differences" (Scott, 1988, in Pinnawala, 2009, p. 34). However, Scott also notes that it is important to question how gender operates, rather than simply what it is or how it is defined. Mosse (1992) defines gender as "the set of roles which, like costumes or masks in the theatre, communicate to other people that we are feminine or masculine" (p. 2). She goes on to say that this set of particular behaviours, including dress, appearance, attitude, household and non-household labour, and personalities, constitute our 'gender roles.' These roles are learned from the moment we are born, are influenced by ethnic background, class and age, and vary from culture to culture. Each society has different gender roles for men and women; hence, any gender analysis should take the societal context into account. To talk about gender and development is to highlight the fact that any development initiative or project will affect both men and women. More than this, it highlights that men and women are affected *differently*. It is important to recognize the different interests and roles of both men and women to better understand social change and development.

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With this in mind, the Gender and Development (GAD) approach recognizes that women and men experience poverty in different ways. There are also differences in the ways women experience poverty depending on their race, ethnicity and class. Despite increased recognition, discussion, projects and advances, women are still disproportionately over-represented as part of the global poor, lack representation and participation in political and economic leadership, and "for the most part bear the weight of sustaining the coming generations with the limited resources at their disposal" (Laurie, 2007 p. 12). The over-representation of women living in poverty relative to men has been termed the 'feminization of poverty' (Burn, 2005). Sassen (2000) describes the connected notion of the 'feminization of survival,' by pointing out that there are systemic links between the growing presence of women from developing nations in a growing variety of global circuits, including care chains, and the rise in unemployment and government debt in their nation's economy. Low-income individuals are often represented as a burden instead of a resource; but these same individuals are in actuality surfacing as significant sources of revenue for countries, communities and households. For instance, the remittances sent by female domestic migrants are increasingly important for developing nations, which have become more and more dependent on women for survival.

2.1.2 Post-Colonial Feminism

The United Nations declared 1975 as International Women's Year, sponsoring an intergovernmental conference on women in Mexico City (Parpart et. al, 2000). While this conference was expected to foster global sisterhood based on the common bonds between women, and their oppression by men in particular, the conference revealed some important divisions between women in the North and women in the South. Women from the South raised concerns about Western and Northern dominated feminist research, and questioned the relevance of this North-based research for women of the South (Ibid.). They called for the recognition of the long-lasting impacts that racism and colonialism have had for women of the South, pointing to the concern that Western feminists have a history of homogenizing women and universalizing women's issues, when the reality is that women across the globe face very different challenges (Mohanty, 1981).

Mohanty writes that some Western feminist writings "discursively colonize the material and historical heterogeneities of the lives of women in the third world, thereby producing/re-presenting a composite, singular 'Third World Woman' — an image which appears arbitrarily constructed, but nevertheless carries with it the authorizing signature of Western humanist discourse" (Ibid., p. 334). Such writings can often represent women of the South as "the vulnerable, helpful, backward 'other'" which reflect and maintain Western biases (Parpart et. al, 2000, p. 93). While Mohanty acknowledges the existence of excellent and valuable Western feminist writings, some of which do not fall

into this analytic trap, she also notes that Western feminist scholarship must be considered "in the context of the global hegemony of Western scholarship" and must examine its role in such a global economic and political framework (1981, p. 336). Feminist scholars in the South point to the need for scholarship to give voice to the diverse, multi-layered and complex realities of women of the South. Spivak (1988) in particular highlights how the voices of subaltern[5] have been ignored, arguing that Western scholarship should not assume cultural solidarity with a heterogeneous people, or attempt to speak for the subaltern condition rather than allowing them to speak for themselves. These feminist theories are of value to this thesis because global care chains inherently involve women of the South, and studies on global care chains should therefore place these women and their experiences at the centre. This is also why a study on the South-South transmigration and transnational care chains between Nicaragua and Costa Rica cannot be examined from the perspective of other global care chain studies. Rather, it is of utmost importance to speak to the migrant women themselves to hear what they have to say.

These post-colonial feminist critiques should also be kept in mind when examining the role differentiation of men and women in societies. Women's lives are built around numerous axes including gender, ethnicity, race, culture, age and class (Parpart et. al, 2000). The labour that men and women do in a particular society is

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[5] The term 'subaltern' derives from the works of Antonio Gramsci, and refers to groups in society that are socially, politically and geographically excluded from the hegemonic power structure, lacking a voice in their society. For more information see: Gramsci, A. Guha, Ranajit, ed. A Subaltern Studies Reader: 1986-1995. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 1998.

therefore not only determined by gender, but also by these additional factors, which interact in complex and sometimes surprising ways (Mosse, 1992, Parpart et. al, 2000). Role differentiation, along with other areas of analysis, must be theorized and interpreted *within* specific societies, such as Nicaragua, for example. Ehrenreich and Hochschild (2004) argue that men are often deemed to be part of the 'productive work force' and are viewed as the 'breadwinners' (or financial contributors) to their families and communities. Women are usually engaged in what has been termed 'reproductive labour,' a term which refers to "the labour needed to sustain the productive labour force" (Parrenas, 2001, p. 561). This reproductive labour includes work such as household chores like cooking and cleaning, the care of children, youth, adults and elders, and the maintenance of social ties in the family. This in demonstrated in the case of Nicaragua, a society in which women are viewed as part of the private sphere, while men are in the public, even though this in reality women have become increasingly part of the workforce. 'Domestic work', 'mothering,' 'motherhood,' and 'care-giving,' are also terms which fall within the category of reproductive labour. The term 'care' refers to the "labour and resources needed to ensure the mental, emotional, and physical well-being of individuals" (Parrenas, 2005, p. 12).

2.1.3 Rethinking Reproductive Labour

Esther Boserup's seminal work, *Woman's Role in Economic Development,* challenges the idea that women contributed to development solely in reproductive or

domestic realms, criticizing development initiatives which were geared towards men as the 'breadwinners' or 'economic agents' of households (Boserup, 1970). Moser (1989) notes that structural adjustment policies (SAPs) define economies "only in terms of marketed goods and services and substantial cash production, and exclude women's reproductive work" (p. 1814). SAPS defined economies in terms of marketed goods and services, while excluding reproductive labour. Therefore Moser notes that in reality, this approach "often simply means a shifting of costs from the paid to the unpaid economy, particularly through the use of women's unpaid time" (Ibid.). Despite advances in women, gender and development theory, women's economic contributions are still often viewed as insignificant in comparison to men. Sassen (2000) argues that mainstream development literature tends to present international economic development processes as gender neutral, when in truth women are playing a critical role. New literature on current globalization "proceeds as if this new economic phase is gender neutral, thereby rendering these gender dynamics invisible" (p. Ibid., p. 507). Waring (1990) makes note of the same trend, arguing that mainstream economics does not account for women's work, excluding the value of nonmarket household labour from national income and product accounts.

Waring (1990) also calls attention to the absence of an official economic value for women's volunteer services and investments in reproduction activities and child-rearing. Feminist scholarship on female immigrants examines how international migration alters gender patterns and acknowledges that women are significant players

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in economic processes. It is clear that reproductive labour is of great importance to the maintenance of families and communities. However, there are other aspects of great importance to consider. Various gender theories, such as GAD, can become too focused on the gender division of labour while forgetting the togetherness of family (Pandey, 2012). Humans are complex beings who are tied to their families by love, responsibility and culture. They are not simply individual market agents who solely based their decisions on economic gain. Some gender and development theories focus on the individual and on entitlement, but many women see themselves as embedded in community and relationships, rather than only as individuals with individual choices (Ibid.). Raghuram et. al. (2009) note that in more recent years, a range of scholars (such as Massey, 2004, Popke, 2007 and Sparke, 2007) have emphasized relationality and the inherently relational interdependence that characterises the globalising world, moving the concepts of care and responsibility within public policy "towards an autonomous, responsibilised self," while also contesting what she refers to as "individualised versions of care and responsibility" (p. 2). Raghuram et. al argue that a more critical engagement with post-colonial thinking will reveal "not only the intimacies and generosities within existing practices of care and responsibility, but also expose their political contestations and the pain and absences that underpin global relationships touched by histories of (post)colonisation, exploitation and inequality" (2009, p. 3). They note that postcolonial theory forces us to recognize disconnections and separation between spaces in the world, as well as connections and flows between others, which has implications for how

we think about care and responsibility (such as the definitions and limits of both in different spaces, places, times and with different people).

The focus of these arguments on the connections between people is similar to a concept referred to by Isaksen, Devi and Hochschild (2008) as 'the socio-commons.' The 'commons' is a European term dating back to the 15 century as a way to explain a commonly shared set of resources, such as land (Harden, 1968). Isaksen, Devi and Hochschild extend this idea to include social resources, such as family, community, co-presence, and "the opportunity to live as a part of an integral whole," while also using it to focus on the way that the extraction of care across borders can disembed, erode and distort relationships of family and community (Ibid. p. 74).

Care is gaining ground in politics and policy due to feminists who have highlighted both the invisibility and universality of care, and the importance of care provision worldwide (Kofman, 2004, p. 3). Humans are interdependent beings as care givers and receivers. All people receive and are dependent on care in their early years at least; indeed, care is essential to the sustaining of human life and needs. Every society requires reproductive labour, and because of its necessity to society, it has been noted that reproductive labour, and care in particular, have in fact become increasingly commodified worldwide.

2.2 The Commodification of Reproductive Labour

A now buoyant trade in reproductive labour and services exists worldwide. While the percentage of female participation in the labour market has increased in industrialized countries, women remain predominantly responsible for household reproductive labour (Parrenas, 2001). Around the world, goods and services are manufactured, bought, and sold as commodities. Much in the same way, women purchase and sell their domestic and care-giving labour as a commodity. This exchange can be referred to as the 'commodification of reproductive labour' in general, or as the 'commodification of care or mothering' when specifically referring to care-giving and/or the raising of children. This type of commodification is not necessarily a new development. Throughout history, women, sex, and care have been commodified (Ehrenreich & Hochschild, 2004). Parrenas asserts that reproductive labour has long been "a commodity purchased by class-privileged women" (2001, p. 61). However, in more recent decades, globalization has contributed to the unprecedented increase in the sale, purchase and commodification of reproductive labour on an international scale. During the 1990s, "multinationals from the North moved production to the South, creating a 'global assembly line' (Parpart et. al., 2000).

Neoliberalism has intensified the commodification process through policies of structural adjustment and free trade, which have had different implications for men and women (Ibid.). Some of these implications include an increase in the feminization of jobs and the growth of informal low-wage and labour-intensive female employment

(especially in export-processing zones) (Ibid.). Barber (2008) notes that the majority of people in the global South "have experienced neoliberalism through the rise of a new international division of labour, along with flexible, geographically decentred production regimes, and the casting of certain nationals as particular kinds of immigrant labour" (p. 1265), labour which has often become commodified globally.

Commodified reproductive labour is not only low-wage labour; it actually declines in remunerative value as it is transferred down the line of domestic workers. Rothman (1989) writes, "when performed by mothers, we call this mothering...; when performed by hired hands, we call it unskilled" (p. 43, cited in Parrenas, 2001, p. 73). Parrenas (2001) goes on to state that "as care is made into a commodity, women with greater resources in the global economy can afford the best-quality care for their family. Conversely, the care given to those with fewer resources is usually worth less" (p. 73). In addition to this, despite its crucial importance, reproductive labour—especially the category of what we might term the commodification of female caregiving or the 'commodification of motherhood'- is poorly researched and understood (UN-INSTRAW, 2010). It generally takes place within the private household rather than in the public sphere and is therefore difficult to gain information about. Reproductive labour also tends to be informal, irregular, and even (in the cases of migrant workers) illegal, resulting in a lack of documentation and research.

Care represents one of the most commodified types of reproductive labour, and this commodification is argued to have occurred as a result of, as well as contributed to,

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what is referred to as a 'care crisis,' in countries across the world, as well as a 'global care drain' (Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2004, Parrenas, 2000, Yeates, 2005). The care deficit in more affluent countries is being filled by the women of poorer countries, and this creates a gap of care in poorer countries. In what she acknowledges may be an oversimplification of this phenomenon, Hochschild writes that instead of raw resources such as rubber, gold or ivory being extracted from the third world, *care* is now the resource being extracted by the North from the South (in Ehrenreich & Hochschild, 2004). However, Parrenas seems to agree with this assessment, referring to the increasing domestic care worker migration from the Philippines as 'a care resource extraction,' and ultimately a macro-process which forms transnational families (2005). Parrenas writes that the Philippines faces "a genuine care crisis," in that care "is now the country's primary export" (2002, p. 41).

There are several reasons posited for the care deficit in the more affluent countries, and the rising demand for domestic workers. The causes include a combination of socio-demographic, labour market and welfare factors, the ageing of the population, changes in family structure, the feminisation of the labour force, and a shift towards neoliberal policies in which the state provide less care – resulting in a shortage of public care services; all of which make it difficult for female family members to perform reproductive labour (Parpart et. al., 2000, Yeates, 2005, UNISTRAW, 2010). Yeates (2005) argues that the purchase of reproductive labour for women who can afford it relieves them from doing this work themselves, and helps "to avoid

generational and gender conflicts over the division of domestic work" (p. 4). In addition to this, she asserts that the purchase of reproductive labour can express and enforce social relations such as social class and status (Ibid.). A UN-INSTRAW (2010) report notes that as more women enter the workforce, there has been "a breakdown of societal organization of care, which requires a redistribution of care" (p. 86). Ironically, this so-called 'care-crisis' and change in the organization of care in the North, has contributed to the same care gap and social reorganization occurring in the South as more and more women migrate to work in the domestic care sector.

2.3 International Migration of Women

Zlotnik states that international and national migration "cannot be fully understood until women become visible both in terms of statistics and as major actors in the migration process" (Zlotnik, cited in Sweetman, 1998, p. 2). International migrants can be defined as people "who were born outside of their countries of residence," (Balbo, 2005). Transnational migration is the process of movement from one country to another in which migrants maintain a variety of ties to their home country while becoming incorporated into their destination country (Levitt and Jaworsky, 2007). The difference between international and transnational migration is often blurred, especially since more and more individuals dwell in host countries while maintaining strong ties with their countries of origin (Balbo, 2005). This section will examine the general implications of international migration, before moving on to global care chains, which

inherently involves transnational migration. The percentage of women migrants has risen significantly over recent decades, with women now comprising over fifty percent of global migrants (IOM, 2012). This increase in female migration has also been termed 'the feminization of migration' by researchers, and is linked to the increasing feminisation of poverty; meaning that the over-representation of women in poverty is connected to the increasing number of women who migrate to escape it (Kofman, 2004).

2.3.1 Push and Pull Factors of International Migration

There are many 'push and pull' factors which contribute to international migration. While international migration has historically always taken place, today there are greater incentives than ever before to migrate because of growing global disparities. The gap in human welfare between rich and poor countries has widened in recent years, and poverty is one of the leading causes for migration. This poverty and a lack of development are compounded by growing population pressure. The stagnation or collapse of economies, political unrest, or even natural disasters can cause people to have to migrate. Sassen (2000) argues that government debt and unemployment have contributed to increased migration. Contributing to this are severe cuts in health care and education which are demanded by strict Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), which have hit women especially hard, "as they are responsible for the health and education of household members" (p. 524). By migrating, people try to protect

themselves and their families against the effects of poverty and a weak economy, or other factors. Finding employment is clearly one of the most powerful reasons to migrate. Unemployment has increased or remained at a stable, but high, level in most of the developing world. Many people are unemployed, or underemployed, receiving very low wages which are barely sufficient for survival. A significant number of migrants work in the informal sector, where employment is unpredictable, opportunities come and go by the season, and working conditions can be appalling.

Globalization cannot be underestimated as a major contributing factor to the increasing levels of global migration. ELCAC reports that, "migration processes are inseparable from globalization" (ECLAC, 2006, p. 7). Improvements in technology and communication have led to an increased connectedness between nations around the world. This revolution has made people more aware of disparities, of what life is like in other parts of the world, and of opportunities to move and work abroad. The increasing range of options for international travel combined with decreasing costs has made migration more feasible. Most migrants move to countries where they have friends or family already established, forming what are often referred to as "transnational migration networks" (Parrenas, 2005, IOM, 2011). These networks encourage migration by providing information, financing trips by lending would-be migrants money, and helping new migrants to settle by providing an initial place to stay, helping them find a job, and providing other economic and social assistance. In addition to this, migration is also facilitated by both legal and illegal migration businesses, such as labour recruiters,

immigration lawyers, travel agents, brokers, housing providers, remittances agencies, and immigration and customs officials (IOM, 2011). There is an illegitimate side to the migration industry, comprised of human traffickers and migrant smugglers, which together are estimated to generate billions of dollars each year.

While the most pervasive reason for migration is to seek a better life out of poverty, women migrate for a various combination of reasons, including obtaining employment, to provide for their families, or in some cases to escape abusive marriages or relationships (Piper, 2005). Arriagada (2009) asserts that the current increases in the international migration of women are related to various "demographic, cultural and social transformations in developed countries: aging populations, an increasing number of dependent elderly persons, an increasing number of households where both parents work full time, growth in single parent homes as well as greater value given to personal and leisure time" (p. 3). Barber (2008) notes that, along with innovations in the mobility of capital, "there has been concerted effort by Western states to attract the right kinds of immigrants to address demographic needs and labour shortages" (p. 1265). In this way, women are often 'pushed' from their country of origin by factors such as unemployment, and 'pulled' to destination countries by a demand for care-giving labour. Migration has many effects, both negative and positive.

2.3.2 South-South Migration

Ratha and Shaw (2007) write that a recent World Bank study of country-to-country migration found that nearly half of the migrants from developing nations reside

in other developing countries. The World Bank reports approximately 74 million 'south to south' migrants, which is just under the estimated 82 million 'south to north' migrants. South-South migrants typically start poorer than south-north migrants, earn less money, and are more likely to travel illegally, raising the chances of exploitation, sexual abuse and trafficking (DeParle, 2007). They also migrate to countries that usually offer less legal protection and fewer services than wealthy countries do (Ibid.). Hatton and Williamson (2005) write that considerable South-South migration is not unprecedented "when those 50 million Europeans left home before 1914, there were at the same time far more than 50 million who left China and India for jobs elsewhere in the periphery. South-South migration is not new. It is just ignored by economists" (p. 36). DeParle (2007) notes that as rich countries tighten their border security and restrictions, south-south migration is likely to grow even more. South-South migration also characteristically involves more illegal and irregular migration and trafficking because it is often easier to smuggle migrants into Southern countries that may have fewer border restrictions (Rotha and Shaw, 2007).

South migration involves a few different 'push and pull' factors than migration from the South to the North. Income, proximity, and networks "are the major drivers of migration from developing to industrial countries" (Ibid., p. 1). However, because South-South income differences are relatively smaller than the difference between South-North, proximity and networks have a proportionally greater influence on migration, and the role of income is more complex. Income differences have the largest influence on

South-South migration between middle-income countries and nearby low-income countries (Ibid.). Costa Rica and Nicaragua would fit into this category. Substantial migration also occurs among low-income level countries with varying income levels because of the extreme poverty which exists in many low-income level countries. (Gindling, 2007).

2.3.3 Migration: A Pathway to Development?

There are obvious benefits to migration. One of the main advantages is the increased income from remittances, which can contribute to economic growth and the alleviation of poverty. Remittances can represent a major source of revenue for receiving countries, and may be especially valuable for developing or struggling economies (Sassen, 2000). The World Bank estimates that in 2008 migrants sent home US$328 billion as remittances, making massive contributions to poverty reduction at the individual and family levels, often promoting development at the community level, and in some cases comprising a significant share of national gross domestic product (Koser, 2010). While the growth rate of remittances worldwide is expected to have decreased somewhat during 2009 as a result of the global economic crisis, the IOM still estimates that remittances rose to US$ 440 billion in 2010, with US$325 billion of this sent to developing countries (IOM, 2011). Latin America's share of total remittances is the largest in the world, and represents significant economic support for many countries (ECLAC, 2006). Remittances received in Latin America grew from US$ 1.12 billion in 1980

to more than US$ 40 billion in 2004 (Ibid.). Research in the Philippines has found that remittances are often spent on education and schooling for children, leading to less child labour and contributing directly to human capital development (Kassam, 2009). Kassam also notes that remittances "do not require any costly bureaucracy and the money stands little chance of falling into the handsof corrupt government officials," meaning that the money can go directly to the benefit of the household (Ibid., p. 15). Remittances can also improve household credit ratings, resulting in access to much-needed loans from financial institutions. Orozco (2008) notes that because many Latin American countries find family remittances to be an important source of national income, several Latin American governments are working to discover ways to attract more of these funds. For instance, policies have been implemented to reduce remittance transfer costs and also "create an attractive economic environment for various kinds of migrant funds" (Ibid., p. 55). Latin American governments can also stimulate remittances by supporting the development of migrant associations and encouraging migrants to invest in these associations and hometown development.

Source country economies can benefit from the sending back of remittances by migrants, and destination countries can benefit from the increased labour in sectors where there is high demand. In fact, migration is even viewed as a development strategy by some countries such as the Philippines (Parrenas, 2005). South Korea and the Philippines both provide examples of countries which introduced formal labour export programs. When South Korea experienced an economic boom the government tapered

off the exporting of workers as it became less necessary and attractive. In comparison, the Philippine government expanded its program and increased the export of its citizens as a strategy to deal with unemployment and a weak economy. Filipino migrants send home over an estimated US $1 billion each year in remittances (Sassen, 2000). Thailand and Sri Lanka are among other countries to have explored migration as a strategy. In 1998 Sri Lankan women remitted US $880 million, and the figures have likely risen substantially since then (Ibid.).

Migration can also be empowering, offering increased independence, opportunities and standard of living (Piper, 2005). Individuals can experience a sense of freedom and empowerment. Individuals, families, communities and even countries can experience increased standards of living. This is enhanced by increased access to better quality health care and education. Migration can lead to better employment opportunities, the increased transfer of knowledge, and an increase in status for migrants who return home having succeeded in their search for 'the better life abroad,' as well as for their families who may display greater wealth and material goods.

2.3.4 Challenges of Migration

While migration has often been depicted as a means to development, or lauded as a pathway out of poverty, there are several challenges and problems associated with this phenomenon. Much of the existing analysis on migration still focuses on economic development and the effects of remittances on the countries of origin, however there is

a clear lack of research on the social impacts of migration. While migration contributes to increased financial security for individuals and families, and increased economic growth for countries, it also carries significant costs and disadvantages. Arriagada (2009) points out that migration can give rise to discrimination and disadvantageous situations, especially for female migrants. Migrant women face increased vulnerability to situations of exploitation, sexual harassment, physical and sexual abuse, trafficking, and stigmatized treatment (Ibid.). Smuggling is exacerbated by the fact that many migrants are illegal, irregular, and lack records, official documents or knowledge about their rights. It is estimated that approximately 1 million people (often women and children) are trafficked across international borders each year into situations of near-slavery (Koser, 2010). According to a UN report, criminal trafficking organizations generated US $3.5 billion per year in the 1990s. Immigration policies and enforcement can actually contribute to making people who are victims of trafficking even more vulnerable by treating them as violators of the law rather than victims of abuse if they are undocumented (Sassen, 2000).

'Brain drain,' a situation in which higher educated people migrate and do not return, is also a concern linked with migration, as it leaves the community with less and less skilled labour. This certainly occurs in Latin America, although the majority of migrants in Latin America are concentrated in sectors such as agriculture, heavy industry, construction, and domestic service (Koser, 2010). Many people work in the informal sector, where employment is unpredictable, opportunities come and go by the season,

and working conditions can be terrible. Jobs which are low paying, low status, and have little security have become dominated by migrant workers who are unable to obtain better work. These are often described as "`3D jobs` entailing work that is dirty, dangerous, or difficult, and often a combination of the three" (Koser, 2010, p. 306).

Migrants may have difficulty integrating into their destination society, particularly if they are illegal, undocumented, or enter a country which does not provide social or legal support for migrants. Some destination countries governments and populations may have a negative perception of migrants as people who steal jobs and resources. As a result of this, many migrants may deal with racism, discrimination and xenophobia on a daily basis. Families in countries of origin may become dependent on remittances for survival, and if the remittances stop for any reason, they may have little or nothing else to sustain them. Families carefully weigh the costs and benefits before making the decision to migrate.

While remittances may provide significant resources at the micro level, some findings suggest that they should not be relied upon as a country strategy. In the *Social Panorama of Latin America 2005*, ECLAC asserted that "the impact of remittances in reducing poverty as a whole is not very significant; although for the recipient households they are a strategic source of income" (ECLAC, 2006). Remittances appear to have little benefit beyond the household, despite efforts by governments to cash in on this inflow of money (such as an allowance for migrant workers to spend up to US$2000 in tax-free stores when they return to the Philippines, or requirements for migrants to send a

minimum percentage of their earnings through a government-owned financial institute) (Kassan, 2009). Rocha (2008) questions why remittances have been given priority over money earned within the country. "Are the $US70, $100 or $200 that a family gets from abroad automatically more productive than the $300 earned by a small scale coffee farmer?" Rocha asks. "In short, why so much fuss about remittances? It would appear that the money labelled 'remittances' is more public, more manipulable, so everyone wants a say about its current or potential uses" (2008, p. 4). Rocha notes that remittances receive so much attention because of two special characteristics: that those who receive remittances are poor, and that the volume of remittances is substantial. He notes a gender division in the academic coverage of migration topics, stating that remittances tend to be predominantly studied by men, while social issues such as a family disintegration are studied by women, resulting in a case of "pure, hard capital versus social capital, one with its male scholars and the other with its female scholars, in a thematic mono-sexuality in which few cross the gender-based divide" (p. 10). Various scholars have proposed that remittances can promote and sustain economic models, and possess the potential to greatly enhance development. Both the IDB and IMF support the channelling of remittances toward the establishment of small and medium sized businesses. However, Rocha asserts that the monetarizing and instrumental-izing of remittance researchers has had an impact on the construction of information about remittances. The concentration on purely financial aspects linked to development

proposals "sidesteps any mention of the political and socioeconomic conflicts of the

societies where the remittances end up" (Ibid., p. 11).

2.4 Gender and International Migration

Overall, there has been little effort made to incorporate gender into

international migration theories over recent decades (Grieco and Boyd, 1998). While

some of the past migration studies have been accused of being 'gender-blind,' it is

becoming widely noted that women play key roles in deciding to migrate, planning

migration, and maintaining social relations (Dobrowolsky and Tastsoglou, 2006, Piper,

2005). It has been asserted that women experience migration differently than men due

to cultural and familial expectations, gender roles, structural constraints or biases, and

labour market constraints (Ibid.). Feminist approaches have attempted to offer a

gender-sensitive approach to migration analysis in order to illuminate how gender

interacts with migration and is an intricate part of migration decisions.

2.4.1   International Migration Theories

A wide array of theoretical frameworks has been used to explain and analyze

international migration. Prior to the 1970s, 'push-pull' theories and neo-classical human

capital approaches dominated migration theory. However these approaches, which

tended to view migrants as a homogenous group, were soon recognized as inadequate

for fully understanding the intricacies of migration, and are now criticized for

disregarding gender, class, and ethnicity as contributing factors to the stratification within labour markets and migration flows (Grieco and Boyd, 1998). After the 1970s, two main types of approaches emerged onto the migration theory scene (structural and integrative), followed by 'synthetic approaches,' which attempted to integrate "the most successful components of contemporary migration theories found in various disciplines to form a single comprehensive theory of international migration for industrialized countries" (Grieco and Boyd, 1998, p. 7). Each approach has advantages and disadvantages; however both the structural and integrative approaches continued the previous pattern of ignoring gender within migration.

Structural approaches emphasize understanding the origins and destinations of labour migration, and centres on the economic and political structures which create the conditions for migration. These approaches hold that gender, class, race, and political structures can all intersect to affect migration processes and policies. While it is important to keep these structures in mind, structural approaches are criticized for tending to disregard individual decisions (Ibid). The integrative framework focuses on social context and the historical and contemporary processes in which migration decisions occur. Integrative approaches have gained the most success in shedding further light on how macro, meso, and micro level factors interact with structure and agency (Dobrowolsky and Tastsoglou, 2006).

Synthetic approaches do attempt to incorporate theories on different micro, meso, and macro theoretical levels (or on analytical levels of the individual, family, and

nation) in order to better understand international migration. This has been a step in the right direction, however more recent migration approaches highlight the different stages of the migration process, and how gender is implicated in this process. While advances have been made in migration analysis to include gender, no single theoretical framework is completely adequate to explain the complexities of international migration. However, considering the rise in female migration and the recognition of women's involvement in the migration process, it is clear that gender, along with class, race, and various theoretical levels, must be incorporated into any migration analysis in order to prevent misconceptions concerning male and female migration experiences, and enhance understanding surrounding the international migration of women (Ibid).

2.4.2 Domestic Labour Migration

Under current economic and social conditions, Kontos (2009) notes that beside the sex industry, the domestic sector is often the only labour sector open to migrant women, particularly those who lack documentation. Little is known about these sectors because of the lack of literal visibility concerning the labour these women perform within households or brothels, and lack of research about this labour. Male migrants, conversely, tend to find work in the more visible and researched sectors of construction, agriculture or heavy industry.

There is a massive and increasing demand for migrant domestic care workers in both developed and developing countries, and therefore the percentage of women

migrants has risen significantly worldwide. Domestic labour migration is particularly feminized, and is often the main occupation held by women migrants (Arriagada, 2009). Families look to domestic labour migration as a way for women to gain employment, higher wages, provide for their families, and diminish the effects of poverty. Migration is sometimes a last resort by parents to ensure that they can send their children to school, give them access to quality health care, and provide them with basic necessities (UN-INSTRAW, 2010). In terms of gender-based migration patterns, "women are in the position of responding to and absorbing new demands created for carework and by the gaps in carework provision" (Litt and Zimmerman, 2003, p. 161).

The growing demand for domestic care may provide a significant source of job creation for women. However, MacLaren (2009) argues that domestic workers are "one of the most marginalized groups in the global labour market in all the ways that count: economically, socially and legally" (p. 2). While women may seek work abroad to supplement family income, they also face multiple forms of discrimination. Domestic work is often excluded from national labour laws, and migrants may face marginalization based on their status as migrant workers, non-citizens, women, or member of a historically racialized or stigmatized group (Ibid). The working conditions and salaries of domestic workers are generally poor, and migrant domestic workers tend to have the lowest salaries of all migrant workers, particularly in Latin America (Moreno-Fontes Chammartin, 2009). Parrenas asserts that the international transfer of caretaking spurs economic development, but "retains the inequalities of the global market economy,"

(Parrenas, 2001, p. 74). Referring to the case of the Philippines, she writes, "the low wages of migrant domestic workers increase the production activities of the receiving nation, but the economic growth of the Philippine economy is for the most part limited and dependent on the foreign currency provided by their low wages" (Ibid).

2.5 Global Care Chains

The combination of care gaps in countries with greater economic development, combined with the commodification of reproductive labour such as domestic care-giving, and transnational migration, results in the formation of global care chains. While class-privileged women purchase the low-wage services of migrant workers, these same migrant workers simultaneously purchase the even lower-wage services of poorer women, or relegate their reproductive labour to female relatives left behind in their countries of origin. A distinction should be made at this point between the concepts of transnational migration, and global care chains. As previously mentioned, transnational migration implies of process of movement from one country to another in which migrants maintain a variety of ties to their home country while becoming incorporated into their destination country (Levitt and Jaworsky, 2007). Transnational migration can involve domestic labour migration, and may become a part of the formation of a global care chains, but it can also involve any variety of employment sectors or reasons for migration. Global care chains, on the other hand, always involve transnational migration as a component. The benefits and challenges of both transnational migration and global

care chains overlap and intersect. For instance, one benefit of transnational migration stems from the remittances sent back by migrants, and because transnational migration is an essential component of global care chains, this benefit is a part of global care chains as well. A challenge of global care chains may include exploitation of domestic workers, but this is not necessarily a challenge of all transnational migration because not all transnational migrants work in the domestic sector.

2.5.1 The Global Care Chain Concept – Room for Expansion?

Yeates (2005) points out that the global care chain concept captures and involves several significant processes: the 'outsourcing' of domestic care labour on both a national and international scale, internal and international migration, household strategies, major social divisions and inequalities, female labour, ethnicity, gender, and social class. Global care chains can be comprised of multiple links in a number of countries, with the most poor or vulnerable often at the end links. Yeates (2005) notes that the global care chain concept is very useful in that it captures the non-material inputs into, and effects of, the international trade in reproductive labour. However, she also asserts that, while offering a distinctive approach to the international migration studies, the concept of global care chains also faces some challenges, and like any relatively new concept, it requires further development.

Yeates posits that the use of this concept should be expanded to include domestic workers of varying statuses (skilled, non-skilled, married, single), a variety of

household types (elderly dependents, extended family), different forms of care (education, health, sexual, and religious care), and institutionalized settings (hospitals and schools), rather than only domestic or household spheres. Kofman (2004) supports this assertion, writing that the emphasis of global care chains on child care, transnational motherhood and children left behind tends to simplify transnational family dynamics and female migration. She argues that older people, as care givers and receivers, as well as migrant women who are not mothers, should be included in global care chain research. Kofman also points out that while the focus of the global care chains on the role of households in the global economy is a strength, it can also become a weakness "unless it is connected with the other sites in which care takes place," such as professional settings or places that offer health and community services and private, public or voluntary employment (2004, p. 13).

In additional to this, it is not only important to study the structure and geographic spread of global care chains, but to understand the transformation of these chains over time through historical analysis. Such studies are essential in order to better comprehend how global care chains have formed and changed in various countries. While this thesis will primarily focus on the impacts of global care chains rather than on care chain history or formation, it is important to note that an expansion of the global care concept is appropriate for this study. Not all Nicaraguan women migrate to work solely as nannies. Some care for elderly clients, while others may be employed as a domestic worker for an employer without children. Some women work as hourly

domestic workers for multiple families, in which their primary duties are cooking and cleaning. Migrants participate in a wide variety of domestic and care employment. This study focuses mainly on the children left behind; however further studies on caregivers, elderly care receivers and the various sites in which care is provided would be valuable in gaining further insight into the complexities of domestic labour and female migration.

2.5.2 Assessing Transnational Migration and Global Care Chains

The out-migration of such a significant number of women has both positive and negative economic and social impacts both in the receiving and sending countries at the macro, meso, and micro levels. While the concept of global care chains is relatively new, and certainly requires further research, it is clear that global care chains hold both positive and negative financial, social, and emotional implications for development at the individual, family, and community levels. Barber (2008) raises concerns about the singularity of interpretations of migration (and, by extension, global care chains, which intrinsically involve migration) which are solely positive or negative, highlighting the complexities which surround contemporary migration. It is important to keep these complexities in mind when determining the benefits and challenges associated with global care chains, without conferring our own expectations of possible positive or negative experiences on the women involved.

a) Benefits

Although several criticisms and concerns have been raised concerning the exploitative and disempowering nature of market societies for women, (Marchand and Parpart, 1995, Kabeer, 1994) Kabeer's research also reveals that being part of a market society is not necessarily exploitative for women. In fact, in the long run it can actually be emancipatory (Kabeer, 2000). Although Kabeer is not writing from a neo-liberal standpoint, she recognizes that there can be mixed results within a market society, especially when conventional economics are tempered with social aspects. Parpart (2002) notes that while financial and economic gains do not equal empowerment on their own, empowerment should involve a balance between spiritual, emotional and mental aspects, and physical and material aspects. With this in mind, it is important to recognize that there are clear economic benefits to global care chains for communities, families and individuals. One of the main advantages is the increased income from the remittances sent back by migrants.

Communities, families and individuals are linked, and therefore what affects one level can also lead to impacts at the other levels. For instance, the income earned by migrant domestic workers may not only benefit them individually, but can be used to benefit their family and their community. Therefore, individuals, families, communities and even countries can experience increased standards of living. In ideal cases, entire communities may be lifted out of poverty by the remittances sent back by migrants, which are then invested into the community in the forms of education, healthcare, and

infrastructure. On an even larger scale, entire countries and governments can gain enormously from the remittances send back. Saskia Sassen (2000) notes that households and entire communities are increasingly dependent on women for their survival,

Domestic labour migration can be a family strategy to combat poverty and unemployment. Although the idea of 'sacrifice' continues to permeate migration narratives, Barber (2008) notes that this is countered with examples of how domestic labour migration contributes to "familial well-being and to personal experience" (p. 1281). Families are enabled to buy needed food and clothing and provide for their families. Beyond basic necessities, some families used remittances to improve their houses, pay for private education or tutoring, or even buy a house of their own. Global care chains can completely change the economic situation of a family. In addition to this, remittances can be used for school supplies, post-secondary education, and health costs. Even though family members may be required to take on additional responsibilities in the absence of a wife/mother, they may have greatly improved standards of living that would not have been available to them before.

Depending on the culture in which a family lives, having a migrant mother who sends back remittances can be viewed positively or negatively. In cases where it is viewed positively, families may gain a higher status based on their increased income and standards of living, despite the fact that their family is separated.

Global care chains can be positive at an individual level of development in that it has the potential to be empowering for migrant women, offer increased independence,

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better opportunities and a higher standard of living (Piper, 2005). In some cases, it may offer an escape from abusive husbands or an alternative to a life of poverty for women and their families. Laurie (2007) writes that some Filipina migrants in Qatar expressed a sense of adventure which contributed to their decision to migrate, and positive emotions which they experienced through earning their own money. Through their domestic labour abroad, migrant mothers are able to provide financially for their children, and provide for their education and future. These mothers show their love for their children by providing financial security, and for some their migration also offers increased financial freedom, a chance to work outside the home, to travel, have new experiences, and meet new people.

b) Challenges of Global Care Chains

Despite the potential for the migration of domestic care workers to enhance and improve communities, there are also several costs associated with the formation of global care chains. For instance, while it might be expected that as more women enter the workforce a more egalitarian set up would occur which consisted of men contributing more to care, this is not always the case. In fact, in many places there may be a definite cultural resistance to men stepping in to take over these roles (Gamburd, 2000, Parrenas, 2004). Gamburd (2000) asserts that the domestic labour migration of women from the Sri Lankan village community of Naeaegama to the Middle East has led to significant changes in the local gender roles of Naeaegama. Men, who feel a loss of

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dignity, reluctantly take over what is regarded as 'women's work.' The sense that Sri Lankan men are not fulfilling their male breadwinner role is implied by the saying "Sri Lankan men must be donkeys," an adage which suggests their impotence (Gamburd, 2000a, p. 176). Alcohol abuse is prominent among the husbands of migrant women in Naeaegama, who may often use the remittances earned by their wives to buy alcohol and display their wealth.

While migrant women in Naeaegama may hope to save their earnings for the purchase of land or a house, the money tends to be spent on their husbands' daily needs instead. Gender roles and power relations are evident through this example. The women of Naeaegama comprise the majority of community members to migrant because caregiving jobs are highly feminized. However, the migration of these women shifts gender and power relationships because the women are now the primary breadwinners of their families and the community. In response to this, many husbands try to preserve their masculinity and maintain the previous power structure.

However, it is important to recognize that women are not simply helpless victims in this situation. Gamburd's research also shows that some women display their own agency through purchasing land and establishing their own homes. Others chose to go back to the Middle East to work instead of staying in the village. Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila (1997) present information on Latina women who work as nannies and housekeepers in Los Angeles while their children stay behind in Latin America. The authors discuss the various Latin American perceptions of motherhood, and the

variations of transnational motherhood which tend to contradict dominant ideas of what motherhood is or "should" be. The 'cult of domesticity' is characterized by breadwinner husbands and domestic wives. Migrant mothers, therefore, "radically break with deeply gendered spatial and temporal boundaries of family and work" (Ibid., p. 5). Although migrant mothers may be breaking with tradition, they can also experience a sense of liberation and empowerment in their changed roles.

In line with post-colonial feminist theories, it is important to note that gender is not the only aspect that impacts the effects of global care chains on women. Ethnicity, class, race and age also influence the experiences of women (Moharty, 1981, Parpart et. al., 2000). For instance, while economic independence can bring about more egalitarian gender relations at home, this is usually only the case among higher classes. Working class women may instead be faced with a double or triple burden of work (Gamburd, 2000a). In addition to the extra work that migrant mothers may take on, these women may also be subjected to the negative perceptions of their community for their choice to migrate. Parrenas (2004) writes that in the Philippines there has been a negative response to the migrant women (the majority of whom are employed in domestic care labour abroad) who are seen to have "abandoned" their children, which is incongruous with the fact that the country itself depends heavily on the remittances these women send back, and actually promotes the migration of its citizens. Migrant mothers are vilified despite the fact that they migrate as a survival strategy to provide for their families, and are part of a larger country strategy which promotes remittance-based

development. While many mothers migrate out of love for their children, in many cultures women are denigrated for their decision to migrate and leave their children behind (Gamburd, 2000a, Gamburd 2000b). They may not be physically present to provide mothering to their children, but migrant mothers provide care through their financial contributions.

Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila (1997) describe the challenges that domestic labour migrants from Latin America face in Los Angeles. Live-in work is challenging because it involves more working hours than weekly work or house-keeping does, pays less, and is less compatible with transnational mothering. Macintosh (2011) has also highlighted the more recent difficulties that live-in caregivers experience in Canada, arguing that the LinCG Program has led to increased vulnerability for its migrant participants. Caregivers are exposed to exploitation by their employers, such as unpaid overtime, poor living and working conditions, social isolation, and difficulty in terminating their employment (Macintosh, 2011, Hodge, 2006). Macklin (1999) agrees with Macintosh's assessment of these conditions, also commenting,

> It cannot escape notice that the profound inequality of power along the axes of wealth, citizenship, race, and knowledge between employers and employees gives employers a significant advantage over workers. The point is not that all domestic workers are exploited, but rather that domestic work, occurring in the unregulated environment of the home, performed under the perpetual spectre-real or not-of deportation, potentiates exploitation (1999, p. 27).

While legal reforms have been set to come about in August 2011 (such as the issue of work permits contingent on the met standards of adequate and private accommodations and the guarantee of employer financial resources for wages) many

reforms are in fact policy changes (such as the revision that employers should cover travel costs), which are not enforceable by law. While the situation for migrant caregivers in Canada is advancing, several concerns remain. The major concerns which still need to be addressed include immigrant status (which remains temporary), the live-in requirement for caregivers, and the health exams which are required for family members. These types of issues are not limited to Canada, but rather are pervasive challenges that global care chains pose to individual migrant domestic caregivers worldwide (Ibid., Hodge, 2006).

The second group of individuals most affected by global care chains other than the migrants themselves are the children of domestic care labour migrants. These children are left behind to be taken care of by other relatives, elder siblings, or outside hired help. While some fathers may provide care in the absence of their wife, most research tends to show that this is not the case. Parrenas writes, of the case in the Philippines, that "without a doubt, the children of migrant Filipina domestic workers suffer from the extraction of care from the global south to the global north" (in Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2004, p. 53). Parrenas (2005) argues that the socialized gender roles of the Philippines aggravate the emotional strains of transnational family life. Mothers are viewed as nurturers, while fathers are seen to be the family breadwinners. This patriarchal framework and subsequent division of labour, leads to increased emotional stress on families in which mothers migrate to work overseas. Arriagada (2009) summarizes the situation as follows:

Despite the fact that families remaining in source countries often benefit economically from migration, the unequal distribution of care-giving responsibilities among men and women make the absence of the mother – traditionally the family's primary caregiver – possible cause for a care crisis in these families, which carries a social cost for the entire family (p. 4).

Parrenas outlines the consequences of these care deficits, asserting that many children may take on caregiving roles for their young siblings. If children are provided with good care substitutes, they often worked very hard (for instance academically) to make up for the sacrifices of their mother. Alternatively, if children were left with little support, they tended to become resentful towards their mother for leaving them. Parrenas' research reveals the emotional difficulties that children experience, such as guilt, sadness, loneliness, resentment and insecurity. Children may respond to their mother's migration with rebellion, sometimes even as a way to influence their mothers to return home.

c) The Experiences of Women in the South

It is of value to note that Western feminists are often quick to point out the adverse effects of global care chains on families in the global South. However, conclusions regarding the overall impact of these chains should not be drawn hastily, especially by Western feminist studies. Post-colonialist feminists critique Western feminist scholarship for its homogenization of women without recognizing racial, national, class and ethnic divisions (Mohanty, 1981). Feminist research is much more valuable when it avoids spacious generalizations about 'Third World women' or "Women in Latin

America' and instead takes other factors, as well as the historical, economic, political and cultural context into consideration for theorizing and understanding. The potential challenges of global care chains are very real, but they may not apply to or impact all of the women or families linked by paid or unpaid types of carework.

In addition to this, these challenges can be influenced by Western notions of comfort and privilege. It is easy to criticise or problematize global care chains when one is in the position of comfort, never having faced the same constraints or situations as domestic migrant women. Barber (2008) writes that interdisciplinary research has "tackled the deprivations of commoditized domestic labour," but that some research "skirted a tendency to 'victimize' women migrants" (p. 1267). She points to the importance of "paying more attention to the agency of emigrants, albeit an agency constrained by limited choices" (Ibid., p. 1266).

This being said, it is all the more important to speak to the women and families in the global care chains themselves, in order to give voice to those who are actually experiencing this phenomenon. Spivak (1988) reflects on whether subaltern women are truly able to speak in dominant Western discourse, and emphasizes the importance of listening to Southern women themselves before conferring our own ideas upon them of what we believe their experiences to be. Indeed, in the long run, although we are connected by gender, it may prove more difficult to overcome class differences, which means that "each of us needs to approach the tasks of theorizing, researching,

developing policies, and working for change with greater humility than has often been the case" (Parpart et. al, 2000).

2.6 Summary of Theoretical Position

I have evaluated and assessed the theoretical positions available to explain the challenges that women and their families face when mothers migrate as domestic workers to provide for their families. From the literature discussed, it is clear that migration can have numerous and wide-ranging effects on development for communities, families and individuals. I argue that the global care chains approach provides the most potential for understanding the impacts of domestic labour migration on women and development. While these chains may serve to provide financial security, they also often include social and emotional costs. However, global care chains do not merely provide a way to understand the impact of domestic labour migration on women and development; they provide an understanding of the impacts of the transnational migration of women on development. The global care chain theory exemplifies the demonstration of unequal development between regions, countries, sectors and social groups. Global care chains illustrate how, in a world of growing inequalities, individuals, families and communities find ways to mitigate the effects of underdevelopment by migrating to places with greater levels of development while still providing care for their family members. Paradoxically, this can contribute to increasing underdevelopment for

their countries of origin as they are emptied of the labour, care, community and relationships which would have been sustained if they stayed.

If development truly means more than merely economic wealth, it is apparent that migration and remittances do not contribute to all levels of development. The concept of global care chains questions the assertion that migration is a certain pathway to development. Development should be holistic in that it includes social, emotional, mental and spiritual development alongside economic. In many cases migration merely contributes to financial increases with high social and emotional costs. The care gaps left in families and communities may have detrimental effects; yet left with few options, many families are forced to choose financial security over emotional and social well-being. Global care chains are a result of the conjuncture of circumstance, including care gaps in the North resulting from industrialization and neoliberalism; the commodification of reproductive labour, and the trans-national migration of women to obtain employment in the domestic care sector. This also points to the value of adjusting the concept of development to include reproductive labour along with social development. Care itself is an intrinsic part of sustaining life and satisfying human needs, and therefore should be an essential aspect of holistic development.

As previously mentioned, women often see themselves as embedded in their families and communities. I draw on the works of Raghuram et. al (2009) regarding care and responsibility, as well as the socio-commons concept supported by Isaksen, Devi and Hochschild (2008) as a way to examine how care chains have the potential to disembed,

erode and distort relationships of family and community. In the same way the market of

the North has changed the market of the South by extracting goods and services such as

care, Isaksen, Devi and Hochschild argue that the market of the North is "indirectly

eroding the social solidarities of the South" (p. 75).

> Mothers are still mothers. But children forget what they look like. Mothers make great sacrifices for their children but the trust concerning that great sacrifice has been undermined. Absent mothers leave for their children's sake but children manage private, often profound doubts about why, in fact, their mothers left. Just as man's relationships to man and nature were disembedded in Polanyi's quite general terms, so we suggest, the relationship between parent and child is "disembedded" by migration. This happens "in" the family, but family theory per se is missing a picture of both the context — the backstage of globalization — and the
> process by which that context disembeds relations between parent and child. It is when we introduce the idea of a "commons" that we see how the distorted and eroded family ties of the South support the market of the North.

> Isaksen, Devi and Hochschild, 2008, p. 75

Care chains are anchored in this socio-emotional commons, and because of this

the costs of migration are not limited to private individuals, but instead become a public

issue to which we need "thoughtful public answers" (Ibid., p. 408). Due to long-distance

separation, the trust between a mother and child is undermined. Their relationship

becomes disembedded and distorted. Children struggle with doubt and emotional

difficulties while their mothers are away, and when they return their relationship with

their child is never quite the same as it was when they left. Global care chains reveal

how the migration of women contributes to the erosion of the socio-emotional

commons; something which is of great value to the sustainability and promotion of

holistic development. Both of these concepts explain the impacts of the migration of

women from the standpoint of women. However, rather than arguing that women should stay in the domestic sphere to avoid the costs of migration, global care chains and the socio-commons theories point to deeper structural issues such as an unequal political economy, unequal gender roles, a lack of male and state responsibility for childcare, and a lack of responsibility for holistic development which includes women, reproductive labour and social development. What is occurring is not merely a transfer of social capital, or resources, but a more fundamental erosion of family and community relationships. Global care chains therefore provide an excellent departure point for the promotion of holistic development which highlights women, social and emotional development, gender, and inequality. Talking with mothers who have experienced this erosion, with caregivers who have witnessed it, or with children who have managed their own doubts about migration, lends to a greater understanding of the impacts these chains entail.

2.7 South-South Transnational Care Chains: Connecting Nicaragua and Costa Rica

With high poverty levels and limited opportunities on the employment spectrum in Nicaragua, an increasing number of Nicaraguan women migrate as a strategy, however costly, to help financially sustain their families. An examination of migratory outflows has revealed that the majority of Nicaraguan migrant women are in the care and domestic sector of Costa Rica, essentially creating South-South transnational care chains between the two countries. In view of this (or consequently), more research is

needed on the last 'link' of these chains, to understand the impacts on the families and communities left behind in Nicaragua. The following chapter presents the methodology of this thesis, showing how women come to forefront in this research because it is precisely their firsthand experience that we need to hear in order to better understand the impacts of care chains on the women themselves, on their families, and on their communities in Nicaragua.

Chapter 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

The literature has shown that the extraction of care from developing nations has social and economic benefits and costs. This thesis argues that the migration of Nicaraguan women to Costa Rica for work in the domestic and care sector has led to significant changes in familial and community relations in Nicaragua. In order to support this assertion, I sought to determine the impact of transnational migration and South-South care chains between Nicaragua and Costa Rica at the individual, family, and community levels, and in particular to determine how migrant mothers maintain their relationships with their families and communities. Who provides care for the children of migrant mothers? How are households re-organized to fill care gaps? How have familial and community relations in Nicaragua been affected by transnational migration and care chains? The answers to these questions need to be answered by who form the center of global care chains: the women themselves.

This research examines domestic labour migration, and the extraction of human resources and care across borders, from the standpoint of the women involved and impacted as migrant workers and as caregivers left behind. Critical social researchers argue that "the purpose of research is to discover flaws and faults in society and in so doing promote actions that eliminate problems" (Rubin, 1995, p. 35). However, the feminist critical social research approach adds to this by particularly highlighting the problems of dominance and submission as they affect women, criticizing positivist

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approaches that do not allow participants to talk or explain. Feminist researchers have attempted to humanize participants and intentionally empower them by giving a voice through interviews to "those who had little or no societal voice" (Ibid., p. 36). This type of open and loosely structured research methodology is necessary to learn about women, to capture their words, their ideas and their stories and their experiences.

3.2 Research Design

I employed qualitative field research methods in order to provide an in-depth description of the experiences of migrants, caregivers and children of migrant mothers with a particular focus on the experiences of children and families left behind in Nicaragua. Semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with two groups of participants: 1) migrant women (narrowly defined as women who had previously migrated to Costa Rica to work as domestic workers and left children behind in Nicaragua), and 2) caregivers of migrants' children. Additional semi-structured Key Informant interviews were conducted with a third group of participants: key community members. I conducted 20 interviews in total, including 8 migrants, 2 migrants/caregivers, 4 caregivers, and 6 key community members (2 teachers, 1 vice principal, 1 community leader, 1 NGO worker/sociologist and 1 psychologist).

These three groups were chosen for interviews because of the important information they could provide concerning the main reasons for domestic migration to Costa Rica, the experiences of children and families left behind in Nicaragua, the effects

of the migration of mothers on children's education, perceptions of migration, family relationships and emotional and social well-being, household gender roles in terms of caregiving and household duties, the advantages and challenges of migration, how mothers support their children while they are away, and significant changes in the community. Ideally, it would have been more insightful to interview the children of migrant mothers themselves, but unfortunately due to ethical research constrictions, this was not possible to do for this study.

Nicaraguan migrant mothers were able to provide this information based on their personal migration experiences and stories. Caregivers were able to provide insight into the impact on the children left behind because they had intimate knowledge of the lives and adjustment of the children they cared for. In order to determine the impact of care chains at a community level, I chose key community members who worked with youth and children of migrant parents on a regular basis. They were able to provide their insights, experience and opinions on how children and youth adjusted to the migration of their mothers, behavioural changes and education levels and on how families or communities have changed or been restructured in response to the out-migration of women.

Ideally it would have been of great value to research the impacts on three groups: migrant mothers, the children left behind, and their caregivers, however, an examination of the implications of female migration on the caregivers back in the country of origin is beyond the scope of this paper. Due to resource and time

constraints, as well as the desire to limit the focus of this study, I will mainly focus on the implications for children, as well as include some of the challenges for migrant mothers.

3.3 Research Process

Field research was completed within six weeks between January 6 and February 21, 2012. Ethical approval was received from Saint Mary's University Research Ethics Board. The study was conducted with the help of Viva Nicaragua, a registered not-for-profit organization located in Granada, Nicaragua which works to meet the needs of communities and families through health, education, youth, children, vocational training and housing projects (Viva Nicaragua, 2012). Written consent was obtained from the participants, and all participants were over the age of 18. The research took place in eight different communities in the greater Granada region of Nicaragua. The names of the communities will be withheld in order to protect anonymity. Research participants were initially recruited through Viva Nicaragua, and the snowball approach was then used to identify additional participants.

Interviews lasted from 30 minutes to one hour each, depending on the participant. The interviews took place in the participant's residence or, in the case of teachers, at the school in which they worked. Participants were not reimbursed. Viva Nicaragua Program Coordinator Carrie McCracken accompanied me on all interviews in order to translate the responses from Spanish to English. The informed consent form was read aloud for individual interviews in the cases where participants were illiterate.

Those who were literate read the consent form themselves before signing. Verbal consent was given so the sessions could be tape recorded. Participants were guaranteed anonymity and each participant chose a pseudonym. All participants were told that they could choose not to answer a question if they were uncomfortable, and that they could withdraw from the study at any time up until May 2012. Participants were first asked statistical questions about their age, marital status, income levels and education levels. This was then followed by the interview questions. Questions were asked in English and then translated into Spanish. Answers were given in Spanish and translated back into English if necessary. Data was then transcribed.

Using NU*DIST QSR N6, a computer program designed for organizing, analyzing and sharing qualitative research, I organized the data into coding categories. I employed the use of both a-priori codes (codes based on the questions and topics from the interview schedules) and grounded codes (new themes that emerged out of the data) during coding. In order to analyze mother-child relationship changes, I employed the use of 'ideal-types,' an analytical tool created by Max Weber, which can be used as a type of measurement to capture the most essential components of a social phenomenon, such as care chains (Calhoun et. al, 2012, Eliaeson, 2000). Ideal types involve an emphasis of typical courses of conduct or defining traits. Defined by Weber, an ideal type "is formed by the one-sided accentuation of one or more points of view and by the synthesis of a great many diffuse, discrete, more or less present and occasionally absent concrete individual phenomena, which are arranged according to those one-sidedly emphasized

viewpoints into a unified analytical construct" (Weber, 1949, p. 90). Ideal-types do not exist in reality. Rather, they serve to make essential features of reality more visible and intelligible. Ideal-types are an aid to interpreters, and "should help the interpreter to depict reality, without reflecting reality directly" (Eliaeson, 2000, p. 250). Three ideal types emerged in the interviews of this study regarding the relationships between migrant mothers and their children: 1) Open Communication 2) Partially Blocked Communication, and 3) Breakdown in Communication. These will be explained and discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

3.4 Qualitative Methods

Qualitative methods allow researchers to study selected issues in depth and detail, and offer great richness, depth and understanding. Qualitative research is sensitive to the human situation, and allows researchers to capture experiences as well as ask questions regarding complex and sensitive issues. It is less likely to be misunderstood than quantitative research because questions can be reworded or clarified, as often was the case in the interviews I conducted. Sandelowski asserts that qualitative research can be described as a "demonstrable effort to produce richly and relevantly detailed descriptions and particularized interpretations of people and the social, linguistic, material, and other practices and events that shape and are shaped by them." (2004, p. 893) In addition to this, qualitative methods typically produce "a wealth of detailed information about a much smaller number of people and cases" (Patton, 1990, p. 14).

Although this reduces generalizability, it also increases understanding of the cases and situations being studied.

The use of multiple methods is important in obtaining a more substantive picture of reality, a more in-depth array of symbols and concepts, and a method of validity. Looking at phenomena from different points of view, or 'lines or sight' is referred to as triangulation (Berg, 2006, Mikkelson, 2005). This is why I felt it was important to include both semi-structured and key information interviews with the three different groups of migrant mothers, caregivers and key community members. Each group offered a different line of sight into domestic migration from Nicaragua to Costa Rica, and each offered a different point of point into the impacts of this migration on those left behind. By combining these different methods and different perspectives along with my own observation, I was able to use each one to support and cross check the validity of the others. This tactic also reduces systematic biases that could result from solely focusing on one type of interview or method, or from interviewing one type of participant.

3.4.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

The use of individual in-depth semi-structured interviews provided a space for respondents to share their personal experiences. The defining feature of a semi-structured interview is its fluid and flexible structure. Instead of following set questions or a sequenced script, semi-structured interviews are usually guided by themes, topics or areas that should be covered in the interview (Mason, 2004). This technique provides

flexibility in the order in which questions are asked, and which questions interviewers would like to follow up on or develop. This is so that the interview "can be shaped by the interviewee's own understandings as well as the researcher's interests, and unexpected themes can emerge" (Mason, 2004, p. 1020). This type of interview involved predetermined questions and special topics; and while the questions are asked systematically, I had the freedom to probe beyond them. I was able to gain more understanding through adjusting the language of the questions, asking clarifying questions, or following up on unexpected or interesting information that emerged. When participants began to talk about a question I planned to ask later on in the interview, I simply changed the order of the topics I planned to cover.

Semi-standardized interviews also allow for comparisons across interviews, and the freedom to pursue new areas. Semi-standardized interview questions "can reflect an awareness that individuals understand the world in varying ways," and researchers can approach issues from the perspective of the subject (Berg, 2006, p. 207). Some of the information I received in the interviews (such as education levels, migration rates, income levels, and household labour activities) could theoretically have been gathered in a questionnaire survey, but within an interview setting I was able to go beyond a bare outline of the situation to reveal beliefs, constraints and strategies that migrant households employ (Willis, 2006). The use of individual, in-depth, semi-structured interviews also proved valuable as family members may not have revealed information about their children or their true feelings on how migration has impacted them than in a

more formal questionnaire. With a flexible setting such as a semi-structured interview, I also received some information on the daily life of the interviewees, their general struggles with balancing work, children and schooling, and on how migration factored into their daily lives

One limitation to using in-depth, qualitative interviews is that they are difficult to carry out in large numbers. However, in order to get greater depth and understanding few interviews are required. Quality is valued over quantity. This is why I first gathered secondary data to obtain a larger quantity of general information and supplement the data obtained in the in-depth interviews.

3.4.2 Key Informant Interviews

Key informant interviews are useful for gathering special knowledge as key informants can have unique information and understanding on certain subjects. Key informants (especially 'outsiders' with 'inside' information) can grant access to valuable information about "other people's knowledge, attitudes, and practices besides their own" (Mikkelson, 2005, p. 172). One of the limitations of key informant interviews is that the informants may provide biased information which can mislead researchers, and therefore it was important for me to keep this in mind while conducting this type of interview.

3.4.3 Observation

Observation is a key component of field research. Researchers observe daily activities and ordinary events in natural settings, and attempt to gain an insider perspective while maintaining an unbiased and analytical perspective and distance (Neuman, 2006). In this way researchers can observe social processes without imposing their own perspectives. Observation therefore involves a researcher being present in a situation and recording his/her impressions of the events that unfold, and watching and listening rather than asking people about their views and feelings. This offers validity because it focuses on what people actually do, not just what they *say* they do. By living with a local family in Nicaragua for six weeks, I was able to engage in unstructured observation of the behaviours, actions, symbols, social differences and physical structures throughout the research period (Mikkelson, 2005). While my research required much more than mere observation, this was still a useful tool for creating key questions to ask during the interviews, as well as for providing an overall idea and understanding of the daily lives of Nicaraguans, migrant and non-migrant household livelihoods, views towards migration, social dynamics, gender roles and familial structures. After certain themes or patterns had been identified, I was able to do more structured observations to confirm and verify them.

3.4.4 Document Research

Secondary sources included books and articles on gender, migration and development theories; books, articles and reports on the history of Nicaragua and the country's current socio-economic condition, current migration statistics for Nicaragua and Costa Rica; official government, United Nations or World Bank reports on migration, gender, poverty, and development in Nicaragua; Nicaraguan newspaper reports, academic articles and studies on global care chains in Latin America and elsewhere in the world.

3.5 Research Location

The site for my research was the city of Granada (Department of Granada). Granada provided an ideal place to conduct research in Nicaragua. A city of almost 200,000 including surrounding communities, Granada is located next to Lake Nicaragua and is only a few hours drive from the Costa Rican border (INIDE, 2012).
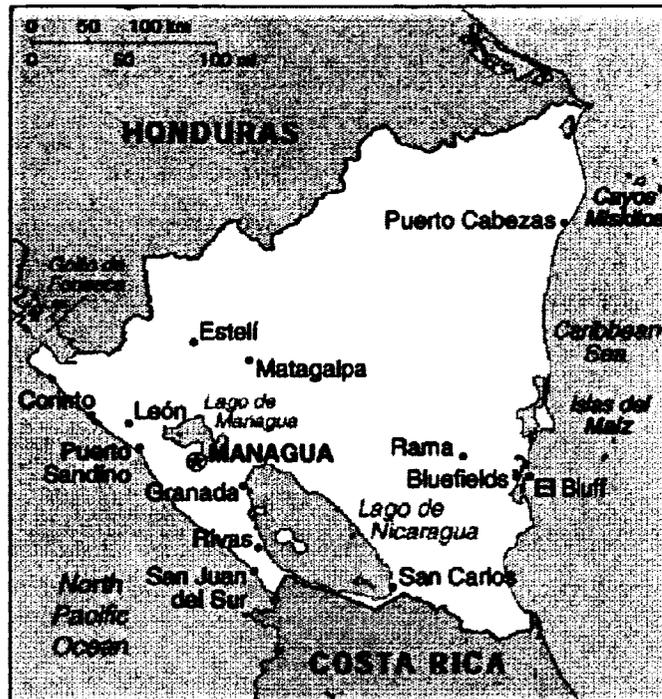
I chose to conduct research in this location because of the large number of

Nicaraguans from Granada that migrate to Costa Rica looking for work, and because of

the number of different communities I would have the opportunity to visit and from

which to interview participants. Like most areas of Nicaragua (the poorest country in

Central America), Granada is characterized by high levels of poverty and unemployment.

Granada has attracted increasing numbers of tourists and backpackers with its colonial

charm, proximity to picturesque volcanoes and lakes, and inexpensive food and

accommodations. However, while the tourism industry has contributed to creating some

employment, tourists are rarely aware of the poverty and sprawling slums which lie

mere blocks away from the beautiful museums, churches and tourist attractions.

Migration to Costa Rica remains a common survival strategy for families, and especially single mothers, who are trying to make ends meet.

3.6 Participants

As mentioned, the sample in this study included three groups: migrant mothers, caregivers of the children of migrant mothers, and key community members. Participant profiles are provided at the end of the chapter to help personalize the 20 interview participants. In accordance with the Research Ethics Board at Saint Mary's University all names have been changed to protect the anonymity of the participants.

The migrant mothers interviewed ranged between 20 and 75 years old. All of the women worked as domestic workers in Costa Rica, for as little time as six months to as long as 23 years. Their current household income levels in Nicaragua ranged from $30 dollars CAN per month to $350 dollars CAN per month. As many of the women worked informally selling food or clothes, their income varied considerably from month. Sometimes income levels per month were higher depending on the number of family members who were employed and/or employable (old or young enough, not in school...etc.). Monthly income levels in Costa Rica ranged from around $50 CAD to $300 CAD. The degree of variety in income levels can be contributed to exchange rates from year to year (for example, some women migrated over a decade ago), how much employers paid for domestic work, and the length of time each woman spent working for the same family (longer working times often resulted in pay raises over the years).

Each woman sent remittances back to Nicaragua for their families, ranging from $20 CAD a month to $100 CAD a month. In line with the reality that most poor nations and communities with low levels of formal education tend to have high birth rates, most of the migrant women interviewed had at least three children. Many had six or seven children, ranging up to 10 or 11 children, which was not uncommon for many families in the communities I visited. Miscarriages and early childhood mortality are also frequent occurrences. One of the women interviewed was pregnant 24 times, but only 10 children survived. In contrast to the large families in Nicaragua, many of the families (often well-off and highly educated) that the women work for in Costa Rica only have 1 or 2 children.

All of the children of the migrant mothers interviewed were cared for by a female family member. Four migrant mothers entrusted their children to the care of a grandmother. Three mothers had their eldest daughter care for the younger siblings. One mother left her children in the care of her sister while she was away, and another hired a domestic worker to care for her children during the day and had a friend stay over at the house during the night. Seven of the women were single mothers and three were married. The women interviewed had generally low levels of formal education. Fifty percent of the women did not finish primary school. Only one woman finished high school and went on to vocational school.

The caregivers interviewed included one mother, two daughters, two sisters and one grandmother (in terms of their relation to the migrant). Three of the women were

single mothers, two were widows and one was married. The women cared for one child up to seven children for various periods of time. Most of the caregivers had low levels of formal education. One caregiver finished high school and went onto vocational school, while another finished high school and plans to attend university in the future. The others finished various levels of primary school with the exception of one, who did not receive any schooling as a child.

The key community members interviewed work in various communities and capacities within Granada. All of them work with youth and children, many of whom are the children of migrants. Data regarding their income and education levels was not collected as it was not relevant to this study. The tables below show the statistical data collected from the migrant women and the caregiver participants.

Lola	Single	31	3	10	Some high school	$142	Mother	11 months	2009	$136	$50 – $100
Juliana	Married	52	7	14	Grade 2	$30	Sister/ niece	Ranging from several wks to 2 yrs over 23 years	1980 - 2003	$100 - $240	$50 - $200
Belkis	Married	34	2	4	Vocational degree	$310	Mother	2 yrs	2009	$90 - 100	$80
Chilo	Single	48	1	4	Grade 1	$310	Mother	23 yrs	1987 - 2010	$40 - $300	$20 - $150
Brittany	Single	32	3	4	Grade 6	$90	Mother	6 mths	2000	$60 - 100	$20 - $60
Rachel	Single	39	5	5	Grade 11	$132	Daughter	4 yrs and counting	2008	$200	$70 - $80
Sara	Single	20	1	13	Some high school	$155	Mother	Two times: 6 mths and 1 yr	2009	$50	n/a
Carla	Married	42	7	13	Grade 11	$177	Mother-in-law/ Daughter/ husband	Three times: 9 months, 5 months, 2 and 1/2 years	1994, 1996, 2008	$50 - $310	$40 - $200
Marta	Single	75	10	6	None	$360	Daughter	14 years	1987 - 2001	n/a	n/a
Lolita	Single	40	2	5	Grade 6	$266	Friend/ nanny	Three times: 8, 6 and 6 months	2003	$105	$70

Table 2: Caregivers

Juliana	Married	52	7	sister	4	Grade 2	$30	12 years	2000	$0
Carmen	Widow	78	10	Grandmother Great-grandmother	1 1	Primary	Supported by children	1 year; 2 years ongoing	2009 2010	$100
Sara	Single	20	1	daughter	7	High school	$155	6 months and 1 year	2009	$205
Mariajose	Single	37	0	daughter	2	Vocational	$360	14 years	1988	$100
Amanda	Single	49	7	mother	1	Grade 2	$60	2 years	1999	$15
Jessica	Widow	54	7	sister, mother in law	7 2	None	$132	1 week to 2 years	1980 - 2003	$40 to $60

3.7 Reflections on Fieldwork

When I first began researching the topic of South-South transnational care chains between Nicaragua and Costa Rica, I realized that I would need to choose between either interviewing women in Nicaragua who had returned from migrating to Costa Rica, or interviewing migrant women who were currently employed as domestic workers in Costa Rica. Due to time and resource constraints, traveling to both countries was not an option. I wanted to choose the most appropriate place to conduct interviews with both migrants and key community members, as well as gain the most information on children and families left behind in Nicaragua. It was clear to me that because my focus was on those 'left behind,' that Nicaragua was the best place to go.

This choice proved to be beneficial in three additional ways that I did not anticipate. First of all, it provided me with the opportunity to also interview caregivers of the children of migrants, and to see first-hand the Nicaraguan communities and families that migrant mothers left behind. Secondly, it provided me with the opportunity to see some of the longer-term effects of migration. Some of the women I interviewed had migrated more than 20 years prior. The impact of their migration was still evident in the lives of their children today. Resentment and bitterness can last for decades after the years of separation. If I had gone to Costa Rica I would not have seen the communities which are now comprised of youth and young adults still living off the remittances of their migrant parents who live abroad. Lastly, I was able to find out why migrant mothers decided to return, and how they adjusted and lived after returning. Some

previous migrants were now caregivers for the children of other migrant family members. Others planned to return to Costa Rica once they had enough money for the visa and travel expenses.

Although I expected to encounter challenges which would result in changes to my original research plan once I began field research, in actuality very few challenges arose in the field. Contrary to my expectations, no participants canceled their interviews, I had no difficulty in transportation to and from interviews, and most participants were quite willing to talk about their experiences. It was not difficult to identify women to interview because every person interviewed knew several, if not at least one, woman who had migrated, or had family members who had migrated or cared for migrant children.

One change I decided to make during the field research was to expand my interviews to include the caregivers of the children of migrant mothers while they are away in Costa Rica. This included grandmothers, aunts and elder daughters. I realized that this addition would provide an important look at how the children of migrants coped with having their mothers gone, from the perspective of the person who took care of them in Nicaragua. The questions asked of caretakers of migrant children in Nicaragua were very similar to the questions asked of migrant mothers, except that they were changed slightly in order to ask from the caregiver perspective (for example, instead of "How long were you in Costa Rica? Or, who took care of your children?" they would be asked "How long was [migrant mother] in Costa Rica? How long did you care

for her children?) The same questions regarding how the migrant mother maintained communication with her children and how the children coped were used. I believe this was a valuable addition, as the interviews I conducted with caregivers provided very rich information on the lives of children left behind, and on the challenges that caregivers themselves faced.

I learned a great deal throughout my research, but one of the main lessons I learned was that there is no typical migration experience. I had expected to find many similar stories, and it is true that in many ways the women I interviewed were alike. However, in other ways it became clear that there was no 'box' for migrant women or their situation. Some women stayed in Costa Rica for several years (one even for over two decades), while others migrated frequently for short periods of time. Some women experienced discrimination and planned never to return, while others viewed Costa Rica as a saving lifeline for themselves and their families. Some women lived with their employers, while others did not. Some women cared for children and others mainly cooked and cleaned. However, one characteristic that all of the migrant women interviewed had in common was their reason for migrating: in order to find work to provide for their children.

3.8 Participant Profiles

3.8.1 Migrant Women

Belkis - A thirty-four year old married woman of two, Belkis has one 13 year old son with her previous husband and another one and a half year old son with her second husband. Belkis migrated to Costa Rica with her husband, who has Costa Rican residency, in June of 2009. She worked in various types of employment, including at a bakery, as a domestic worker, and selling time share vacation packages. Her eldest son remained in Nicaragua for the first six months of her time in Costa Rica and then she brought him there in December of 2009. He lived there with Belkis and her husband for eight months before returning to Nicaragua for three months until he was joined by his mother in December of 2010. While she was away he was cared for by his grandmother. Her second son was born in Costa Rica. Belkis completed high school and went on to vocational school for a secretarial diploma.

Brittany - Is a 32 year old single mother of three daughters. Brittany migrated to Costa Rica to work as an hourly domestic worker for six months in the year 2000. Her oldest daughter was two years at the time and stayed with Brittany's mother. Brittany now works informally selling food from a street stand. She likes the flexible schedule this offers because she is able to see her children more often. Brittany finished school up to the sixth grade.

Carla - Is a 42 year old married mother of seven children from the ages of 12 to 24. Carla also has four grandchildren from one to six years old. There are 13 people living in Carla's household. Currently Carla's 24 year old daughter is the only family member who is formally employed. Carla informally sells food like meat and soup, one of her daughters does nails, and her husband makes furniture when he is not occupied with his duties as a leader in the community. Carla's 15 year old son and youngest two daughters all attend school, and her grand-children attend preschool. One of her daughters hopes to attend university next year. Carla completed her third year of high school. Carla has migrated to Costa Rica three separate times, and plans to go back soon. The first time was in 1994 for nine months, the second time was in 1996 for five months, and the third time was in 2008 for two and a half years. Carla worked as a domestic worker each time.

Chilo - A quiet 48 year old, Chilo is the single mother of one 26 year old daughter. Chilo migrated to Costa Rica in 1987 and remained there as a domestic worker for 25 years. Her daughter stayed in Nicaragua with Chilo's mother. Chilo returned to Nicaragua in November 2011 because of a strained relationship with her employers. Chilo cared for their daughter for 21 years, travelling to Europe with her and living in the United States for a year and a half while her charge attended school. Chilo worked long hours, often 17 or 18 hours a day. She received a half day off on Saturdays. Chilo completed school up to 1st grade but is illiterate.

Juliana - Is a talkative 52 year old married mother of seven. Juliana first migrated to work in Costa Rica in 1980. Between 1980 and 2003 Juliana migrated back and forth between Nicaragua and Costa Rica an estimated 30 to 40 times, for short periods of time, to buy items such as used clothing and sell them either in Costa Rica or Nicaragua. However, at one time Juliana stayed for two years to work selling clothing and other goods in various locations, particularly at a banana plantation located near San Juan. In 2003 Juliana moved to Costa Rica for one year as a domestic worker for a wealthy household with two children. Juliana's own seven children were cared for by her sister. Juliana is now a caregiver for two of a different sister's children while she works in Costa Rica. Including her niece and nephew, and a few grandchildren, there are now 14 people currently residing in Juliana's household. Three members of her family are currently employed. Juliana and her daughter work informally selling food and other small items from their house and at a table in the central park, and Juliana's husband also works. Juliana completed school up to the second grade.

Lola - Is a soft-spoken, single 31 year old mother of three. Ten people share her small, three room household. Lola moved to Costa Rica to work as a domestic worker for one year in 2009, when her eldest son was 6 years old. Her other two children were not born yet. Her current job in Nicaragua is also as a domestic worker. While in Costa Rica Lolita lived with her brother on Sundays, and spend the rest of the week in her employer's

household. Four members of her household in Nicaragua are currently employed, and her oldest son is in school. Lola graduated from high school.

Lolita - is a 40 year old single mother. She has two daughters aged 22 and 15. Lolita migrated in 2003 for over a year and half to work in Costa Rica, primarily to put her children through school. For the first eight months Lolita worked as a domestic worker in various houses. She started working as a nanny and domestic worker for one of many houses she cleaned and stayed with them for a year. She cared for two children aged one and a half and five years old. Lolita now works in Nicaragua selling homemade piñatas, greeting cards and gift bags. She lives with her grandfather, two daughters and grandson. Her oldest daughter, grandfather and herself all work informally. Lolita places a high priority on education for her children. Her oldest daughter is taking English classes and attending university, and her younger daughter and grandson attend high school and primary school. Lolita attended school until the 6th grade.

Marta - is the 75 year old single mother of 10 children. Her oldest child is now 60 years old and her youngest is 32 years old. Marta migrated to Costa Rica almost 25 years ago, leaving 13 year old daughter Mariajose behind to care for her youngest son, who was 6 years old at the time, and her oldest son who is disabled and was 36 years old at the time. Marta worked as caretaker for an elderly woman until she died at age 104. She

now lives in Nicaragua with Mariajose and travels frequently to Costa Rica to visit her other children there.

Rachel - Is a 39 year old single mother of five children from ages 5 to 21 years old. Her three youngest children still attend school. Rachel is currently living and working in Costa Rica, however she was back for a short visit to her children at the time I conducted interviews in Nicaragua. Rachel first migrated to Costa Rica four years ago. Her 21 year daughter old sometimes works in Costa Rica as well. Rachel is a domestic worker and a waitress in Costa Rica, and lives with her brother in a housing project in San Jose. Before she migrated to Costa Rica, Rachel sold items or food informally in Nicaragua. Rachel finished school up to her 3rd year of high school.

3.8.2 Caregivers

Amanda - is a 49 year old single woman of seven children, ranging from 15 to 34 years old. Amanda finished school up to the second grade. Amanda works selling food near the ferry. She lives with three of her children. Amanda cared for one of her grandchildren when her daughter Brittany migrated to Costa Rica for work 13 years ago. Her granddaughter was about one and a half years old, the same age as Amanda's youngest daughter at the time. Amanda cared for Brittany's daughter for almost two years. Because she was still working at that time selling food, one of her daughters (aged

11 or 12 at that time) would watch the children, or she would leave them with her neighbour if her daughter was at school.

Carmen - is 78 years old and a widow. She has 10 children, now aging from 50 to 30 years old. She has around 32 grandchildren, and 18 great-grandchildren. Carmen was pregnant 24 times, but lost the other 14 children through miscarriages. Carmen currently takes care of her seven year old great-grand-daughter Nicole, whose mother is working in Costa Rica as a domestic worker. Two years ago, Carmen also cared for Rafael, the now 13 year old son of her grand-daughter Belkis, who also migrated to Costa Rica as a domestic worker. Carmen only lives in her house with Nicole, but one of her daughters and a hired employee come over during the daytime to help with chores. Nine of Carmen's children live abroad in the US, Costa Rica and El Salvador. She is supported by her children and sometimes Nicole's mother, who send her remittances.

Jessica - is a 54 year old woman. She is currently the mother of seven children after three died in their infancy. Her children range from the ages of 14 to 26 years old. Jessica is a widow. She lives with three of her children and two of her grandchildren and sells food at the ferry dock. Jessica cared for her sister's seven children while her sister was working in Costa Rica, and now cares for her two grandchildren while their mother also works in Costa Rica.

Mariajose - is a 37 year old woman. She has nine brothers and sisters from ages 30 to 60. Twenty-four years ago, when Mariajose was 13 years old, her mother migrated to Costa Rica to work as a domestica caring for an elderly woman. Mariajose was left behind to care for her six year old brother and her 36 year old brother who is disabled. Mariajose's mother worked in Costa Rica for 14 years. Mariajose cooked, cleaned, cared for her brothers and paid the household bills. Her mother sent money and packages to support them. Mariajose also got a job when she was 14 years old as a caregiver for an elderly client to help put herself and her brother through school. She graduated high school and went on to complete a vocation degree in computer programming.

Sara- is a 20 year old single mother of a two year old son. She is the daughter of Carla. Sara was about 16 or 17 years old when her mother migrated to Costa Rica for two and half years in 2008. Although her father remained in Nicaragua, Sara helped with much of the caregiving responsibilities for her six siblings. Her mother also migrated to Costa Rica for nine months in 1994 and five months in 1996, but Sara was too young to remember. Sara continued to attend school while her mother was away, and just finished up secondary school. Sara also migrated to Costa Rica herself when she was around 18 to work as a nanny for a year and a half. Sara earned $7500 colones every two weeks working as a nanny in Costa Rica.

3.8.3   Key Community Members

Celeste – As a clinical psychologist, Celeste works with high risk youth and also with children. Celeste used to work with an organization which worked with youth in the criminal justice system. She currently works with an NGO in Granada doing various youth and children's programs. She also works for a kindergarten once a week to meet with the parents about their children. Celeste will be starting a support group for migrant children in the future.

Lumbar - At 27 years old, Lumbar is an elected community leader. Lumbar plays an important role in his community as a liaison between community members and the Ministries of Education and Health. He is in contact with families and children on a daily basis, and is aware of their problems and concerns. Lumbar helps organize and run programs for children and youth, and collaborates with various NGOs to start up different programs and projects in the community. Lumbar went back to school to receive his high school diploma, and is now taking computer and IT classes.

Lily - Is the Program Coordinator for a non-governmental development organization in Granada. She has worked in Granada for six years since founding the organization. Lily lived in Costa Rica for a number of years prior to moving to Nicaragua, and completed her field research for a Masters in Sociology in Costa Rica. Lily works with several

communities in Granada, and is well-acquainted with the challenges that migrants face. Her organization plans to start a program for the children of migrants which involves art therapy and a support group through which children and youth can express their thoughts and feelings.

Margarita – Is a teacher at a primary school. She has been teaching there for the past five years, and has been working in the school system for 30 years as a teacher, administrator and principal. Margarita has two degrees from UNAN, one in Education and one in Business. Last year Margarita taught grade three, and will be teaching the same class this year for grade 4. She expects to have from 30 to 40 students in her class this year.

Maria - Is the pre-school teacher in her community. While this is her first year teaching at the school, she has been quite involved with children and youth in the community and knows their families well. Maria has lived in her community for three years, and will have 20 to 30 children in her class this year.

Rosalinda- Is the assistant principal at a primary school. She has been working there for 24 years and has extensive experience working with the children of migrants and low-income families.

3.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter has outlined the use of qualitative field research methods in order to provide an in-depth description of the experiences of migrants, caregivers and children of migrant mothers in Nicaragua. This chapter also reflects the focus of this research on women, and importance of their narratives to better understanding care chains. The following chapter offers a look at the background and history of Nicaragua up to the present day. It then examines the current socio-economic situation and how this has contributed to increasing migration of Nicaraguan women to Costa Rica and other countries.

Chapter 4: NICARAGUA

4.1 Introduction

To study Nicaragua during the last few decades is to look at a country which has undergone profound political, social, ideological, and economic change. It is important to understand the context of Nicaragua to understand the root reasons for increased transnational migration to international destinations, which has occurred for both political and economic reasons. Nicaragua has a history of involvement from outside nations, and also falls within a select group of countries in the world which have experienced social revolution. Nicaragua achieved independence from Spain in 1823. However, a mere 27 years later Great Britain and the United States ignored Nicaraguan sovereignty by negotiating a treaty to control the Nicaraguan San Juan River as a transoceanic transit route without the involvement or consent of the government of Nicaragua (Vanden and Prevost, 2006). In 1855 U.S. citizen William Walker set up a coalition government between two conflicting cities of Nicaragua under the Conservatives, but afterwards declared himself the president of the country. Walker was eventually exiled by the British, other Central American governments, and the U.S., leading to a fairly stable 30-year period under Conservative rule (Ibid.). However, this was soon to be followed by a dictatorship which carried tremendously harmful consequences for this small Central American country.

4.2 The Somoza Regime

Nicaragua was ruled by the Somoza family for more than four decades; a regime which was brought to power by the United States in 1932 and supported by it until the late 1970s (Perla, 2008). Power and wealth became highly concentrated, and corruption and repression were commonplace during this time. The regime was characterized by extreme dishonesty and high levels of poverty. Rather than focusing on social development, the Somoza government strategy focused narrowly on the economy's agricultural export sector (Walker, 2003). Despite rhetoric about aiding the poor, the basic causes of economic and political disparity were never addressed, and national projects were essentially used to enrich Somoza and his close associates (Ibid.). The wealth of the nation was poorly distributed under the Somoza dictatorship, and statistics showed extremely low levels of living, high inequality, and poor levels of health and education (Arnove, 1995). The Somoza system supported and was supported by illiteracy. Politically, it was to the Somozas' advantage to have and maintain an illiterate population. Basic education might have provided the poor with the tools to question the unequal power relations and economic conditions under which they lived in Nicaragua. Illiteracy was therefore "associated with a culture of silence and a lack of protest" (Archer and Costello, 1990, p. 21). A 1979 census showed that 50 percent of the population was illiterate, and this number soared to close to 90 percent in rural areas (Miller, 1985).

Only 68 percent of all primary age children entered school, and one half of those dropped out during the first year, while a mere 5 percent of rural children finished primary school (Barndt, 1991). Secondary schooling was accessible to only 18 percent of the eligible population, and only .3 percent of the population completed higher education (Ibid.). In December of 1972, Nicaragua was struck by a massive and devastating earthquake. Central Managua was destroyed and 10,000 people lost their lives (Vanden and Prevost, 2006). Some observe that this event was a key turning point for the Somoza regime. To the outrage of all Nicaraguan social classes, Somoza used the catastrophe to his advantage. Somoza channelled international relief funds into the construction of luxury homes for the National Guard or the pockets of family and friends, self-awarded government building contracts, and purchased industries destroyed by the earthquake while the homeless poor constructed their own wooden shacks to live in (Ibid.). Somoza lost the support he had from the poorer classes, as well as the loyalty of the elite. The dictatorship became increasingly isolated while revolutionaries began to gain support and create plans to dismantle the Somoza regime. The assassination of the head of the newspaper 'La Prensa' (open Somoza critic Pedro Joaquin Chamorro) on June 10, 1978, sparked the movement of the urban masses into action, resulting in the first serious confrontation with the National Guard (Knudson, 1981). Somoza's strategy to bomb civilian areas of his own country resulted in further popular support for the rebels, and so began the rise of the Sandinistas, who remained in power for the next 11 years.

4.3 The Sandinista Revolution

In July 1979, a revolution led by the Daniel Ortega and the Sandinista National Liberation Front (Frente Sandinista de Liberacion Nacional [FSLN]) overthrew the dictatorship of General Anastasio Somoza Debayle, who was assassinated in Paraguay the following year (World Almanac & Book of Facts, 2009). A revolutionary government was established by the FSLN, and was committed to "a program of rapid social transformation" (Miller, 1985, p. 16). The Sandinistas took their name from Augusto C. Sandino, a nationalist and anti-imperialist who led an uprising against the US supported government in the late 1920s and 30s (Walker, 2003). The Sandinistas made educational expansion and reform amongst its top priorities in its efforts to transform Nicaraguan society, and the FSLN party promoted a high level of involvement from the state and state-run social programs (Walker, 2003). The most marginalized members of Nicaraguan society were able to see tangible evidence of the Sandinista claims to include them in the new society and that the revolutionary movement could change their lives for the better. Within eight months of taking power, the Nicaraguan government mobilized the national literacy crusade. The year 1980 was decreed the "Year of Literacy," which the new government leaders as an integral part of the Nicaraguan national development and resulted in the reduction of illiteracy to 12 percent by 1983 (Skidmore and Smith, 2001). The literacy crusade also resulted in additional by-products, such as infrastructural and construction work, anti-malaria campaigns, environmental, health and sanitation actions and local development projects

(UNESCO, 2006). Life expectancy increased by five years, infant diarrhea, mountain leprosy, and malaria decreased by 75%, 60% and 50% and infant mortality decreased to 90.1/1000 births by 1983 (from 121/1000 in 1978) (Skidmore and Smith, 2001, Walker, 2003, Kampwirth, K., 1997).

4.3.1 Sandinista Gender Reforms

Gender-reforms were also implemented, including state-funded marriage counseling, domestic violence workshops, contraceptive counseling, services for battered women, and the construction of more day care centers (Kampwirth, 2006). By 1989, 275 day care centers had been built, serving over 40,000 children nation-wide. Communities initiated their own day cares as well, resulting in 60 additional centers in the countryside (Baker, 1998). The FSLN made a conscious effort to incorporate gender-reforms and transform the traditional gender ideologies of Nicaragua. However, scholars such as Baker (1998) and Merrill (1993) argue that while this was a step forward, the Sandinistas merely expanded the definition of women's roles without truly changing Nicaraguan machismo and patriarchal ideology which saw men as superior breadwinners and women as inferior domestic caregivers.[6] Merrill writes that although

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[6] Machismo is defined by Baker (1998) as the predominant Nicaraguan ideology, "a set of beliefs predicated upon a series of oppositions regarding men and women, highlighted, in particular, male virility and all things considered masculine. These oppositions were, in fact, descriptions of what Nicaraguan society considered to be the natural qualities of men and women. By 'nature', men are sexually voracious, aggressive, active, competitive with other men, dominant over women, and superior
in terms of strength and competence in activities requiring logic. Women, on the other hand, were considered highly moral, passive, self-sacrificing, subordinate to men, and inferior in

the revolution "drew thousands of women into public life, encouraged females to work outside the home, spawned a national women's movement, and enshrined gender equality in the national constitution, it left largely intact the values, beliefs, and social customs that traditionally had regulated relations between the sexes" (1993, 'Women').[7]

4.3.2 Sandinista Challenges and the Contra War

Despite their progress in several areas of governance, the Sandinistas were little prepared to deal with the chaos and confusion left by the previous leadership. Somoza left Nicaragua with an international debt of $1.6 billion and escaped the country "with all but $3.5 million of the Nicaraguan national treasury" (Miller, 1985, p. 22). Prospects for success seemed bleak. Sandinista revolutionaries were young and untrained, and had no experience in government. Programs such as education and health needed to be started from scratch, and with no experience in governing a country this proved to be a difficult task for the new government. Hindrances to education included natural disasters and economic decline, but the external pressure of the U.S. counter-revolution was by far the most destructive factor. Two years after the Sandinistas overthrew Somoza, counter-insurgent armies (called the 'contras') formed to try and overthrow the FSLN party.

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strength and overall capabilities (aside from childcare and domestic work)" (p. 6). Patriarchy is defined as "a set of beliefs in which the husband/father is the sole provider and locus of authority. Women are considered naturally dependent upon men and submissive to their will" (Baker, 1998, p. 6).

[7] For more information see Merrill, T. (1993). Nicaragua: A Country Study, or Byers, K. (2010). Macho Macho Man: Masculinity in Latin America and the Quest for Gender Equality.

Contras were Nicaraguans, trained and financed by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) who fought under the military command of the Somoza National Guard to overthrow the Sandinista government (Arnove and Dewees, 1991). These Nicaraguans became disenchanted with the Sandinista government. Some felt that Nicaragua was turning into a Soviet puppet state, and therefore worked to remove the Sandinistas from power (Ibid.). Nearly a decade of fighting followed between counter-revolutionary, U.S. backed contras, and the Sandinistas, resulting in devastating effects for the country. The war led to thousands of displaced peoples, more than 100,000 casualties, 40,000 orphans, countless homeless and 40,000 to 50,000 lives lost (Walker, 2003). The economic damages were severe, and the war led to several major setbacks in social development, health, education and infrastructure. Defense costs skyrocketed, and eventually consumed more than half of the national budget, which led to severe cutbacks in social and education programs.

Contra groups were instructed to sabotage and eliminate Sandinista government projects and personnel. Miller (1985) wrote that the contra groups "attacked government development projects – burning down clinics, cooperatives, kindergartens, and schools and killing or kidnapping the people who serve in them" (p. xxv). Over time, the FSLN was forced to shift its priorities "from education and production, to defense, and finally, to national survival" (Arnove, 1995, p. 30). By 1988 inflation had reached a staggering 33,000 percent (Skidmore and Smith, 2001). As economic circumstances worsened, households required additional income earners, and women began to enter

the public labour market. However, as the formal sector shrank in size, many women sought informal employment. Perez-Aleman et.al (1992) notes that 60 percent of employed women in 1985 were working in the informal sector. Despite their key role in family provision, as well as the high number of female-headed households (estimated conservatively at 45 percent in the capital of Managua) women still experienced higher levels of unemployment and lower wages than men (Ibid.).

4.4 The Post-Sandinista Era

War-weary Nicaraguans decided to make a change after a decade of on-going violence, and so in 1990 the National Opposition Union (Union Nacional Opositora [UNO]) led by Violeta Barrios de Chamorro (the widow of Pedro Joaquin Chamorro) won in what was the first free national election in Nicaragua in 50 years (Sandiford et. al., 1994). While the FSLN promoted a high level of involvement from the state and state-run social programs, the UNO promoted a liberal, market-led ideology in which the state played a limited role. This represented a significant political change for Nicaragua, as a shift from central government to decentralization, depoliticization, and the privatization of health and education took place. While the FSLM aimed at setting the country on a social path to development, the UNO administration attempted to reintegrate Nicaragua into the world capitalist economy (Arnove, 1995).

Structural adjustment programs were introduced by governments across Latin America in the 1980s in an effort to decrease extreme widespread inflation. After the

1990 elections the IMF and World Bank mandated even harsher measures, the effects of which are controversial. In Nicaragua, as in other countries, the most vulnerable social groups, such as the poor, women, and children, were hit the hardest (Babb, 2009). The Chamorro government embraced structural adjustment measures in an effort to stabilize the Nicaraguan economy. Several key components of the Chamorro program included reduced government spending, the elimination of government food subsidies, a cut back in social services, increased interest rates, the devaluation of Nicaraguan currency (the cordoba), the downsizing of the government and the elimination of import tariffs (Babb, 2009, IOM, 2005). In an effort to overturn Sandinista gender reforms day cares were closed and contraceptive counseling, domestic violence workshops, state funded marriage-counseling were eliminated. Homelessness, un- and under-employment, domestic violence, drug addiction and crime rates soared (IOM, 2005). By 1992 unemployment had reached 19 percent, and underemployment was at 45 percent (Envio 1992). These figures increased to 20 percent and 54 percent by 1995, putting the unemployment rate at twice that of 1990 and ten times more than the rate of 1984 (Arana 1997). Babb (2009) writes that in response to these harsh adjustment measures and the resulting unemployment, 700,000 Nicaraguans left the country to find work elsewhere.

The UNO government was followed by two other conservative governments led by Arnoldo Aleman of the Liberal Alliance (AL) in 1996, and Enrique Bolanos of the Constitutional Liberal Party (PLC) in 2001. These administrations all employed neoliberal

policies in Nicaragua, but the Nicaraguan national economy continued to deteriorate. Nicaragua's payment deficits reached $12 billion in 1994 (making it the highest per debt capita in the world) and unemployment levels increased to over 50 percent (Vanden and Prevost, 2006). Nicaragua became classified as one of the IMF's Heavily Indebted Poor Countries, and in additional to this, Nicaragua's neoliberal repayments were overwhelming. Under the 1994 structural adjustment agreement the country paid an average of $280.7 million per year in interest and principle payment (Ibid.).

By the mid-to-late 90s structural adjustment measures had helped to curb inflation, and also contributed to an economic growth of 3.2 percent in 1994 and 4.2 percent in 1998 after negative growth in the early 1990s (Vanden and Prevost, 2006). However, negative effects included high unemployment, lowered standards of living and wage decline (Babb, 2009). Women were disproportionately affected by public sector cuts, becoming more numerous than men among the underemployed (Ibid.). Babb argues that Nicaraguan women have experienced this adjustment in gender-specific ways through their paid labour in and outside the home, writing that women's unpaid and paid work "are highly interconnected, and just as women's expanding work in the household may constrain their participation in the labor force, their increasing difficulties in earning a livelihood make the new demands at home that much harder to meet" (p. 175).

4.5 The Return of Ortega

The conservative Chamorro, Aleman and Bolanos governments all attempted to reverse the programs and policies of the FSLN. Vanden and Prevost (2006) acknowledge that for the most part, they were successful in doing so. However, they also note that these governments were not successful in marginalizing the FSLN party, which remained the leading opposition party in the 1990, 1996 and 2001 elections. Daniel Ortega and the FSLN were eventually re- elected in 2006. Ortega managed to change the constitution in order to run for a third term, and also won the elections in November 2011. Opposition leader Fabio Gadea claims that the election was a fraud, and clashes erupted in Managua over the election results (BBC News, 2011).

It appears that Ortega holds the majority of support from Nicaraguans with 62.65 percent of the vote, however there are serious misgivings concerning the legitimacy of the election, especially considering the fact that in previous years Ortega only held 20 to 30 percent of popular support (Ibid.). From conversations with locals in Granada, it is clear that some wholeheartedly support Ortega, while others, even former supporters, question his unconstitutional return to power. One woman said that her grandmother was counted as having voted for the FSLN, despite having passed away six years ago. Another former Sandinista soldier commented that Ortega simply gives handouts to the poorer communities to gain support, without truly promoting development. Teachers in Nicaragua receive a bonus for each of their students for school materials, supporters of the FSLN receive metal roofs for their homes, and Sandinista communities receive

funding for social programs. For those living in poverty, such resources are welcomed in return for support.

CIDA has stated that the administration of public services as well as the management of the economy and national budget have improved in Nicaragua, however they note that "the commitment to democracy, human rights and rule of law is being questioned by civil society and the media" (2012, p. 1). Measures such as the introduction of identification cards to show political affiliation, are concerning to many. Despite this, Ortega has not faced any serious uprisings. However, considering the tense political situation, he has sought to soften his revolutionary image (BBC, 2011). Pink and yellow government signs line the roads of Managua and Granada, promoting education and health. His government now employs a mix of both central and decentralized methods, but it is clear that there have been contradictory development results. On the one hand there has been social and political progress in areas such as education, agriculture and cooperation with civil organizations. On the other hand the government has been criticized for merely providing handouts to supporters and repressing free speech (Swiss Labour Association, 2012). The Ortega administration continues to invest in social programs which benefit the poorest of Nicaraguan society; however the statistics of the country show that greater improvements are still needed.

4.6 Assessing Current Socio-Economic Development in Nicaragua

The absolute number of people living in poverty in Nicaragua has increased, and the situation of inequality has not significantly improved (Johnson, 2006). In spite of advancements in recent years, poverty and unemployment levels have remained high in Nicaragua and are only second to Haiti in the Central American region (Gindling, 2007). According to the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), an estimated one out of every six Nicaraguans lives on less than US1.25 per day (2012). Nicaragua's gross domestic product per capita was US $2641 in 2006. (IOM, 2012b). The average monthly household income is US$100, while un-and underemployment combined in Nicaragua is at a high 60 percent (INEC, 2005, CIA, 2002).

Nicaragua is the largest Central American republic, but remains the most sparsely settled with a population of 5,789,000 in 2010 (World Bank, 2012). This under-population is advantageous because it means that the amount of arable land in Nicaragua is adequate for the size of the population. The country is rich in natural resources and good climatic conditions for supporting a wide range of agricultural products including rice, sugar, cotton and coffee. However, most of Nicaragua's rural poor live in the dry central region of the country which has limited natural resources, scarce water and electricity, and where land has been over-exploited (CIDA, 2012). Inhabitants are typically small-scale farmers or landless farm workers who depend on agriculture for their livelihood.

Nicaragua ranks low on human development indicators, with a low per capita income and short life expectancy (Vanden and Prevost, 2006). In the 2011 UN Human Development Report, Nicaragua ranked 129 out of 187 countries on the Human Development Index (HDI), with an HDI value of .589 (UNDP, 2011). By way of comparison, Canada ranks 6 on the HDI, with a score of .829 (Ibid.). Based on the Human Development paradigm championed by Amartya Sen and Mahbud Ul Haq, the HDI is a summary composite index that measures a country's average achievements in three basic aspects of human development: health, knowledge, and a decent standard of living. Health is measured by life expectancy at birth, knowledge is measured by a combination of the adult literacy rate and the combined primary, secondary, and tertiary gross enrolment ratio, and standard of living is measured by gross domestic product (GDP) per capita (PPP US$). Nicaragua's HDI value has increased by 29 percent since 1980 (Ibid.).

Nicaragua's Human Development Trends 1980 - 2011

Year	Life Expectancy at Birth	Expected Years of Schooling	Mean Years of Schooling	Gross National Income (GNI) per capita (2005 PPP$)	HDI Value
1980	58.5	7.9	3.2	2,596	.457
1985	60.7	7.4	3.6	2,290	.463
1990	64.2	7.6	4.0	1,832	.473
1995	67.3	8.8	4.3	1,608	.495
2000	69.7	9.8	4.7	2,010	.533
2005	72.0	10.8	5.1	2,250	.566
2010	73.8	10.8	5.8	2,378	.587
2011	74.0	10.8	5.8	2,430	.589

Nicaragua's HDI Trends: http://hdrstats.undp.org/images/explanations/NIC.pdf

4.7 Women in Nicaragua

According to the 2010 OECD Atlas of Gender and Development, women comprise 50.2 percent of the Nicaraguan population, and have a life expectancy of 76 years. The United Nations Gender Inequality Index (GII) is a summary composite index that measures a country's gender-based inequalities in three dimensions: reproductive health (measured by maternal mortality and adolescent fertility rates), empowerment (measured by the percentage of seats held in parliament by each gender and secondary or higher education levels for each gender) and economic activity (measured by labour market participation rates) (UNDP, 2011). Nicaragua has a GII value of 0.506, ranking it 101 out of 146 countries in the 2011 index. By way of comparison, Canada has a GII value of .140 (Ibid.). The adolescent fertility rate (average births per adolescent female)

is 112.7 births per 1000 live births, and the overall fertility rate for all women is 2.8 (OECD, 2010, UNDP 2011). However, some reports cite that the number of children in Nicaragua's poorest regions is closer to between 5 and 8 per couple (Envio, 2005). For every 100,000 live births, 100 women die from pregnancy related causes. Compared to 44.7 percent for men, 30.8 per cent of adult women have reached a secondary or higher level of education (United Nations Human Development Report, 2011). Female adult literacy is the same as male adult literacy at 78 percent. Women comprise 19 percent of Nicaraguan parliamentary seats, and the ratio of estimated female to male earned income is 32 percent (OECD, 2010).

4.7.1 Women's Rights

In terms of women's rights, several gains were made in Nicaragua in the 1980s, such as paid maternity leave, sex education inclusion in the school curriculum, equal access to education, and legal equality in relation to divorce, adoption, and parental responsibility (Vander and Prevost, 2006). However, it is important to remember that these gains occurred in the context of what can be described as "a very traditional male-oriented society and with a Sandinista government that often resisted women's rights and a deference to the Roman Catholic hierarchy" (Ibid., p. 549). The 1987 Constitution of Nicaragua grants equal civil rights to all Nicaraguan citizens and prohibits discrimination based on gender. It also calls for absolute equality for family rights and responsibilities for men and women. The 2001 Penal Code established laws to

criminalize discriminatory acts, and a 2002 human development report notes that significant progress had been made in terms of less discriminatory social and cultural behaviour (OECD, 2010). However, more progress is needed in terms of gender equality, domestic violence and sexual abuse, and equal parenthood responsibility.

Babb (2009) notes that gender inequality is apparent in Nicaraguan households. Women carry out far more of the work of family maintenance, and unequal economic power is often accompanied by domestic abuse and violence. Domestic conflict has come to the forefront as a serious social issue in Nicaragua because of its prevalence across households. Victims are often hesitant to report instances of abuse or rape for fear of social stigma or repercussions. Early marriage is common; a 2004 UN report estimates that 32 percent of girls between 15 and 19 years of age were married, divorced or widowed (OECD, 2010). The minimum age for legal marriage is just 14 years for women and 15 years for men with parental authorization. Without parental consent, the legal age rises to 18 years for women and 21 years for men (Ibid.).

4.7.2 Single Mothers

Female-headed households are becoming increasingly common in Nicaragua's machismo culture, where men often leave responsibility for their children with women, both within marriage and afterwards (Johnson, 2006). In Nicaragua there is a clear cultural understanding of women as the primary caregivers for children, with their place being in the home. Baker (1998) notes that this is captured in the phrase "las mujeres –

la casa; los hombres – la calle" (the women – the house, the men – the street) (p.18).

One third of all households are single-mother families, (SLA, 2012) which coincides with

the statistic that "31 percent of Nicaraguan households are sustained only by the

mother's work and wages" (Envio, 2005). In 2005, Envio reported that paternal

irresponsibility was a key problem linked to high birth rates. In an attempt to mitigate

the effects of so many Nicaraguan men's irresponsibility towards their children, the

Sandinista government passed a child support law (the "Nurturance/Provision Law")

during their time in office (Baker, 1998). However, its effective implementation fell to

the wayside as defense during the Contra War took increasing priority (Ibid., Envio,

2003). In 2003 the Nicaraguan Ministry of Family introduced additional legislation to

promote responsible paternity and maternity (Ibid.). Data from the Supreme Electoral

Council showed that ten percent of children born between 2000 and 2002 and

registered with the civic registry were not recognized by their fathers, and therefore

were registered under their mother's name (Ibid.). The bill proposed "free and

streamlined administration procedures to guarantee a child's right to recognition by his

or father and institutionalization of the DNA paternity test" (Ibid.). However, at a cost of

$200, the DNA test is inaccessible to many single mothers seeking grounds for child

support (Envio, 2005).

4.8 Female Migration from Nicaragua to Costa Rica

From the end of the civil conflict in Nicaraguan in 1990 to the present, there has

been a constant flow of migration from Nicaragua to the neighbouring nation of Costa

Rica. The armed conflict during the revolution and counter-revolution of the 1970s and

1980s greatly increased migration from Nicaragua to Costa Rica and the United States

(Vargas, 2005). This migration was marked by refugee flows. After the conflict ceased in

1990 (or at least was significantly reduced), migration took on an economic-labour

nature, resulting in an unprecedented stream of movement from Nicaragua to Costa

Rica. There was an astonishing 400% increase in migration there since 1991 (Johnson,

2006). Vargas (2005) describes the increase in migration in the 1990s as "explosive,"

writing that Nicaraguans represented over 75 percent of all foreigners in the Costa Rican

2000 census (p. 5).

Nicaraguan immigrants in Costa Rica grew from approximately two percent of

the population to an estimated seven percent between the years 1990 and 2000

(Marquette, 2006). According to household survey data, from 2000 to 2004 the

proportion of Nicaraguan workers in Costa Rica reached 7.75 in 2004, representing

approximately 8000 new Nicaraguan-born workers entering Costa Rica each year

(Gindling, 2007). The chart below shows the increase in migration from 1970 to 2000.

The extreme spike in migration levels between 1989 and 1999 is quite apparent.

Figure 1. Nicaraguans by Year of Arrival 1970-2000

Source: Data on Year of Arrival Reported by Migrants in the 2000 Census

Nicaraguan Migrants in Costa Rica

http://ccp.ucr.ac.cr/revista/volumenes/4/4-1/4-1-1t/4-1-1t.pdf
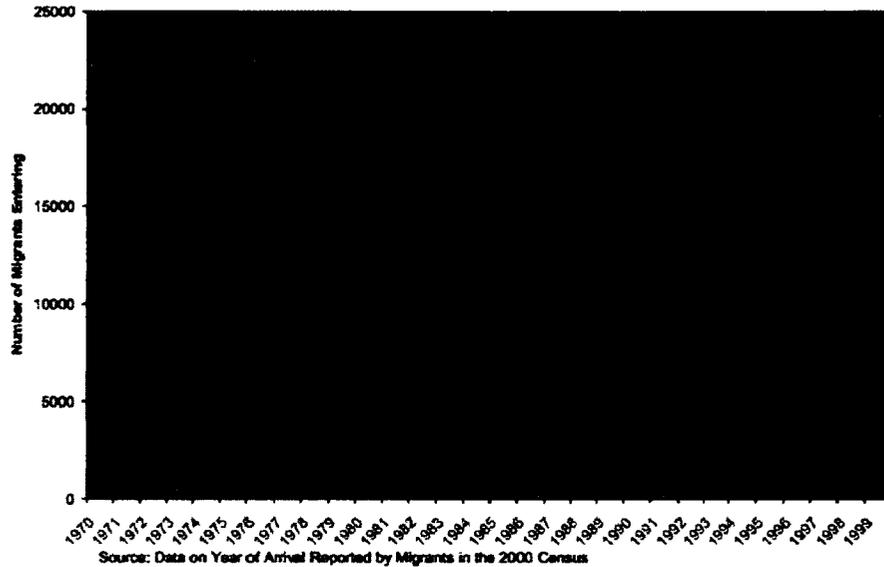
Nicaraguan women who migrate to Costa Rica represent one of the most significant flows of female migrant workers in the domestic sector of Latin America. Women comprise 48.3 percent of all Nicaraguan migrants (IOM, 2012a). A study conducted in 2008 showed that Nicaraguan women reported the main reasons for migration as being: to escape poverty, the lack of jobs at home and finding better paying jobs in Costa Rica. Other reasons included escaping domestic violence and an "idealistic perception of life in Costa Rica" (Gender and Migration News, 2009). It is apparent that the migration has been largely caused by economic factors. Female migrants have been drawn South by the stability, increased standards of living, and overall development of

Costa Rica, as well as its proximity to Nicaragua (Marquette, 2006, IOM, 2012a). Garcia et. al (2002) state:

> Costa Rica's better social and economic situation makes the country attractive from the perspective of Nicaraguan citizens. On the other hand, labour market demands in Costa Rica justify recourse by Costa Rican companies to Nicaraguan migrant workers, who will perform duties no longer acceptable to Costa Rican men and women.

Nicaraguan migrant women tend to concentrate in non-skilled employment sectors which are socially frowned upon in Costa Rica. The average monthly household income in Costa Rica is approximately US$395, which is four times more than the average household income in Nicaragua (INEC, 2005, CIA, 2012b). However, considering that many women in Nicaragua are single mothers who do not receive child support, the average household income would be even significantly lower for single mothers.

Over 15 percent of Nicaraguan families have relatives living abroad, and 93 percent of these households have a member that migrated for work (AECI, 2006). In 2006, an estimated 315,000 Nicaraguan migrants were living in Costa Rica, although some organizations estimate the number is up to almost three times this amount due to undocumented migration (Ibid). Vargas (2005) points out that different types of migration cropped up after the 1990s, including "temporary (with returns, repeated or not, depending on specific crop cycles), circular (with repeated returns, independent of a particular crop cycle), unique (migrating with a return to country of origin without a second migration), and permanent" (p. 2). Between 1984 and 2000, the proportion of Nicaraguans in Costa Rica grew to three quarters of all foreigners in the country (Ibid.).

4.8.1 Domestic Labour Migration

According to research conducted by Gindling (2007), Nicaraguan immigrant workers are less educated, work more hours, and are paid less than Costa Rican-born workers. Nicaraguan migrants have five years of education on average, and the majority have only incomplete primary education (Marquette, 2006). Similar to global migration trends, Nicaraguans are also concentrated in low status and low paid occupations, with males in construction, females in domestic service, and both men and women in agricultural labour (Ibid.).

Figure 5. Distribution of Nicaraguan Migrant Labor Force in Costa Rica by Sector, 2000 Census

N = 105,312 Workers

Transport and Communications, 2229, 2%

Health, Admin, Finance, Teaching, 3783, 4%

Community Services, 2262, 2%

Agriculture, Cattle, Fishing, Mines, 26154, 25%

Housing Services, 5539

Restaurants and Hotels, 7350, 7%

Sales and Repair, 12984, 12%

Manufacturing, 15569, 15%

Construction, 13964, 13%

Domestic Worker, 15478, 15%
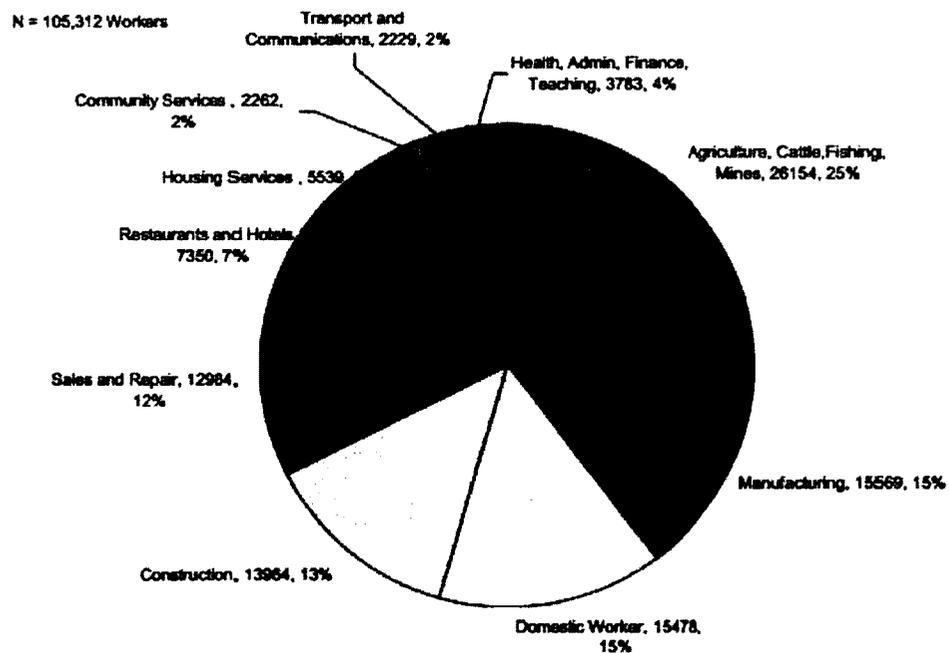
Nicaragua Migrants in Costa Rica,

http://ccp.ucr.ac.cr/revista/volumenes/4/4-1/4-1-1t/4-1-1t.pdf

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Over twenty-seven percent of all women migrants in Latin America are employed in the domestic sector (MacLaren, 2009). In 2006, over one third of Nicaraguan women in Costa Rica were employed in the domestic services, and 72 percent of these women had their own children back in Nicaragua (ECLAC, 2006). Domestic workers in Costa Rica often work extremely long hours for little pay. The current minimum wage of 115,435 colones (USD$210) represents the lowest wage category in Costa Rica (Acosta and Fernandez-Alfaro, 2009, p. 17). Marquette (2006) writes that Nicaraguans work more hours, and are paid less than Costa Rican domestic workers, but that is no evidence for formal wage discrimination against them. "Rather," writes Marquette, "lower educational levels relative to Costa Ricans are the main cause of lower wages among Nicaraguan" (Ibid., p. 6). She does note that job discrimination and social stigmatization may play a role in lower wages for Nicaraguan women, as well as the fact that most Nicaraguans have irregular statuses and agree to verbal, informal labour contracts. Otterstrom (2008) noted pervasive gender differences between Nicaraguan men and women working in Costa Rica, writing that women often found themselves in "completely different, lower-paying jobs than men," often as domestic workers in urban areas than in the rural areas where Nicaraguan men comprised the majority of agricultural workers (p. 28). However, Otterstrom also notes that still, both men and women "were earning more than their counterparts in Nicaragua" (Ibid., p. 28).

Domestic workers are excluded from health services, pension programs, and social security programs which provide workplace risk insurance and plans for old age,

death, and disabilities (Ibid.). The National Association of Domestic Workers estimates that less than 10 percent of the 80,000 domestic workers in Costa Rica are reported by employers (Ibid.). Domestic workers are often 'invisible,' for both this reason and the fact that many workers are illegal and undocumented and therefore do not venture out of the home for fear of being caught by migration authorities. Their illegal status also prevents them from complaining to the authorities about poor working conditions or abuses by their employers (Barahona, 2001).

Many Nicaraguan women migrate to Costa Rica illegally because they cannot afford to pay for a passport or a visa, or because of long wait times for documents. While some women cross with the help of friends of relatives, many women use the services of a 'coyote' - a person who makes a living getting people across the border illegally. A study conducted in 2001 of Nicaraguan female migrants to Costa found that women who crossed the border using coyote services were usually expected to pay in both cash and 'in-kind' sexual favours (Barahona, 2001). Sexual exploitation and trafficking are major dangers facing female migrants. Some traffickers lure victims with the promise of jobs in Costa Rica, offering a one month visa to get into the country. However, once the visa runs out, migrants are again illegal and at the mercy of their benefactors or employers, who may use their illegal status to exploit them into difficult working conditions or prostitution. The decision for Nicaraguan women to migrate is heavily influenced by family strategies to earn money for their children to have a better life. Without other forms of income, many Nicaraguan women have little other choice

than to find work elsewhere, even out of the country, in order to provide for themselves and their families.

4.8.2 Remittances

Workers' remittances amounted to 13 percent of Nicaragua's GDP in 2006 (IOM, 2012b). Orozco (2008) notes that this amount is more than half the value of Nicaragua's exports. He also argues that in a time of declining agricultural exports, remittances are rescuing the ailing Nicaraguan economy. Foreign aid to Nicaragua has fluctuated, and other traditional exports have struggled to regain the previous levels of the 1980s. Orozco points out that migration from Nicaraguan has also created new tourism outlets because nationals return to their home country as visitors, creating substantial tourism income. Jones (2003) reports that 75% of remittances are used to buy basic subsistence needs such as food, education and health (Jones, 2003, cited in Johnson, 2006). It is interesting to note that remittances send back to Nicaragua by males on average are lower than remittances sent by female migrants, despite the fact that women earn less than men on average in Costa Rica (Barahona, 2001).

4.9 Costa Rica

Approximately 4.6 million people live in Costa Rica (CIA, 2012a). Located between Panama and Nicaragua, Costa Rica represents a key destination for migrants from Nicaragua and other Central American countries. Although they share a border, the

nations of Costa Rica and Nicaragua have many differences (Otterstrom, 2008). After its Civil War in 1948, Costa Rica experienced sustained economic growth, social progress and political stability (Garcia et. al 2002). Costa Rica ranks fairly high on human development indicators, especially compared to other Latin American countries. In 2011, Costa Rica ranked 69th in the world on the Human Development Index with a HDI value of .744 (UNDP, 2012). The country's education and health conditions are amongst the best in Latin America, with low levels of illiteracy and high life expectancy (Garcia et. al, 2002). In the mid-eighties Costa Rica began to develop new productive activities, such as non-traditional agricultural activities, tourism and banana production, which increased the need for man-power in the country. New job opportunities also started to emerge in household and domestic services. This demand for workers, along with the fact that the average income in Costa Rica was double that in Nicaragua, contributed heavily to the increase in migration to Costa Rica from Nicaragua (Ibid.).

In 2009 the minimum wage the minimum wage for domestic workers in Costa Rica was US$210 plus food, which was good pay for Nicaraguans but constituted the lowest among all Costa Rican wage categories, even though domestic workers complete the longest working day (Acosta and Alfaro, 2009). In 2002, only 14 percent of Costa Rican women were employed in domestic service jobs, labour which is deprecated socially in Costa Rica, and is economically devalued (Ibid.). Despite the high demand for migrant labour, Costa Ricans tend to view migrants negatively, resulting in discrimination and xenophobia. The relationship between Nicaragua and Costa Rica is

currently strained because of a dispute over the Rio San Juan (Tico Times, 2010). The

river belongs to Nicaragua, but the Costa Rican border lies on the opposite river bank.

Costa Rica is building a new road along the river which will benefit their tourism and

transportation. However, Nicaragua claims that both the construction of the road and its

existence will contribute to the pollution of the river. As a consequence of this dispute,

many Costa Ricans may display increased xenophobia towards Nicaraguan migrants, and

more restrictions have been placed on the border for Nicaraguans wishing to migrate.

4.10 Migration Regime

A migration regime can be defined as "the national and international body of

law, regulations, institutions and policy dealing with movement of people" (Van Hear,

1998, p. 16).

This includes state regulations and rules which govern the departure of citizens and the

admission of newcomers, their policies and institutions for the integration of

immigrants, and the attempts by international organizations, such as the IOM, UN-

organizations, Regional Consultative Processes, and the World Bank, to supervise and

control migration (Ibid., Kron, 2011). Against a backdrop of increasing cross-border

migration in both North and Central America, and widely unsuccessful national attempts

to restrict immigration, the Regional Conference on Migration (RCM), also known as the

Puebla Process, was established in 1996 in Mexico to address cross-border migration as

a regional concern (Kron, 2011). Kron writes that the Puebla Process can be interpreted

as the central institutional arrangement of "an emergent and comprehensive regional migration regime in North and Central America," which is characterized by "multilateralisation efforts and criminalization of undocumented cross-border mobility" (2011, p. 20). The Puebla Process recognized migration as potentially beneficial for origin and destination countries, as well as a potential security and development problem. The Puebla Process promoted regional cooperation, increased border control and tighter regulations. Migration management has therefore emerged as a kind of social control for mobile populations, especially with regards to irregular and undocumented migration. As member states of the RCM, Costa Rica and Nicaragua have voting rights. The RCM is supported by intergovernmental organizations such as the UNHCR, UNDP, ECLAC, and UNICEF, and the regional office, which administers funding and coordinates activities, is located in San, Jose, Costa Rica (Ibid.).

Costa Rica adopted a new migration law called the General Immigration and Alien Law No. 8764 in March 2010, replacing the former law No. 7033 from 1986. (Ley General de Migracion y Extranjeria, 2010). Kron (2011) argues that Costa Rican migration and border and management serves to control migration from, through and into Costa Rica, forming part of a new mode of domestic government which tends to 'manage' increasing social inequalities and conflicts through security-focused policies. The new law emphasizes security and the criminalisation of human smuggling (IOM, 2012a).

The documentation process to migrate to Costa Rica from Nicaragua is both cumbersome and costly, making it difficult to enter Costa Rica as a documented (legal)

migrant. In order for a Nicaraguan to go as a documented migrant to Costa Rica, he/she must have a passport and a 30-day visa (Johnson, 2006). In order to obtain a passport, a person must have both a national identity card and a birth certificate. This in and of itself can be a difficult process because identity cards are not issued at the hospitals at birth. Parents have one year from the time of birth to register their child at the Supreme Electoral Council in Managua, which takes money and time for those who live outside of the capital. Obtaining a birth certificate is a separate process and cost US $6 if the child is registered, or US $29 if the child is not (Ibid.). The birth certificate is required to obtain a national identity card. Passports must also be obtained in Managua, requiring time and money. The application forms are available for a fee, and the actual passport is around US $25. Getting enough money for documentation can be a significant burden, which is why many Nicaraguans forgo the process and attempt to enter Costa Rica illegally instead.

Despite new and increased security measures, the border between Costa Rica and Nicaragua is particularly porous, which only two authorized border posts and countless unpatrolled blind spots which serve as places for regular unauthorized border crossings. The Costa Rican border regime is characterized by strategies of escape, such as bribery. In the case of the arrival of police officers, migrants must be prepared to offer monetary bribes or possibly 'sexual favours' as payment (Kron, 2011). A wide range of border actors contribute to undocumented border crossings, including coyotes

(smugglers), drivers of both registers taxis and buses, or informal and pirate taxis, and border authorities who engage in informal agreements with migrants.

The current Ortega administration is focusing on employment creation and social protection for migrants, with an emphasis on gender and indigenous issues (IOM, 2012b). New migration laws are being discussed in parliament to reinforce the protection of Nicaraguans abroad, but it is clear that more improvements have yet to be made. The IOM in Managua has recently implemented an information campaign for migrants concerning visa and residence regulations, trafficking, and sexual and labour exploitation (Ibid.). Initiatives to improve the access of remittance recipients to formal financial institutions are also being expanded in order to improve awareness on the importance of budgeting, saving and financial independence.

Costa Rican migration policies have typically been aimed at controlling and regulating irregular and illegal flows of migrants. Marquette (2006) notes that Costa Rica has no general strategy, integrated policy or separate government agency for addressing migration issues at national, municipal or local levels. Moreno-Fontes Chammartin (2009) also states that Costa Rica does not have a clearly defined policy on labour migration. Numerous NGOs do provide aid to Nicaraguan Migrants in terms of legal support for labour rights or obtaining residency. Migration groups and NGOs call for the development of an integrated and 'transnational' social policy on migrants which would recognize "the higher level of global and regional forces that determine migration from Nicaragua, the social networks that sustain and give this migration 'a life of its own' once

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it is in motion, and the fact that Nicaraguan migrants and continuing migration from

Nicaragua are a permanent feature of Costa Rica's economic, demographic, and physical

landscape" (Marquette, 2006, p. 23). The establishment of a bi-national agreement

between Costa Rica and Nicaragua could help mitigate some of the consequences of

migration (such as discrimination, exploitation and family separation) and help to better

incorporate Nicaraguan migrants as a beneficial labour resource to Costa Rica.

Nicaraguan migrants are often uneducated about labour rights or

documentation. In 2001, The Association of Domestic Workers (ASTRADOMES), the

International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the International Labour

Organization (ILO) collaborated to conduct a survey on labour conditions in Costa Rica,

and the knowledge of current labour and social security legislation by both domestic

employees and employers (Acosta and Alfaro, 2009). The survey results indicated

widespread ignorance of labour rights and that little effort is made to uphold them. The

study concluded that the lack of knowledge about labour rights increased the

vulnerability of migrant domestic workers to exploitation and abuse (Ibid., 2009).

Migrants need to be better informed, both in Nicaragua before they emigrate, and in

Costa Rica when they arrive. Similar to other migrant destination countries, Costa Rica

does not recognize the contributions of migrant care workers. They receive no rights,

limited incorporation, and extremely low wages which do not enable them to go home

to visit or bring family with them. More inclusive policies are needed, and as Arrigada

(2009) argues, given that receiving countries benefit from the availability of migrant

labour, they must pay particular attention to disadvantageous and discriminatory situations faced by migrant workers due to gender, race or their migratory status" (p. 4). As can be seen in the Chapter 5, Nicaraguan migrants continue to face discrimination and exploitation in Costa Rica.

CHAPTER 5: TRACING TRANSNATIONAL DOMESTIC LABOUR MIGRATION

"I wanted to help my family."[8]

In order to examine the impacts of South-South transnational care chains on the children and families left behind, we need to first understand the reasons leading to their mothers' migration. This chapter traces the journey of migration by Nicaraguan women to Costa Rica, outlining their reasons for migration, how they find employment, their experiences as domestic workers, and how they provided care for their children from abroad. It also raises key issues facing women, such as the transfer of reproductive care from one female to another and single parenting. While common threads weave through the different comments and descriptions, it is clear that the experiences of the participants are diverse. The various motives for migration, individual circumstances and characteristics, and the support systems available to each migrant, along with many other variables, prevent blanket statements or assumptions about transnational migration. At the same time, there are clear and common themes which distinguish the experiences of female migrants from men, as well as particular trends within domestic migration which resonate with findings from similar migration studies.

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[8] Interview with migrant mother Chilo

5.1 Reasons for Migration

Several different rationales for migration emerged from the interviews. Women often stated economic reasons, finding employment, family provision and the search for a better life as the primary 'push' factors for their migration, but other significant issues, such as providing for their family as a single mother, came to the surface.

5.1.1 Employment/Economic Reasons

The key reason stated for migration to Costa Rica was to find work, and for economic reasons. Fifty percent of interviewees specifically mentioned the need to find employment or that there was a lack of employment opportunities in Nicaragua. Eight interviewees said that they migrated for economic reasons, which is closely related to the lack of employment. Sara, a 20 year old single mother who was both a migrant and previous caregiver for her siblings when her mother migrated, succinctly stated, "There's work there. Here there's not a lot of work." Celeste, a psychologist who works mainly with children and youth, and lives in a community in which many have migrated to Costa Rica stated, "It's all for the same reason, economic." Carla, a 42 year old married mother of seven mentioned that she was in debt and needed more money to pay it off. Her daughter Sara, who cared for her siblings while her mother was gone said, "[We felt] sad. But, we had a debt at the bank, and we had to pay it back, so that's why my mom went."

As displayed in the literature review, finding employment is one of the most powerful reasons for migration. Considering the high levels of poverty and unemployment discussed in Chapter 4 which exist across Nicaragua, it comes as no surprise that many women in Granada migrate for economic reasons and to find work. As in developing countries around the world, the decision to migrate is often based on poor economic circumstances and the need to find work because there is none (or at least none that provided sufficient income) in one's own country or city (Arriagada, 2009, Parrenas, 2005, Sassen, 2000).

5.1.2 Family Provision and a Better Life

Six migrants said that they migrated in order to provide for their family or to provide them with a better life, including access to education. Three key community members also provided this same reason. Lola, a 31 year old single mother stated "I went to work to help my family and my children." Lolita, a 40 yr old single mother of two, stated that one of main reasons she migrated was so that her daughters could receive a good education.

> The most important thing for me was the school, so they would go to school, and then I paid for a centre where they would go to do their homework, because there was no one here to help them with their homework.

- Loli

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Marta, a single mother of 10 who is now 75 years old, remembered:

> Okay, so I went to help get money, and to help my daughter who was sick. Before that I had never been anywhere. I went to visit my daughter because she was sick and my cousin said, "Why don't you just stay here and work?" She got me the job and said, 'You can stay here to make money to send to your family.' So it was kind of an accident. I didn't go planning on staying, but I ended up staying.

The search for a better life is a strong motivator for migration. Many women are willing to make the personal sacrifice of leaving their country, community and family behind, in order to enable the well-being of their family (UN-INSTRAW, 2008). This reason for migration appears to go beyond survival or the provision of basic needs such as food and shelter. In providing a better life for their children mothers strive to provide better education, improved housing, or improvements to the health care their children receive.

5.2 Single Motherhood

Two key community members and one migrant pointed to the situation of being a single mother as a reason for migration. Eight out of the ten migrants interviewed were single mothers, and all of the four caregivers interviewed cared for the children of single mothers. Lolita was the only migrant who openly stated that she migrated because her ex-husband did not support her.

> I separated from the father of my children and he didn't give any support at all. And there was no work here so I had to go look for work there. I decided to go because if I didn't, I was only maintaining the household, so I said if I don't go we'll die of hunger. So I made the decision.

> - Lolita

When asked why women migrate, Vice Principal Rosalinda replied, "Because their husbands leave them and they don't pay. And if they don't have work here, then they have to look for work over there." Earlier in the interview she had explained,

> There are a lot of single moms whose partners have left the family, and they don't receive any support. So they work, do whatever activity out of the home, sell at the market, whatever they can to make payment for the family here. Those that can't, they leave. But, you see a lot of cases where the Ministry of the Family intervenes, because the father isn't responsible.

Mariajose said that her mother was a single parent before she migrated and that her father did not provide any support to the family. Brittany's remarks echoed the frequent situation in which fathers leave and do not provide support for their children, leaving mothers as the sole family providers.

> When we were all young he left.
> - Mariajose

> The father of the kids, he doesn't give us anything. He doesn't give any child support. I buy beans, soup, frijoles, plantains, whatever I can to sell. And fortunately we make enough to get by.
> - Brittany

When talking about her grandson (who she cared for while his mother was away) Carmen remarked:

> He doesn't have a father either, even though Belkis was married and he used to support them when his son was younger, now he doesn't support them or give them anything.

The issue of single parenting came up frequently throughout the interviews. While the participants did not specifically link their need to migrate to being a single mother, it is likely that being the sole economic provider for their children added increased pressure

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to find sufficient employment in order to sustain their family. Chapter 4 discussed the issue of irresponsible fathers and the culture of machismo in Nicaragua. These factors certainly play a part in the increased migration of Nicaraguan women to support their families. In 2005, Envio reported that over a third of Nicaraguan households are single mother families, sustained only by the mother's labour.

5.3 Migrant Women's Agency

Johnson (2006) and Isaksen et. al (2008) note that many women in developing countries who have limited employment opportunities locally are often left with little other choice than to migrate in search of work. Sometimes families decide to send one member abroad to earn money, and sometimes the decision to migrate is an individual one. In this case, every migrant interviewed, with the exception of one, stated that she made the decision to migrate and that it was her own choice. The one exception was a woman who sought her husband's approval before migrating to Costa Rica.

> [It was] my decision. I'm independent, it was my decision so it didn't matter if my family supported me or not.
>
> - Rachel

A couple of migrant women mentioned that their family was involved in discussing whether or not they should migrate, but that ultimately it was their own decision to undertake migration to Costa Rica as a strategy to provide for their family. This finding may have been influenced by the fact that most of the migrants interviewed were single mothers, and did not have a husband or male partner who might have wanted a say in

the decision. However, while it is true that many single mothers (and married mothers) choose to migrate to Costa Rica to mitigate the effects of poverty, it is also true that there are many women who choose to remain in Nicaragua. This can be for a number of reasons, many stemming from the challenges that arise from migration. Two caregivers mentioned that they had the chance to migrate at one point, but chose not to because they did not want to leave their children. A couple of migrant women said that their children did not want to migrate in the future because they perceived Costa Rica as difficult or dangerous. However, one migrant mother hired a Nicaraguan domestic caregiver for her children while she was away in Costa Rica, showing that domestic work does exist within Nicaragua for women, sometimes, ironically, because their fellow Nicaraguans migrate. For whatever reason, domestic labour migration to Costa Rica is only one strategy, albeit an increasingly common one, employed by women to provide for their families.

5.4 Reasons for Choosing Costa Rica as a Migration Destination

Two key community members pointed to Costa Rica as a main migration destination because of its proximity to Nicaragua. Lumbar, a 27 year old community leader said:

> Yes, they have to, for work, and because Costa Rica is the closest. And if there's ever an emergency they're close to home. Of course in the States there's more work and pay and everything, but the distance...

It was not surprising to find that most migrants choose Costa Rica as a migration destination. Marquette (2006) writes that Nicaraguan women are drawn South by Costa Rica's demand for domestic work, and its overall development. However, as Lumbar mentioned, the proximity of Costa Rica to Nicaragua has the advantage of keeping mothers (relatively) close to their children should an emergency occur, compared to if they had migrated to the United States or Canada. Most women did not even have the money to buy a visa for Costa Rica, and therefore it is unlikely that they would be able to procure the funds for a more costly migration to a destination farther away from home. These findings support Rocha and Shaw's (2007) assertion that proximity plays a major factor in contributing to South-South migration.

5.5 Finding Work

Most Nicaraguan migrants find work through 'migration networks' - family members or friends who live in Nicaragua or Costa Rica and assist their friends and family in finding employment. Others find work through employment agencies or newspaper advertisements. Nicaragua newspaper 'help wanted' sections are dominated by columns of ads seeking domestic workers for Costa Rica.

5.5.1 Migration Networks

Nine interviewees stated that they found work through a family member or friend. This seems to be the most common way that Nicaraguans find employment in

Costa Rica. This is not surprising considering that migration networks are a common characteristic of South-South migration (Ratha and Shaw, 2007). Chilo, a 48 year old single mother of one, worked in Costa for 25 years. She said "I have another sister and she went before to Costa Rica, and she got me a job at the same house." Rachel, a 39 year old single mother of five who currently works in Costa Rica, stated that she found work "by asking friends who lived there and had been working there for several years."

5.5.2   Advertisements or Employment Agencies

Two of the women interviewed stated that they had found jobs in the newspaper, and another woman, Lola, stated that she had found work through an agency located in Costa Rica:

> I found domestic work through an agency. There were a lot of Nicaraguans who go through it.
>
> - Lola

5.6 Visa and Work Permits

Both men and women line the halls of the immigration offices in Nicaragua each day, waiting for the slim chance that they will be one of the two or three people to get their visa stamped. The process, according to Johnson (2006), is both cumbersome and costly. Many others, because they have limited time or money, decide to forgo the wait and risk crossing the border illegally, sometimes with the help of family members or by paying a coyote. Some pay for a one-month visitor's visa and then simply do not renew it. However, they then live in fear of being deported at any moment.

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Two of the women interviewed said that they obtained the visa to work in Costa Rica legally at least one of the times they had migrated there. The rest of the interviewees only obtained one month visas and then remained in Costa Rica illegally for the rest of their time there. Some women had to pay a fine for the months they stayed there illegally.

> The first time we went illegally, so we had to use the back roads and hide from the migration police, so that was difficult. But the second time we went legally so that was easier.
>
> - Sara

> I had my passport, and so a visa for one month, and then I came back after one year after being there for 11 months without papers, and they charged me a fee.
>
> -
>
> Juliana

Carla said that she was able to stay legally the third time she migrated to Costa Rica because her employer helped her:

> Yes, [I was legal] but I went and paid every month to have my passport stamped to extend my visa. My boss was in the supreme court of Costa Rica and she helped me, told me where I had to go to extend my visa...my boss paid it so that I would be legal.... It's similar [to a working visa]. My boss did get me permission to work the last time, and paid for my health insurance, and everything. So I was there working legally the last time.

There is a definite lack of education about what one needs to do to obtain documentation. The process can take a significant amount of time and money. Considering that the main reason for migration is economic, most women do not have the money to pay for a passport, visa, and the transportation costs involved. They prefer to take the risk of deportation (or in Juliana's case, having to pay a fine afterwards) than

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go through the hassle of documentation. Carla was fortunate to have an employer who was willing to help her work legally, but many employers would not do the same. In fact, many employers prefer to hire undocumented workers because it gives them an advantage over their employees in terms of pay and working conditions. If employees do not meet their requirements, (such as 12 to 15 hour days or no vacation time) employers can simply fire them or report them to the migration police.

5.7 Domestic Working Conditions

The migrant women interviewed typically described long working hours with low pay; however, there were some exceptions. Some women loved their work and received wages, holidays, severance pay and health benefits which followed the labour laws. Others did not fare as well, reporting exploitation or difficult working conditions. Domestic worker duties often included cooking, cleaning, washing, and taking care of children. Some women lived at their employer's house, while others lived with a friend or family member. Most women worked at one house for a salary, however some worked doing hourly domestic work at various houses.

5.7.1 Work Hours and Pay

The number of working hours varied considerably from person to person. Some women worked regular hours, Monday to Friday from 6 a.m. to 4 p.m. and had weekends off. However, others worked longer hours, for instance from 5 a.m. to 10 or 11 p.m. with only Saturdays and Sunday afternoons off.

> I worked every day and only on Sundays I left to stay with my brother. I started at 5 in the morning and finished at 8 at night. They never called me in the middle of the night to do things. But I only had Sundays off.

- Lola

Carla migrated to Costa Rica three separate times, and each time her schedule was quite different. She commented, "The first time I had to start at 5 in the morning and stay until my boss came home because I took care of her little girl as well. Sometimes until 8 at night. It was a lot of work. Every day of the week, no days off." Concerning her second position, Carla said, "Because I lived there and I was always working, I can't say how many hours. The only day I had off was Sunday. I can't give you a fixed schedule because it was whenever they needed me." However the third time she went to work in Costa Rica she had a regular schedule from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday to Friday.

In 2009 the minimum monthly wage for a household worker in Costa Rica was 115,435 colones (approximately $210 CAD), constituting the lowest wage among all Costa Rican employment wage categories, "despite the fact that these workers must complete the longest work day" (Alfaro and Acosta, 2009, p. 17). The salaries reported

by the women interviewed varied depending on the year of their employment in Costa Rica, the type of domestic work they did, how long they had worked for their employer, and on the employer they worked for. Most women earned around the minimum wage for Costa Rica.

> The pay was very little, 35,000 cordobas every 15 days. It's under $40 dollars every 2 weeks.
>
> > \- Bel
> > kis

Clinical psychologist Celeste pointed out that education plays a factor in the type of work that Nicaraguans find in Costa Rica.

> Those who have a better education are able to get better jobs. If you do an analysis of those who have left, [they] are usually those who have lower education. The work that they do outside, it's not that they're doing office work, they're doing domestic work. Work that is not highly paid, in the majority of cases.
>
> > \- Cel
> >
> > est
> >
> > e

This highlights the supporting data that points to the reality that those who migrate to find domestic employment are often poor and lack formal educated. The migrants interviewed often had not completed elementary school, and had an average of five children. The work they were able to get in Nicaragua was limited and often informal. Domestic work, though underpaid, was still better employment which offered high wages in comparison to the work they could find in Nicaragua. Despite the hardships associated with migration and domestic work in particular, (such as long hours, poor pay

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and exploitation) many women view their domestic employment in Costa Rica as an improvement relative to their employment (or lack of) in Nicaragua.

5.7.2 Duties

As previously mentioned, duties among domestic workers can vary considerably. Some women spend most of the day cooking and cleaning. Others mainly took care of children, or, in the case of Marta, provided care for an elderly patron.

> Clean the whole house, wash, well, no not wash because I didn't know how to use the washing machine, so I just hung up the clothes to dry. I ironed, cooked breakfast, lunch and left dinner ready for them to heat up at night. And I took care of the two kids.
>
> - Lolita

> There were 2 kids. One was 8 years old, one was 12. I took care of them. They had a playroom bigger than my house. They had lots of toys. It was like a toystore because everything was very organized. When they played they took everything down and I would have to put all of it back after.
>
> - Juliana

> Everything, cooking, dressing her. I traveled to many countries because the mother of the girl traveled for work, so I went too. To Europe. She was in Spain, Italy...
>
> - Chilo

> It was very good! I took care of an older lady until she died. She was a single woman, never got married. She was 104 when she died. I worked for about 15 years. I went by myself and she hired me and the two of us lived together. It was like I was in my own house. I loved her. I loved all the family - the nephews, everyone. After she died I stayed and took care of the house, until they sold it.
>
> - Marta

5.8 Employer/Employee Relationship

The relationships between Costa Rican employers and Nicaraguan domestic employees varied considerably. Some women reported good treatment, while others recounted experiences of exploitation and conflict.

> She treated me well, but she told me that she would give me lunch, but at the end she never left me any lunch. So I ended up, so I wouldn't be accused of taking food, and I didn't want to say anything, so I took my lunch every day. She was stingy with the food. They told me "you have to deal with it because you don't have a work permit here.
>
> - Lolita

From this account it is clear that Lolita's employer took advantage of Lolita's illegal status. As an undocumented migrant, Lolita had no defense against poor working conditions or unfair treatment. She recalled that when she left Costa Rica both she and the children she cared for were sad. However, Lolita seemed to think it was better that she left because her boss did not treat her fairly.

> The older one cried, and I cried and said I would miss her. But, my boss wasn't the best boss, she was a 'banderita,' she wasn't always honest and sincere.
>
> *How so? Can you provide an example?*
>
> If she would have really wanted me to stay she would have helped me get my papers to stay, she would have given me lunch. And on Fridays I had to work until 10, because they said it was because I didn't have to work on the weekend. But on Fridays my boss' husband would drive me home because it was late at night.

Carla, who migrated to work as a domestic worker three separate times, experienced poor treatment from her employer the first time she lived in Costa Rica, but enjoyed her work with her second and third employers.

> The first time it was bad. She was Colombian, and she treated me bad. There was jealousy with her husband, and she treated me poorly. In the first time they said I had to eat differently than them. For instance I couldn't have the milk, because the milk was theirs. I could have coffee and bread, but not with butter. In the other workplace the meat was only for them, and I could have processed meat like ham, and beans. In the third place they let me eat the same food they ate. The second one treated me very well. The last one was great, and I just called her recently.

5.9 Caring from Afar

Migrant mothers continue to care for their children from afar. They arrange for the physical care of their children by transferring their domestic and reproductive responsibilities to someone else until their return. However, this does not mean that they abandon their role of caring and nurturing for their families while they are away. Many keep in regular contact by telephone and are often able to visit once per year depending on their employer and/or finances. They provide emotional support and advice over the phone or when they visit, and also send support in the form of remittances and material goods. Except for one case, all of the children of migrant mothers interviewed were cared by either female family members (such as grandmothers or aunts), or by an elder female sibling.

5.9.1 Communication and Support

a) Telephone:

Eight migrant mothers said that they called regularly to communicate with their children. Lola called her mother and son almost every day while she was gone. Three caregivers said that the mothers of the children they cared for called regularly to check in.

> I would call my mom to see how she was doing and to see how my son was doing. I tried to call almost every day, but just to talk for a little bit. You can get a calling card that's $2 and so I tried to do that almost every day.
>
>   - Lola

> I lived talking on the telephone.
>
>   - Marta

b) Visits

Most migrant women were able to visit once a year during December when they had their two weeks vacation, but some employers did not allow their workers to return home. Juliana recalled that she was never able to visit when she worked as a domestic worker because her employer did not give her vacation time. Some mothers may have not been able to visit because they could not afford the bus ticket, or did not want to risk being caught for crossing the border illegally. Other mothers choose not to return during their vacation time. Mariajose held back tears as she remembered that her mother, Marta, did not come back to visit her and her two brothers for six years:

Six years without coming back. And then she came back, thinking that she would never go back. And then she saw that things were not any better here, so she left again for Costa Rica.

For how long?

For 14 years. Sometimes she came back once a year. Sometimes.

The first time she wasn't able to visit?

No, she never came.

- Mariajose

(In the interview with Marta she said that she received two weeks of paid vacation each year and that her employer followed the labour law. Marta was also in Costa Rica legally. Therefore it is safe to assume that Marta was able to visit, but for reasons unclear, chose not to).

c) Emotional Support:

Migrant mothers also continued to provide emotional support for their children from afar by talking to them about their problems or giving them advice. However, some women, like Chilo, felt that they could not help their children emotionally because they were away.

When I called I was always nervous and anxious about their wellbeing when I talked to them, so I tried to see how they were doing and give them advice.

- Juliana

I felt bad, because I wasn't able to help with that.

- Chilo

[My daughter] missed me, she got depressed. Her grades dropped, but I talked to her on the phone and I told her that I had to be there because I owed money, and that I would bring her presents when I got back. (Crying). It did help her, because when I came back she was doing a lot better, and she didn't fail the year. She passed.

- Carla

d) Remittances

All of the migrant women interviewed sent back money to their families. Some sent money weekly or monthly, while others brought money with them whenever they returned to visit. Many women said that they sent money with friends or family members whenever they were in Costa Rica to visit or sell things.

I send money for food and for clothes.

— Rachel

I sent back material support. Money, for food, clothing, so they could have a better life

- Juliana

When I lived there, I had just about everything covered, so I was able to send most of it to the family.

- Lolita

Remittances were primarily used for basic necessities such as food and clothing. However, in the case of Lolita, remittances were used to pay for an after-school tutoring program for her children, and to pay the nanny who cared for them during the day and cooked and cleaned. Lolita was the only women interviewed who did not use the money solely for basic necessities, and hired another women to care for her children. She was also able to save a portion of her income to invest into her own business in Nicaragua so

that she would not have to work in Costa Rica. Gamburd (2000) writes that in the village of Naeaegama, Sri Lanka, women migrate out of love for their children. The same can be said of the women from Granada, Nicaragua. This love is measured financially in how they provide for their children. While they may not be physically present to provide mothering to their children, migrant mothers provide love and mothering through providing their children with the money needed to pay for food, clothing, health, housing and education.

e) Material Goods

While Mariajose's mother did not often visit her children, she talked to her daughter on the phone and sent them gifts often.

> There were a couple times that we went to the border and saw her at the border. And she was always sending gifts and things, packages to the house....for example, the basics. Rice, sugar, beans. Clothes, she said they were cheap there.
>
> - Mariajose

Carla also brought her children back material goods and gifts every time she saw them:

> Every time I came back I brought them presents, I brought them everything they needed, shoes and things. So that helped them know that it was worth it that their mom was away.
>
> - Carla

Carla hoped that through the gifts that she gave them, her children would recognize her sacrifice and "know that it was worth it" for her to leave them for a time. While migrant mothers are away, material gifts can come to symbolize both her presence and her

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sacrifice. Isakson, Arvi and Hoschchild (2008) write that in such cases material symbols become a substitute for socio-emotional ones.

> There is no sharing of dinners, birthday celebrations, no daily conversation, no visual or physical contact. In this instance, children, as well as their care givers, can come to experience money as a substitute for shared experiences and love. Paradoxically, as such, it can even loom larger as a symbol of love even as it can, at the same time, also depersonalize and commodify love (p. 72).

Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila (1997) note that migrant mothers ultimately seek to mesh breadwinning with care-giving and guidance. However, in the process, love can become depersonalized, and abstract, even commodified. Material goods come to signify personal relationships.

5.10 Reasons for Return to Nicaragua

Three mothers said that they returned because they had promised their children or saw that their children needed them.

> Normally I would just come back every December for Christmas and so my original decision was just to come back to visit, but then I saw that my children needed me more.
>
> – Juliana

Two women stated that they returned to Nicaragua because they disliked living in Costa Rica. Belkis explained:

> Because I didn't like living there. I couldn't work. I had a child, I felt closed in and discrimination. I didn't like it at all, I wanted to come back.

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Would you return to Costa Rica?

No, (shaking head emphatically while laughing) not even if they gave me permission to live there dipped in gold.

Carla said that she left Costa Rica after her first time working there because of conflict with her employer. Carla said, "Because I was tired of all of the horrible things that she said to me, and she never let me leave to come back and visit Nicaragua." Lolita returned because she had earned enough to come back to Nicaragua and pay for her children's education. Five women said that they would not return to Costa Rica, either because they disliked it, had earned enough or did not want to leave their children again. Two women, Carla and Chilo, said that they wanted to return to continue supporting their families. However, Carla still needed money for the visa and Chilo's family did not want her to return because of her poor health.

5.11 South-South Migration

Several key characteristics of South-South migration emerged as part of the findings of this study. First of all, the migrants reported frequent migration between Costa Rica and Nicaragua. Juliana migrated to Costa Rica a countless number of times between the years 1980 to 2003, sometimes staying a couple weeks at a time while other times staying several months. Migrants Sara, Carla and Lolita all reported that they migrated two or three separate times to Costa Rica. Secondly, migrants reported sending remittances frequently, and often informally. Most of the women said that they

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sent remittances every 15 days, while others said they sent them whenever they could, often relying on relatives or friends to bring the remittances back to Nicaragua with them when they returned. This is typical of South-South migration, whereas in South-North migration migrants typically send remittances one a month or every couple of months, either due to the distance or the cost of sending money (Rocha, 2007). In addition to this, most Nicaraguan migrants sent small amounts of money, ranging from $20 dollars to $100, rather than saving large sums before sending them home. This is also typical of South-South migration (Ibid.). There are economic implications associated with this, as small amounts of money continuously and informally trickle into Nicaragua, as opposed to the large amounts of money which enter Southern countries from migrants in the North who send them by formal banks or agencies. In Nicaragua the remittances in their entirety reach individuals and families, without any fees for sending. However, the sending of these remittances does not contribute to the overall economy or institutions. In South-North migration, remittances are more likely to be sent formally and therefore benefit banks and money-sending agencies as well as individuals and families, although migrants must pay a fee to use such services.

5.12 Section Summary

Several main themes emerge from this data. There are personal and structural causes of migration to Costa Rica which involve economic need and the desire to provide a better life for one's family, both now and in the future. Participants explained

their need to migrate in terms of finding employment (either because they could not find work in Nicaragua, or they needed employment that offered more stability and pay), or because they wanted to pay for their children's education or improvements on their house. In addition to this, it is apparent that women experience migration in particularly gendered ways. All of the women worked in the domestic sector in which they typically worked long hours for little pay. Some were discriminated against because they were illegal migrants and could not seek legal recourse in response to unfair treatment. Except for one case, all the caregivers of migrant children were female. Husbands did not take over the responsibility of caring for children in the absence of their mother and care was often transferred to aunts or daughters rather than uncles or sons. In the majority of these cases, paternal irresponsibility had taken place long before migration. Single mothers did not receive support from their ex-partners before they migrated, and subsequently could not leave their children in the care of their fathers to begin with.

The experiences of women were shown both in terms of their employment experiences, and their experience of caring for their children from afar. Women were able to communicate with their children by telephone calls or by visits (usually once per year). Most women do not plan to migrate for long amounts of time. Rather, they hope to earn enough money to both provide for their family and return to Nicaragua eventually. In the case of Juliana, she returned early because she could see the negative impact of her absence on her children. Others, such as Belkis, returned because of the

hardship and discrimination they experienced as a domestic worker in Costa Rica. However, some choose to stay or return several times because the benefits of migration outweigh the costs. The following chapter examines the costs and benefits of migration from Nicaragua to Costa Rica.

Chapter 6: ASSESSING WOMEN'S TRANSNATIONAL MIGRATION
FROM NICARAGUA TO COSTA RICA

"I wished that I was home when I was there."[9]

We saw in the last chapter that women migrate primarily for economic reasons, and have a variety of migration experiences. Now we will examine the impacts of this migration and the resulting South-South transnational care chains which are created, answering the questions: How does migration benefit Nicaraguan women, their families, and communities? What challenges do they face? How do mothers experience migration and separation from their families? How are their families impacted? This chapter will delve into the benefits and harmful effects of care chains between Nicaragua and Costa Rica, showing that care chains entail significant benefits, but also challenges. We will examine economic, educational, individual, community and country benefits, as well as challenges, such as the misuse of remittances, discrimination and insecurity in Costa Rica, community depletion, the reinforcement of traditional gender ideologies, and the issues associated with the transfer of care responsibilities. Chapter 7 will focus solely on the impacts of South-South transnational care chains on mother-child relationships.

6.1 Benefits of Migration of Female Caregivers from Nicaragua to Costa Rica

As previously discussed in the literature review, migration can hold many benefits for migrants and their families, especially in monetary terms. Participants

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[9] Interview with migrant mother Lola

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mentioned remittances as a key benefit to migration, and linked their increase in income

to improvements in education and living conditions. Every single interview participant

acknowledged that there were clear advantages to migration.

6.1.1 Economic

As seen in the previous chapter, the main reason for migration is to find

employment to earn a better income. Therefore, it is unsurprising that the economic

benefit of migration was the main advantage mentioned by interviewees. Carla best

summarizes the majority of answers, saying simply "There's work there, and the salary is

much better." Almost every person interviewed said that the extra income brought in by

migration was the main benefit of migrating to Costa Rica.

> The pay, the pay is better in Costa Rica than here. There's more stability in the
> workplace. It's more informal.
>
> - Belkis

Families were able to buy needed food and clothing and provide for their families.

Beyond basic necessities, some families used remittances to improve their houses, pay

for private education or tutoring, or even buy a house of their own. Jessica, a caregiver

for her sister's children, said that migration completely changed her sister's economic

situation, and was beneficial for the entire family.

> [They saw it as] positive, because... it was a positive change in their lives. Before
> Juliana left, their economic situation was pretty bad, and she went to work, and
> with the money she earned plus the money her husband was saving, their
> economic situation changed completely, completely. And they all were able to
> have shoes, and to have things that they needed. And just their overall economic

situation improved a lot, and they saw that change and recognized that change. So it was positive for the entire family.

- Jessica

Lolita, a single mother of three, used the money she earned in Costa Rica to start two small businesses in Nicaragua. By saving her money and investing it in an entrepreneurial venture, Lolita was able to pay for better education for her three children (at a private school and tutoring centre) and pay for her house. Depending on the way remittances are used, the economic benefits from migration have the potential to extend into improved living conditions, better education opportunities, and improved health at the meso and micro levels.

a) Improved Living Conditions:

Many women described how the remittances they earned helped to improve their families' living conditions, especially in terms of improving their house. Juliana noted that many members in her community were able to make improvements to their homes using the money they earned in Costa Rica.

> There's a lot of youth and women in this neighbourhood who go to work in Costa Rica and with the money they are able to make improvements, and improvements to their houses. But, many of them don't have a lot of kids like I did, and some of them are even able to take their kids with them. I know a woman who left to pay for her house, and now she's back here. She was able to pay for her house.

- Juliana

Chilo also described the difference her work made in her family's living conditions, saying, "We didn't have a house, and now everyone works in Costa Rica- we have four members of the family working." Chilo's family now owns a large house and has been able to pay for furniture, clothes, food, education and health expenses with the money earned in Costa Rica. Carmen commented that despite the difficulty of being separated, with remittances her family has been able to build a house.

> The only thing is the distance, but everything else, that we've been able to build a house, that we've been able to do... is good.
> - Carmen

> For the neighbourhood as a whole, not much, but for the families, yes, there have been benefits. It has improved living conditions.
> - Lumbar

Most participants identified improved living conditions as a major positive impact of migration. For some families the remittances sent back meant the difference between living in a corrugated metal shack with dirt floors, or a wooden house with a door and windows. Housing improvements are a very visible way in which the benefits of migration can been seen. Migrants pointed out the improvements to their homes in the form of new roofing, or bars on windows to improve their security. However, as community leader Lumbar noted, these types of improvements do not often extend to communities. Remittances are used for individuals and families, not community projects. Home improvements are a tangible advantage of migration that children, family members and community members can see; which in turn can increase migration

to Costa Rica as more and more women see it as an alternative and successful strategy to provide for one's family.

b) Education

The remittances from migration are sometimes used for education costs after basic necessities such as food and clothing are paid for. Margarita, an elementary school teacher, stated,

> Yes. They don't live in extreme poverty anymore. They've been able to improve their houses. There are many, many benefits to migration because they go for progress, to improve their lives. They give better education to their kids because they can pay for their kids to go to a private school. To university.

As previously mentioned, Lolita's children attend private schools and will attend university because of their mother's migration to Costa Rica to work as a domestic employee.

> The most important thing for me was the school, so they would go to school, and then I paid for a centre where they would go to do their homework, because there was no one here to help them with their homework.
> - Lolita

Lolita was the only migrant mother who said that she used remittances specifically for school costs. The other respondents all mentioned food, clothing and housing, but education and health (or improved education and health) were not cited as key reasons for migration. Public education and healthcare is free in Nicaragua, but there are additional public school and health fees, and tutoring or private schooling or hospitals are not free (MINED, 2012). This finding may be explained by the fact that many of the

families interviewed were extremely poor, and therefore basic necessities for survival were prioritized over improvements to education or health.

c) Investment in Micro-Enterprise

Remittances are primarily used for basic necessities such as food and clothing, or for housing improvements. However, in the case of Lolita, she was also able to save a portion of her income to invest into her own business in Nicaragua so that she would not have to work in Costa Rica.

> With what I was able to save and put aside, I came back to start a business where I sold chicken in order to put my kids through school, because everything that I did was to provide an education for my children. So with the sale of the chicken, I wanted to pay for my children's education.
>
> - Lolita

In addition to selling chicken Lolita also began to sell beautiful hand-made cards, which are especially popular among tourists. Her children are all in school, and Lolita now owns her house. The example of Lolita points to the significant difference that migration and remittances can have on a household. Lolita's example also supports Kabeer's assertion that a market society is not necessarily exploitative for women. (Kabeer, 2000). In the long run, Lolita's domestic work in Costa Rica transformed her family's economic circumstances and offered Lolita greater financial stability and freedom.

6.1.2 Personal Independence

Domestic labour migration can promote independence for some women, giving them a chance to work outside the home, travel, and meet new people. Marta provides an example of one migrant who enjoyed her life in Costa Rica tremendously and appreciated the freedom that it gave her, both financially and personally. Marta was more enthusiastic than most in her responses, pointing out her increased independence and good working conditions. When asked what she viewed as some of the advantages to migration Marta animatedly replied,

> Everything. Free food, good salary, place to live, on the weekends I went to my cousin's house. I had the weekends free. I had vacation. They followed the labour law. They paid my bonus in December, I got severance pay, they gave me 100,000 colones. She was a very excellent, excellent boss.

Marta enjoyed living and working in Costa Rica so much that she stayed there for close to 15 years before returning to Nicaragua. It is possible that Marta viewed her migration to Costa Rica as emancipating in that it freed her from responsibility at home, her traditional role in Nicaragua or its patriarchal society. However, this is only a hypothesis as Marta did not reveal this explicitly. It was clear however that, similar to migrant interviews from other studies (Johnson, 2006, Laurie, 2007), Marta viewed her migration to Costa Rica with a sense of adventure and satisfaction which contributed to her decision to stay for so many years.

Chilo, a 48 year old single mother of one, also decided to stay in Costa Rica as a nanny for 21 years. While taking care of her charge she travelled to various countries, an

opportunity and experience she never would have had while living and working in Nicaragua.

> I traveled to many countries because the mother of the girl traveled for work, so I went too. To Europe. Spain. Italy.
>
> - Chilo

In some cases, migration may offer an escape from abusive husbands. None of the women I interviewed mentioned this as a reason for migration, but this does not mean that it could not have been a contributing factor for some of the women interviewed, or for other women who migrate from Nicaragua.

6.2 Migration of Female Caregivers from Nicaragua to Costa Rica: The Other Side

Despite the economic benefits of migration, as well as the increased feelings of independence that women can experience, all participants discussed the various challenges and harmful effects which surrounded their migration to Costa Rica. Some respondents questioned whether the economic benefits outweighed some of the disadvantages, while others became quite emotional when talking about family separation. Only one migrant, Marta, stated that there were no disadvantages to migration. However, later in the interview Marta mentioned that she felt sad at times to be away from her children in Nicaragua.

6.2.1 Economic Benefits for All?

a) Misuse of Money

Both psychologist Celeste and vice-principle Rosalinda brought up an interesting point: migration does not necessarily lead to economic benefits if the money is not used appropriately by the family or caregiver. Celeste talked about her own family, saying that the remittances sent to her in-laws were not spent on what they were meant for.

> For example the older children of my mother-in-law, she sent them money to make improvements on the house. But they never used the money for the house. Some of them stopped and they just bought their diplomas. And others used the money to go on vacation, or to party. So now, my mother-in-law is older, so she doesn't send as much money or she stopped sending money so now they can't make improvements on the house.
>
> - Celeste

> It depends on how responsible the parent is who leaves, and the caregiver here. There are some people who use the money to build a house or to do something with. But there are some moms who don't send on a regular basis, don't send money, or the money isn't used as it should be.
>
> - Rosalinda

It is easy to say that migration will automatically lead to improvements for families and children who receive more food and clothing. However, we cannot assume that all money is used for food, clothing and home improvements. In some cases the money is spent on other items by caregivers or other family members. In the example Celeste provided, the money was spent on vacations and partying. Instead of using the money for school supplies, fake diplomas were bought. Rosalinda has been working in the Nicaraguan public school system for 24 years, and has worked with numerous children

who have migrant parents. She recalled a couple of students whose mother had migrated, saying:

> They weren't getting adequate attention at home, the money being sent wasn't being used how it should be. The kids would come to school dirty, with their clothes dirty. So you'd think that a family that was being sent money, that they would have a better appearance. Being poor doesn't mean you have to be dirty, that you don't brush your hair, or you don't clean your clothes. It's not an excuse. So the money wasn't being used appropriately.

When children are left with responsible caregivers, mothers can be sure that the money they send is being used appropriately. However, in some cases it is clear that remittances may not make a difference in the lives of those at home if the money is not managed well.

b) Is It Worth It?

Some migrants questioned whether the economic benefits of migration to Costa Rica were significant enough to warrant family separation. Several mentioned the expensive cost of living in Costa Rica, and felt that the money they made there was immediately spent instead of saved.

> The advantage is that there is work. The disadvantage is that you have pay for your house, and things are expensive. So whatever you earn, you end up spending a lot of what you earn. And here, I don't have to pay for this house. I just look for different jobs and different ways I can make a living.
> - Lolita

> It's expensive - rent, water, electricity.

> *How much do you pay for rent there?*

7000 to 8000 colones per month [Approximately $14 - $16 CAN]. Everything has gotten more expensive.

- Rachel

There's a lot of work. But at the same time everything is expensive, and whatever you earn, you spend. It's expensive.

- Brittany

Sometimes women find themselves in the same situation as in Nicaragua. In Lolita's case she felt that it was better for her to move back to Nicaragua earn a living instead of remaining in Costa Rica. Brittany returned to Nicaragua because she simply could not make ends meet while in Costa Rica. Migrants not only have to weigh the economic benefits of migration against the emotional costs, but also whether the economic benefits are even worth considering migration as an option. For most, the pay they earn is much than they earn in Nicaragua, but for others who find only part-time work or a domestic job which pays very little or is live-out (meaning they will not receive free room and food), the situation may be equal to the money they earn in Nicaragua.

6.2.2 Living in Costa Rica

Some migrants found domestic work which paid well, worked for employers who followed the labour law and treated them well, and overall enjoyed living in Costa Rica. However, other migrants said that they felt unsafe or insecure while living there. Others referred to the negative views that some Costa Ricans have towards Nicaraguans, saying that they felt strong discrimination from Costa Ricans in general, or from their

employers. Some said that their employers took advantage of them because of their undocumented status.

a) Danger and Insecurity

Three migrants stated that they felt unsafe in Costa Rica either because of perceived danger (or dangerous areas) or because of the constant insecurity which accompanies the status of being an illegal migrant.

When your visa runs out, at any time you can be deported. You live in fear.

- Sara

The most difficult thing was living in a dangerous area with my brother. He [my son] says that he wants to go, but I tell him that it's too dangerous.
- Lola

Lolita told me about a time when she was robbed right before she returned to Nicaragua:

When I didn't finally came back I was at the bus stop and someone came up from behind me and grabbed my earrings and pulled them off, and so I turned around, it was a woman that did it, and I started wailing on her. It's good I came back that day because I probably would have ended up killing her. So it's good I left. (laughs).

Did you get them back?

No, she ran off. And every one said it was lucky that she was working alone, because usually they work in pairs.

b) Discrimination

Several women spoke strongly about discrimination against them because they were Nicaraguan or undocumented. Belkis, a 34 year old women said, "There's a lot of

discrimination for people who aren't documented. And exploitation of workers as well.

For example, the salary is under minimum wage. And, I was fired from the bakery for

being pregnant." Belkis had the opportunity to stay in Costa Rica, but said she did not

want to stay there, saying:

> My son was born in Costa Rica, and my husband has residency there, so because of that I could get my settlement there, but I don't want to because I felt so much discrimination. Even the graffiti on the walls, it says "Get out Nicas," and there's jokes all the time about the Nicaraguan accent, the way that Nicaraguans talk. My sister has suffered a lot of discrimination in her workplace and on the street, but she says that likes living there and she stays there. She is a domestic worker.

Chilo, a 48 year old single mother worked for the same family for 25 years. However,

Chilo remarked, "the family that I worked for discriminated against me." Her brother,

Juan, explained,

> When she cleaned the house, her boss don't permit that she go inside the house with shoes. And don't touch anything, because she believe that we contaminate the house. When my father was sick, before he died, she came to Nicaragua to see my father sick, when she came back to Costa Rica, her boss don't permit that she talk to him, while she was examination.

When asked about discrimination, Lolita said,

> For the acts of one, all of us have to pay. They would say, "Oh Nicas, they're violent, they're murderers, they're starving to death, good for nothing." It's not that, it's that we go and are looking for work. So I would hear negative comments, not directly to me, but people would make derogatory comments about Nicaraguans. And that made me feel bad because I'm Nicaraguan.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, Costa Rica and Nicaragua have an on-going dispute

concerning the Rio San Juan (San Juan River). The tensions regarding this issue have

likely exacerbated the discrimination or mistreatment of Nicaraguans in Costa Rica.

Some Costa Ricans believe that Nicaraguans are taking jobs away from Costa Ricans, but the demand for Nicaraguan domestic workers continues to grow.

6.2.3 Macro and Meso Impacts

a) 'Brain Drain' and Community Depletion

'Brain drain' is a situation linked with migration in which higher educated people migrate and do not return. However, this is likely more the case with emigration to the United States, as most migrants to Costa Rica are concentrated in what are considered lower-skilled sectors such as agriculture, heavy industry, construction, and domestic service (Koser, 2010). Lily, a sociologist and NGO worker commented,

> Well, in the case of migration to the United States you see a brain drain. In the case of male migration we're losing a huge workforce, well, with female and male migration. It's a possible work force here.

Lily points out that while brain drain may not be occurring with the high levels of migration to Costa Rica, community depletion is. Large numbers of women (and men) migrate each year, leaving communities which are largely comprised of grandparents and children. Psychologist Celeste reiterated this point, stating that few people migrated from her community anymore because their parents had already migrated and were sending back remittances.

> It's rare now to see people leaving because most of the people are children of migrants, and they live off of what their family members send them. For example, my mother in law has been living in Spain for 25 years. She left and then the sisters left, and the children left. So that's what you see a lot here, the children of migrants.

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This not only empties communities of a potential labour force, it empties them of entire generations. Children are often raised by their grandparents, which could lead to social changes as well.

> Another thing, that we haven't talked about a lot is that kids now are being raised by their grandparents. And so while there might be some type of positive social change with younger generations, their kids are being raised with the values of their grandparents. And so, for example, machismo, maybe younger people have different views about male, female gender roles. But now, kids now are being raised by their grandparents, who have different views.
>
> - Lily

Unfortunately, this study did not focus on the effects this phenomenon may have on the culture or familial values, and therefore I am unable to elaborate on the significance of this finding. It is clear that a shift has occurred in the care-giving responsibilities within families and communities, and that the make-up of communities has significantly changed.

b) The Depletion of 'the Commons'

Isakson et al., (2008) and Johnson (2006) note that while migrants may choose to migrate, it is a choice within the limited range of options. Women are often left with little other choice than to migrate in search of work. Entire communities can be emptied of women who migrate to sustain their families, taking with them the care, community and relationships that would have been sustained if they were able to stay (Isaksen, et. al., 2008). They then use the remittances they earn to sustain the community and family

they left. Isakson et. al. (2008) asserts that this process is an erosion of the socio-emotional commons.

> Similarly, most migrants see themselves at using their remittances (the market) to better their families (the commons). But, over their heads, so to speak, a more powerful process is simultaneously at work – the distortion and erosion of the Third World commons. Indeed, as whole villages in Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Kerala, Latvia, and the Ukraine are emptied of mothers, aunts, grandmothers, and daughters, it may not be too much to speak of a desertification of Third World caregivers and the emotional commons they would have sustained had they been able to stay (p. 419).

The erosion of the socio-emotional commons involves the loss of care in communities. Care itself is an intrinsic part of sustaining life and satisfying human needs. The loss of care and the emotional commons means the loss of a valuable and intrinsic part of holistic development.

c) Economic Benefits for the Community?

Supported by proponents such as the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the "remittances for development" paradigm focuses on money remittances as migration's key influence on development. It argues that remittances positively impact development at the macro level by reducing poverty, stabilizing the balance of payments, and increasing sources of financing, as well as directly benefiting recipient households and indirectly benefitting communities (UN-INSTRAW, 2008). Remittances are believed to promote the entrepreneurial spirit of recipients and migrants, and the increase in the formal banking of remittances can result in the reduction of costs and an increase in

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competition. While families and individuals do receive benefits at the micro and meso levels, there is no evidence from this study showing benefits for the community. The reality seems to be that remittances are primarily for the benefit of the family. Community leader Lumbar commented,

> We don't see community benefits from it, it's not that people come back and help make improvements to the streets, it's for the benefit of the family. Everything goes to the family.

Remittances can help individuals and families out of poverty, but the money goes directly towards households. In practice there is little evidence to support the assertions of remittances for development proponents. Instead, it is evident that the market is "unable to generate development if remittances are not also accompanied by substantive support in terms of public policies" (UN-INSTRAW, 2008, p. 9).

d) Impacts on Family Members

While family members can benefit economically from domestic labour migration, the migration of mothers unavoidably leads to the creation of South-South transnational care chains, and this holds consequences for each member left behind. Family members are required to fill the care gap left by migrant mothers. Sons, daughters, uncles, aunts and grandparents may take on more responsibility for the well-being of children. As previously mentioned, it is most often female family members who take on increased care-giving and domestic responsibilities; however male family members may take on added responsibility as well in some cases. Transnational care chains lead to the

redistribution of familial duties, and family members become care-givers for the children left behind. These care-giving roles are often in addition to other care, domestic or labour responsibilities. Jessica, a 54 year old mother of six, cared for her sister Juliana's eight children while Juliana was away. Jessica worked at a food stand while providing care for 14 children. She recalled that it was difficult at times, but that fortunately the older female children could help take care of the younger ones while she worked. Not all family members were required to take on added domestic or care responsibilities, but they were nevertheless impacted. Eight more children moved into Jessica's home. Living arrangements were re-ordered. Cooking, cleaning and shopping needs increased alongside the necessity of care for younger children. In this case it is clear that Jessica's household was re-organized in response to Juliana's migration, and that all family members were impacted in one way or another. Parrenas (2005a) identifies the overburdening of kin care-givers as a potential challenges to the functioning of transnational families. In cases such as Jessica's, it is clear that this risk is a definite reality for Nicaraguan families.

6.2.4   Caregivers for the Children of Migrants

The caregivers for the children of migrant mothers were female in every single case except for Carla, whose husband helped their daughter Sarah care for the children while their mother was away. Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila (1997) note that Latina migrant mothers usually preferred a close female relative to take care of their children,

especially their own biological mother. Three women left their children in the care of their mothers, three left their children in the care of their eldest daughter in the home, two left her children with her sister, one left her child with her grandmother and one employed a nanny. Only two caregivers were from the father's side of the family. In one of these cases, the caregiver's son and daughter-in-law were separated but she still cared for her two grandchildren while their mother was away. In the other, the husband and wife were still together and the husband's mother came to help care for the children. In all other cases the caregivers were females from the mother's side. The most common caregiver for migrant children was the migrant's own mother. However, older siblings sometimes take over.

a. Children as Caregivers

When Nicaraguan mothers migrate to Costa Rica for domestic work the care of their children is sometimes shifted to an eldest daughter, symbolizing the last link of a care chain between the two countries (Piper, 2005, Isaksen, 2008). Three Nicaraguan migrant women out of the ten women interviewed left their children in the care of their oldest daughter when they migrated to Costa Rica.

> Sometimes you see in cases of extreme poverty, the mom goes on her own, and it's the older sibling that has to take care of the younger children, and they can't continue studying....the kids are the second parents...
>
> Margarita

> I was 13 and I cared for my 6 year old brother - the youngest, and my oldest brother, he's disabled. He was 36 at the time.
>
> Mariajose

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My oldest one - the 17 year old [cares for them] She has been since she was 12.

<div align="right">Rachel</div>

The interview with Mariajose provides a glimpse at the lived experience of becoming a caregiver for her two siblings at the age of 13. Mariajose cared for her brothers for 6 years before her mother (Marta) returned, but seeing that things in Nicaragua had not improved, Marta soon migrated back to Costa Rica for another 14 years.

> I was 13 and I cared for my 6 year old brother - the youngest, and my oldest brother, he's disabled. He was 36 at the time.

Only the three of you lived here?

Yes.

Where were your other siblings?

Some were in the United States or in Costa Rica. One of my other brothers was here for a bit but he left to the United States too. One went to Paraguay.

Was there anyone else here helping you?

My brothers sent some money sometimes, but I don't remember how much it was. But when I was 14 I got a job taking care of an elderly couple, doing domestic work, and with that I was able to buy my school supplies and finish school.

Were you attending school the entire time your mother was away?

Yes. After I graduated I got a vocational degree in computer programming. That was three and a half years to get. And then I eventually got a job, and that was to help with the household expenses, not with my studies anymore.

How did you care for your 36 year old brother?

He has crutches. His hip doesn't work, and he has epilepsy. There was a time for about 10 years where we had to be very attentive to him because his epilepsy was really bad. He took a lot of care. But now with treatment he hasn't had any attacks for the past 10 years.

Did you have to take him to the doctor or administer medication?

Yes, sometimes.

What did you do to care for your 6 year old brother?

I helped with his studies, went to meetings at school.

                                                                      -Mariajose

At a young age, Mariajose took on the caregiving and domestic responsibilities for her household while her mother worked in Costa Rica. Fortunately, Mariajose was able to continue her education, but her life was filled with various responsibilities and demands: caring for her siblings, managing the household, attending school and working as a domestic worker in Nicaragua. This example shows how the migration of Mariajose's mother led to significant changes in her household's organization of familial care, with the majority, if not all, of the caregiving responsibility falling on Mariajose as the eldest female in the household.

Jessica cared for her sister Juliana's children, but noted that her older daughters often helped to care for their cousins if Jessica was working or busy.

> She [Juliana] went to work, to sell arts and crafts. But then she found permanent work there, so she asked me to take care of her kids. So even though at that time I was working, I worked nearby and the kids stayed at home and the older kids helped take care of the younger kids. The distance from my house to where I was working was like the distance from here to the street. It was close. So I would prepare the food at my stand so they had food, but it was always the older kids that really helped me out with taking care of the younger kids.
>
>   -Jessica

Parrenas (2003) found that in Filipino families where both parents had migrated, more responsibility landed on the children left behind, and on female siblings in particular. In

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the case of Nicaraguan families, many fathers are absent to begin with, meaning that the same situation often occurs.

b. Extended Family as Caregivers

Juliana left her seven children in the care of her sister, Jessica, despite the fact that her husband remained in Nicaragua. His children moved in with their aunt while their mother was away. When asked why Juliana's children could not live with their father, Jessica replied:

> Her first husband was in Rivas, and they separated. She had the first two kids but then they separated. Then she came here and married her current husband. And he's the type of guy, well most of Juliana's kids are female, and they couldn't stay with him, they needed a mother figure. They couldn't stay with the father. And also, he's the type of person who's not very strict with the kids, and whatever they ask for he gives them. So she knew that that wouldn't be the best for the kids, that they needed someone who would be a little bit more firm with them. Juliana knew that if the kids were here I would be a lot more strict.

Jessica said that Juliana's husband never gave her money to help support his children, but that if they ever needed school supplies he would go buy it for them. He also came by to visit, or the children could go visit him.

> Okay, because their father was close so they knew everything was fine. They knew they could go visit their father.
>
> - Jessica

When asked if her husband took on more care and responsibility for her children while she was away, Juliana replied, "Yes, but my sister was the one who took care of them. ...but, he loves them. The kids love him. He is responsible. He was working."

As discussed in the literature review, it is not common for males to become the primary caregivers for their children or to take over domestic or caregiving responsibilities when mothers migrate (IN-STRAW, 2008, Laurie, 2007, Parrenas, 2005). Given that most of the women interviewed were single mothers who did not receive support from their ex-husbands, there was no male present to contribute to care. However, as in the case of Juliana, it is clear that even when a father is present it does not mean he will take over the care of the children when their mother migrates. Juliana justified her husband's lack of involvement by saying that he was responsible and loved his children. Her sister Jessica also justified the arrangement by saying that the children needed a mother figure and someone who would be strict with them. The view of women as nurturers and caregivers is apparent in this example. Not only was Juliana now a breadwinner for her family, but she continued to provide care and guidance for her family as well. The physical care of her children was transferred to Jessica, who had seven children of her own. It is clear that the responsibility of care in this situation fell squarely on the shoulders of women. The absence of male caregivers for the children of migrants, and the subsequent unequal distribution of care-giving responsibilities among men and women, speak to the obdurate gender roles which govern Nicaraguan society and households.

When asked why female relatives and not fathers take over the care of children, psychologist Celeste replied:

> Because the father's not always around or many of the times they're separated and the father is not around. That's why most of them stay with grandmothers, and most of them are grandmothers on the mother's side. In Nicaragua, there are a lot of irresponsible fathers.

School-teacher Margarita provided a similar response:

> *What is the father's role in caring for them? If only the mother migrates, do fathers take over the care?*

> If only the mother goes, that's another case. Sometimes both parents go and leave their kids behind, but in many cases you have single moms and the children have been abandoned by their fathers. It's very very rare that the father will take over the care of the child.

6.2.5 Gender Roles and Relations

Mirroring most literature on gender relations in Nicaragua, this study shows examples of enduring traditional gender ideologies without major transformations in the ways that males and females think about and perform caregiving. This supports the assertion that care chains reinforce the existing gender roles in Nicaragua. The general trend that caregiving and domestic work is largely delegated to women in Nicaragua speaks to the enduring nature of a gendered division of labour. Masculinity is commonly equated with men being breadwinners, being able to conquer women and sire children, while feminine identity is equated with mothering, domestic work and caregiving (Jelin, 1991, Montenegro, 2001).

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In three cases, even when husbands/fathers were part of the Nicaraguan family and able to provide care or take on more domestic responsibility, these duties were transferred to a female family member instead. In one case, a father helped to take on some additional responsibilities such as helping his children with homework and providing care for his children, but this was alongside his eldest daughter, who acted as the primary caregiver. It is not surprising that care chains impact men and women in different ways. Women suffer disproportionately from societal and their own expectations of what mothering should look like and entail. Care chains reinforce these gender ideologies, transferring care from country to country and from women to women. In addition to this, the women in these chains are consistently found in care-giving and domestic employment which offers lower pay and less prestige then men, reflecting the widely held belief that reproductive labour is of less economic value than productive labour (Parrenas, 2004, Sassen, 2000). The increase in linkages between women who provide paid or unpaid care in Nicaragua or Costa does nothing to challenge this gender ideology or the current gender roles and relations in either country.

6.2.6 Class Dynamics

Transnational migration and South-South care chains can intensify class inequalities in Nicaraguan society. As previously mentioned in Chapter 2, women experience poverty differently depending on different factors, such as gender, ethnicity, race, culture, age and class (Parpart et. al, 2000). The labour that men and women do in

a particular society is therefore not only determined by gender, but also by these additional factors, one of which is class. (Mosse, 1992, Parpart et. al, 2000). Yeates (2005) asserts that the purchase of reproductive labour can express and enforce social relations such as social class and status (Ibid.).In the case of care chains between Nicaragua and Costa Rica, reproductive labour is a commodity purchased by class-privileged women in Costa Rica. This reproductive labour is carried out by Nicaraguan women of a lower class. Reproductive labour employment is characterised as a low-class, low-status employment. Gender, class and ethnicity all contribute to the stratification within Nicaraguan and Costa Rican labour markets and migration flows.

Sometimes, Nicaraguan migrant women, such as Lolita, can afford to purchase the domestic labour of another Nicaraguan woman. If they cannot afford this, a female family worker takes over domestic care-giving duties. Therefore, while class-privileged Costa Rican women purchase the low-wage services of migrant workers, these same migrant workers simultaneously purchase the even lower-wage services of poorer women, or relegate their reproductive labour to female relatives left behind in their countries of origin. Domestic workers in Nicaragua do the same labour as their Nicaraguan migrant employers in Costa Rica, but their labour is worth less and paid less. In this way, the South-South, transnational care chain concept captures major social divisions and inequalities in both Nicaraguan and Costa Rican society.

6.2.7 Impacts on Education

The data suggests that the education of migrant children can be negatively impacted by transnational migration in three different ways. First of all, when children take over the care-giving and domestic responsibilities for their household, they are sometimes forced to drop out of school to accommodate their new role and duties. In other instances, children's education is impacted because of the emotional pain (and resulting behavioural changes or rebellion) they experience when separated from their mother. Lastly, children's educational achievement can be impacted because they do not receive adequate support at home, for example in terms of homework assistance or even in terms of care in general. The responses below reflect how the transfer of household caregiving and domestic responsibilities can impact children's education.

> Sometimes you see in cases of extreme poverty, the mom goes on her own, and it's the older sibling that has to take care of the younger children, and they can't continue studying. Yes. I have seen that, and when I've visited homes, especially those living in extreme poverty, where the oldest child has to cook, clean, bath, take care of all the younger children. And the grandmother might be there, but the grandmother has to go out and work as well, washing clothes and ironing. And so it's the responsibility of the older child. I have seen that.
>
> - Margarita

Rachel's daughter cared for her three siblings while her mother was away in Costa Rica.

> *Did she still attend school while taking care of the children?*
>
> When I left, she stopped studying for two years. She will attend university next year though.
>
> - Rachel

Several respondents stated that children rebelled against their mothers and caregivers by refusing to attend school while their mothers were gone. In other cases children's grades declined during their mother's absence, perhaps due to sadness or distraction.

> He never wanted to go [to school]. He didn't do anything that his grandmother said, or anything that I said, even on the telephone. He wanted to do whatever he wanted.
>
> - Belkis

> My son gave me a lot of problems. He was a good student, but very distracted. All of them passed the year, but their behaviour was horrible.
>
> - Juliana

> [He was] very disobedient. He didn't go to school. He missed a whole year. When she left he didn't go to school. He skipped one year. He is now just finishing elementary school [at age 14].
>
> - Carmen

Assistant Principle Rosalina and teacher Margarita both noted that the children of migrant parents sometimes do not receive support at home for their studies, which can lead to decreased grades or even flunking out of school. However, Rosalinda acknowledged that this can be a problem for any child that does not receive adequate support, not just the children of migrant parents.

> The kids might come to school, but they have no support outside of school. So maybe they come, or they don't come all the time because they don't have support, and so they fail. They don't pass the school year.

> *Is there a higher failure rate among migrant children?*

> No, the biggest problem is extreme poverty. There are children with their parents here but they don't receive any support at home either. They say "I can't send my child to school because we don't have food." They don't come to school every day and the parent will say, "I didn't have money to wash clothes, I didn't have money to give them breakfast," and so there's a lot of missed days of

school. We are fulfilling our responsibility but the parents don't send their kids to school like they should.

- Rosalinda

Many have to repeat the school year because they flunk. And if they flunk a year, then they stop studying. Our role as teachers is to go visit the homes and ask why they stopped studying and try to get them back into school.

- Margarita

Who helped with their homework?

Nobody, they had to do it themselves.

- Juliana

A study of 709 Filipino elementary age school children by Battistella and Conaco (1998) found that the children of migrant parents typically earned lower grades than the children of non-migrants. This was especially true in the cases of children with migrant mothers. On the other hand, some studies have actually shown that the children of migrants tend to perform better academically than the children of non-migrants. In a similar study on elementary Filipino students, the Hearts Apart study of 2004 found that elementary aged children of migrant parents earned higher grades than their classmates and exhibited higher drive and ambition. However, this was less likely amongst the children of migrant mothers. Several Nicaraguan migrant mothers stated that their children continued to do well in school while they were gone in Costa Rica. The children who continued to do well tended to have strong support from their caregivers, and were not children whose mothers or caregivers reported as having had any major behavioural issues or rebellion. Psychologist Celeste commented that the children of migrants tend to do well in school if they have adjusted well to their mother's absence. Those who

adjust well are generally children who understand why their mother has migrated and recognize her efforts to provide for them.

> Yes. There are some that do continue studying, more than anything it's those that recognize the effort that their mother is doing in order to support the family. When they recognize that, then they continue studying. But there's some that, because of their resentment, or because they don't have their mom there pushing them to continue studying, they stop studying.
>
> - Celeste

While Lolita was in Costa Rica, her three children continued to attend school, received support from a hired nanny, and attended an afterschool tutoring program that Carla paid for with the money she earned as a domestic worker. Lolita reported that her children all understood why she had to migrate, and appreciated her efforts to provide for them by working in Costa Rica. Belkis' son rebelled while she was gone in Costa Rica, and missed two years of school. However, Belkis said that her son did not understand why she had left, and believed she was looking for his father in Costa Rica.

> I almost lost my son. My husband is not my eldest son's father. My son thought that I had left to go look for my husband. He did very poorly in his classes, he didn't pass two years of school, he didn't want to talk me me...obey me.
>
> - Belkis

Generalizations regarding education are not possible in this study, as specific circumstances certainly had an impact on these children's education experiences. However, the data does suggest that good communication concerning the reasons for migration and recognition on the part of children concerning their mother's efforts to care for them, as well as outside support from the community or church, can go a long

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way in helping children to adjust to their mother's absence, cope emotionally, and continue to do well in school.

6.3 Section Summary

This chapter has raised some important issues regarding the benefits and challenges involved in migration (which unavoidably involves the creation of South-South transnational care chains). Central to the discussion is the finding that while these chains hold economic and personal benefits for migrants, there is also 'another side,' which reveals a less than bright picture. The economic gains involved in care chains are significant, and can lead to improved living situations, access to education, income to invest in micro-business, and personal independence. It is not difficult to see why so many women migrate given the potential benefits and chance to change their circumstances. However, there are also costs that many women and their families continue to grapple with while seeking these benefits.

The misuse of remittances can mean that the potential economic benefits of remittances are never realized. Discrimination and insecurity in Costa Rica can equal a difficult and uncomfortable life for migrant mothers. Care chains reinforce existing gender beliefs which devalue reproductive labour, and also impact women disproportionally, if not exclusively in some cases. The education of migrant children can be negatively impacted by migration by three different factors: when children take over the care-giving and domestic responsibilities for their household, the emotional pain

(and resulting behavioural changes or rebellion) they experience when separated from their mother, or because they do not receive adequate support at home. The emotional pain and relationship changes stemming from familial separation will be looked at in the following chapter.

Chapter 7: IMPACTS OF TRANSNATIONAL MIGRATION AND SOUTH-SOUTH TRANSNATIONAL CARE CHAINS ON THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CHILDREN AND MIGRANT MOTHERS

I never could have a good relationship with her, or trust, or talk with her, because she wasn't here.[10]

This chapter explores the impacts of transnational migration and South-South transnational care chains on the relationships between migrant mothers and the children they leave behind in Nicaragua. The chapter begins with an overview of the emotional and psychological challenges faced by migrant mothers and their children. It then delves into an explanation of the three ideal types which are used to evaluate mother-child relationships. Before offering examples, the deviating factors which cause reality to differ from ideal-types are provided. This is followed by examples of each ideal-type, with deviating factors made explicit in each case.

7.1. Overview of Emotional Challenges

Migrant mothers and their families are impacted in different ways by care chains. Throughout the interview process, it became clear that my participants had experienced (or were experiencing) different types of changes in their family relationships, specifically between migrant mothers and their children left behind in Nicaragua. This finding reflects the discussion surrounding the impacts of migration on the erosion of the 'socio-emotional commons,' but there were findings that showed a strengthening in

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[10] Interview with Mariajose, child of migrant mother and caregiver for siblings

relationships too. Some mothers said that their absence resulted in a stronger relationship between them and their children once they had returned. However, interviewees most often reported that the children of migrant mothers expressed their longing to reunite with their mothers. Children were reported to have felt very sad or even depressed about their mother's departure. Many cried, or asked when their mother would return. Younger children did not understand why their mother left, and even older children did not always clearly understand the reasons for their mother's migration. Frequently those who were school age would rebel or refuse to attend school. Some acted out as a means to get attention or get their mother to return. Some felt extreme resentment or even hatred for their mothers, feeling abandoned and unloved. Sociologist and NGO worker Lily commented,

> I think any time a child is abandoned by any family member there are definite psychological effects. And so yes, when a parent or both parents have to leave their child, there are psychological and social effects.

Celeste, a psychologist who often works with the children of migrant parents, echoed Lily's comments concerning migration, and pointed out the value of communication for mitigating these negative effects.

> There's economic benefits, but there's a lot of social and psychological problems though. Because they don't have communication with their families, with their mothers, with their family members, they take more advice from their friends or from neighbours or what other people say. So that's when they start with the bad behaviour and choices.

It is clear that the migration of mothers can lead to significant emotional upheaval for children and changes in the relationships between mothers and children. However,

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many mothers feel forced to choose financial security over their children's and their own

emotional and social well-being. In her study of the children of Filipina migrants,

Parrenas (2001) writes,

> While enabling Filipina domestic workers to maximize their earnings, the formation of transnational households also involves emotional upheaval in their lives and those of the children whom they have left behind in the Philippines. A central paradox in the maintenance of transnational families is the fact that the achievement of financial security for the sake of the children goes hand-in-hand with an increase in emotional insecurity..." (p. 149).

Migrant mothers strive to maintain their relationships with their children, as well

as provide emotional support from afar along with financial support. Their migration

does not mean that they abandon their role of caring for their children. However,

migrant mothers themselves reported experiencing overwhelming feelings of sadness,

guilt and increased emotional insecurity. Borrowing the words of historian Jacqueline

Jones (1985), domestic work is both a 'labor of love' and a 'labor of sorrow'" (in

Parrenas, 2001, p. 120). Migrating to work in Costa Rica, and the subsequent creation of

care chains between the two countries, nearly always means that women are separated

from their children in Nicaragua. This causes tremendous pain, and therefore,

unsurprisingly the key challenge of migration mentioned by interviewees was family

separation. Every single interviewee mentioned the difficulty of mothers being

separated from their children. All 10 of the migrant women reported that one of their

main challenges was not being able to be with their family and children. Many made

comments like Juliana, a 52 year old mother of eight, who said the hardest thing for her

was "being away from the family and from my kids." Johnson (2006) writes that

Nicaraguan migrant women feel their suffering is concerted in emotional and

psychological facets.

> Most distressing for them, then, is the internal suffering as a result of being
> separated from their families. This includes the deterioration of family
> relationships, worrying, grief at not having loved ones close, and an
> overwhelming feeling of sadness.

Most of the migrant women interviewed expressed a powerful sense of loss at being

separated from their families. Some were quite emotional when they talked about how

their children felt when they left, or said they cried when they called home. The women

reported feeling sad, lonely, helpless, and guilty for leaving, or that they often worried

about their children in Nicaragua.

7.2 Ideal Types

The different types of relationship changes between Nicaraguan migrant mothers

and their families can be classified into 'ideal-types,' a concept mentioned in Chapter 1

and Chapter 3 as an analytical tool created by Max Weber, which can be used as a type

of measurement to capture the most essential components of a social phenomenon,

such as care chains (Calhoun et. al, 2012, Eliaeson, 2000).

Three ideal types emerged in the interviews of this study regarding the relationships

between migrant mothers and their children: 1) Open Communication 2) Partially

Blocked Communication, and 3) Breakdown in Communication. The Open

Communication ideal-type is characterized by a strengthened mother-child relationship,

good communication between mother and child regarding the reasons for migration, recognition by the child of mother's sacrifice and reasons for migration, frequent contact by telephone or visits, and the alleviation of sadness in children by mother offering advice, reassurance and material gifts. Mothers often worry about their children and feel sad to be separated from them, but do not report high levels of guilt. Children often continue to do well in school without experiencing any major behavioural changes.

The Partially Blocked Communication ideal-type is characterized by a weakened relationship. There is often poor communication regarding the reasons for migration, despite possible frequent contact by telephone or visits. Children experience confusion regarding the reasons for migration, and feelings of sadness, resentment, detachment are reported. Mothers and caregivers report rebellion in children. There are sometimes negative changes in children's education (grades, attendance). Mothers often report feeling guilt, and sometimes return home earlier than planned to restore their relationship with children and help mitigate the negative effects of their familial separation.

The Breakdown in Communication ideal-type is characterized by a breakdown in the mother-child relationship. Poor communication is common, and children have confusion regarding their mother's reasons for migration. There is infrequent contact between mother and child, feelings of abandonment in children, and high levels of resentment and rebellion. Children may drop out of school or do poorly, often failing a grade or falling significantly behind their peers. Mothers may report sadness at being separated

from their families, but do not return to Nicaraguan earlier than planned. Mothers continue to send remittances and material gifts, sometimes relying on them as a substitute for parenting.

7.2.1 Deviating Factors

It is important to note that ideal types are pure forms, and reality always deviates. There are other factors which affect the mother -child relationship, causing it to deviate from the ideal-types. In this study, a key influencing factor is the type of support children, families and mothers receive in Nicaragua and Costa Rica. Types of support include the support system that mothers have in Costa Rica, the type of support system families have in Nicaragua, and whether substitute caregivers provide adequate care for children. The suppression of emotion is another factor which can help families cope for a time, but does not prevent the long-term emotional effects of family separation. These factors emerge as an influential force in each example of the ideal-types described later on.

a. Support for Children in Nicaragua

Mothers and children may engage in open communication while separated, but if the child does not receive adequate support from their caregivers, their relationship with their mother might suffer because they associate her absence with poor care. As discussed in the previous chapter, inadequate substitute care can have a negative

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impact on children's education. In the same way, inadequate or adequate care and support can negatively or positively impact the relationship between mother and child, and how effectively children cope with separation. Inadequate care can become visible in the misuse of remittances (for items or activities other than food, clothing or housing improvements to benefit the family), a lack of support or advice for children who are experiencing emotional challenges such as loneliness, sadness, depression, resentment or confusion, and a lack of concern for educational attainment. Children who become caregivers for their siblings may also feel overwhelmed with their new responsibilities, and therefore, despite a good relationship with their mother, may feel resentment towards her for leaving them behind as the primary caregiver.

However, children who receive adequate substitute care, or outside support from relatives, the community, or the church, tend to cope better than those who do not. These types of support can offer a place for children to talk about their feelings, and people who provide advice and assistance. Outside support can positively impact a child's relationship with their migrant mother, and help alleviate the emotional, social and even physical difficulties involved with familial separation.

b. Support for Mothers in Costa Rica

Mothers who lack a support system in Costa Rica may find that they are unable to engage in transnational parenting as effectively because they are occupied with their own adjustment and difficulties in a new and unfamiliar country. Most of the women

interviewed migrated to Costa Rica alone and said that they had little contact with others outside of work. Five of the migrant women interviewed said that they had no support system in Costa Rica. The other women mentioned family members that they had in Costa Rica, although some said they rarely saw them. Belkis, a migrant who experienced a great deal of discrimination said, "The only people that treated us well were the people at the church. They were Costa Rican." Carla also mentioned the church as a place of support, saying, "Church. Only the last time. I didn't have any support system the first times." The lack of a support system can make things much more difficult emotionally for mothers who are separated from their families, living in a new country and working long hours. Some of the migrant mothers reported feeling insecure and that they had a fear of deportation or danger, or clear instances of discrimination. A support system would provide migrants with others to talk to about their problems, as well as people who could provide advice or help.

c. The Repression of Emotion

It is not common or encouraged in Nicaraguan culture for one to express their emotions, especially if they are male (Belli, G., Montenegro, 2001). Feelings are not often discussed, and parents or caregivers might not encourage their children to talk about how they feel being left behind. The result is that emotions are bottled in and bitterness or resentment can easily grow. Children may rebel because they do not know how to deal with the negative emotions they are experiencing.

Some children just say, "Oh my mom's in Costa Rica, Oh my dad's in Costa Rica," but it's not common for people to talk about emotions. It's a cultural thing. You have to be, because life is so difficult, there are so many problems, if you just sit down and cry about everything that happens, you're going to spend all your time crying. Things are very difficult here. And, you don't talk about your emotions and your feelings. It's very, it's uncommon. But what I've seen, are the manifestations in the children of migrants.

- Lily

Laurie (2007) noted that Filipino migrant parents discussed the challenges their children were facing with them, but did not want to burden them with their own challenges in Costa Rica. Asis (2006) found that children engage in the same strategy, by not sharing their problems or worries with their parents or caregivers, either due to the distance, a fear of getting in trouble, or to not be burdensome to them (p. 63). Parrenas (2003) asserts that the longer parents can repress emotions enables them to delay family reunification, but this aggravates the intergenerational strain and makes return more difficult.

7.3 Open Communication

A child's understanding of the reasons for his or her mother's absence is of great importance in mitigating some of the potential negative emotional effects of parental migration, and can contribute to their views of migration as positive or negative. Open communication is essential to helping children understand the reasons for migration. Children can come to appreciate their mother's sacrifice, and understand her migration as a strategy to help the family. While some may view their mother's migration as a

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solely negative situation which separates their family, others may view it as a 'necessary evil' so that their family can have food and clothing. In some cases, children may be happy to have their parents gone because of the material gifts they receive. However, in most cases, children are sad to be separated from their parents, regardless of the economic benefits.

Most of the mothers interviewed did attempt to explain the reasons for their migration to their children, in addition to caregivers also explaining reasons for parental absence. However, a child's age and developmental stage can influence how much a child truly comprehends. Many migrant mothers make great effort to maintain their relationships with their children, and many children do recognize and appreciate the sacrifices that their mothers have made for them. This factor alone can help greatly in mitigating the emotional effects of family separation, and did seem to contribute to a more positive view of migration on the part of children left behind.

> They see it positively, they're aware of the sacrifices that I made. I also went the last time to get money for my oldest daughters quinsinera [15th birthday party] and I was able to get enough money so we could celebrate it. So my oldest daughter talks about how when she was able to celebrate her quinsinera because her mom worked.
>
> Lolita

Lolita's daughters continued to attend school in their mother's absence. While Lolita said that her daughters were sad, they also continued to do well in school and maintain their grades. In some cases relationships between children and mothers can be strengthened during separation. Aranda (2003) asserts that migration "actually

heightens the meanings of kinship and family that may have been taken for granted

before migration" (p. 623).

> Yes, [our relationship changed] because when I came back we were even closer, because they wanted to keep me here. They didn't want me to go again. Even now, they don't like it when I go, and they don't want me to go back. Even now when I go to visit, I'll take my younger daughter with me, and my oldest daughter who is grown will call me and say "Mom, I want you to come back. I feel sad, I feel alone," even though she's grown.
>
> Lolita

However, despite providing adequate substitute care for her children, and the fact that

her daughters continued to do well in school, Lolita worried continuously about their

welfare while in Costa Rica.

> Ah yes. Every time I would eat, I would think about my kids and say, "Oh I hope they're eating, because I'm eating." Even though I sent money back, I thought what if they're not getting food, what if they're not giving them food. And I would start crying. I lost a lot of weight, I got skinny.... The youngest one was the one that had the most problems. She would cry on the telephone and tell me to come back, and it was really hard for me.
>
> Lolita

Johnson (2006) writes that migrants are "profoundly insecure, precisely because they

have left behind their family, they suffer because of this separation, and in many cases,

upon their return, they must assume the burden of a broken family, both materially and

morally, especially with regard to the sons and daughters, because the mothers had

been separated" (p. 18). The mental and emotional suffering of women can be

characterized as the worry they feel for family members, especially children, who are far

away. They can feel helpless in these situations because they are not there and cannot always help their children or family members with their problems.

In cases where mothers and children maintained their transnational relationship with open communication, children were reported to recognize the sacrifice their mother has made in migration. They recognized that their physical well-being stemmed directly from their mother's migration. This helped them to view their mother's migration as a positive thing and as something that helped their whole family economically, even though it meant separation for a time.

> Bella said that she likes it when I go because at least we have money. I don't know if it's because of our certain situation, because we have no money in the household, but Bella and Chris both have talked to me about it. They miss me, but because of the money I send back, they support me going.
>
> *Do you think your children view migration positively?*
>
> Yes, for them, they know that when I go it's to work and to send back money.
>
> - Carla

Carla's daughter Sarah supported Carla's statements, revealing that her siblings understood the reasons for their mother's migration.

> They [my siblings] understood that she went, not because she wanted to go, but because she had to pay the bank. And she always called or we would call her, so even though we were far away, we could maintain contact.
> - Sarah

Although they feel lonely or sad, many children and mothers suppress their emotions and put their emotional needs to the side. Understanding that their family had few

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financial options open to them, Sara's siblings did not want to burden her with their

emotions. However, Sara's mother reported that one of her daughters in fact became

quite depressed while she was away.

> They never told me they were sad, because they didn't want me to feel so bad.

> - Sara

Later in the interview Sara commented,

> The middle one, his grades dropped a bit, so the school called and called in my
> father to talk to him about it. So I think he was a bit distracted while my mom
> was gone.

While her brother did not tell Sara that he was upset or distracted, she observed that

his emotions may have had an impact on his schooling and concentration. Even though

Carla and her children maintained a good relationship across borders and communicated

often, the separation had its toll. Carla talked about one of her daughters in detail,

saying that her daughter became very depressed while she was away. Her depression

affected her grades and her emotional state did not improve until her mother returned.

> [My daughter] missed me, she got depressed. Her grades dropped, but I talked to
> her on the phone and I told her that I had to be there because I owed money,
> and that I would bring her presents when I got back. (Crying). It did help her,
> because when I came back she was doing a lot better, and she didn't fail the
> year. She passed.

> - Carla

Carla offered support and advice over the phone, explaining her reasons for

migration and promising gifts as a way to alleviate her daughter's sadness. The

emotional distress that Carla's daughter experienced while she was away is not

uncommon. Several respondents stated that their children, or the children they cared for or worked with, became very sad or even depressed in the absence of their mothers. Community leader Lumbar talked about how the children of migrants often expressed their sadness to him during kid's club or different activities.

> When I do crafts with the kids, some of them draw different countries and sometimes when they're doing those crafts they express that they want to go see their mom in the other country and that they want their mom.
>
> - Lumbar

Various studies on the children of migrant parents in the Philippines and Indonesia have shown that children with parents away suffered in their social development and in the psychological and emotional well-being. This was particularly true in cases where the mother was abroad. (Hugo, 2002, Parrenas, 2003, Parrenas, 2005). When asked if she thought that most youth and children would view migration positively or negatively in terms of weighing the benefits and the challenges, NGO worker and sociologist Lily pointed out that some may view it as positive because they focus on the material benefits and suppress their negative emotions. In the same way, while some families may communicate frequently, they may also simultaneously engage in the repression of their emotions to better cope with the separation.

> Well, I think because people are taught not to really focus on their emotions, or to try and hide their feelings, they only think about the material benefits. And, in most cases, there are material benefits, when the parents send money back. And so, you know, they're able to get the toy that they always wanted, or the clothes that they wanted because their parents are sending back money. So I think that because, a lot of times, they suppress their true emotions, they see migration as

a positive thing. But, again, I have worked with children, or I have talked with children who express the fact that they hate their moms for leaving them.

- Lily

It is valuable for families to talk openly about their feelings regarding separation. Open communication and recognition by children of their mother's sacrifice can help both children and mothers cope with familial separation due to migration.

7.4 Partially Blocked Communication

Schmalzbauer (2004) identified that transnational parenting in Honduras is most challenging when the children are young and do not understand the reasons their parents left, which as we saw above, can contribute to negative perceptions of parental migration. Laurie (2007) found that parents in the Philippines often felt a lack of caring or respect from their children. In some cases children are so young, or there is so little contact, that the parents are forgotten entirely. This happened in Nicaragua in the case of Lola, who left her 4 year old son with her mother for about one year. When she returned, her son barely remembered her, and preferred her mother instead. This can be heart-breaking for mothers who return to children who do not know them or care for them like they used to.

Did he miss me? No, but if his grandmother left, yes. (laughs).

Do you think your relationship with him changed while you were away?

It is changed because he's now more attached to my mother than me.

- Lola

Even though Lola called home almost every day, and maintained frequent contact with her family, her relationship with her son changed. Her son became more attached to his grandmother, detaching himself emotionally from his mother.

Migrant mother Marta enjoyed living and working in Costa Rica, and stayed there for 14 years. She called home frequently, saying, "I lived talking on the telephone." She sent her three children in Nicaragua money and gifts often. Her daughter, Mariajose, understood that her mother left to find work in Costa Rica, and to help her family make ends meet.

> At first it was difficult for me, but after some time I was able to process and understand why she was there, that she needed to help the household because of the lack of formal employment here.
>
> - Mariajose

While Mariajose's mother did not visit her children, she talked to her daughter on the phone and sent them gifts often.

> There were a couple times that we went to the border and saw her at the border. And she was always sending gifts and things, packages to the house....for example, the basics. Rice, sugar, beans. Clothes, she said they were cheap there.
>
> - Mariajose

Although Marta maintained contact with her children through telephoning and sending gifts, it is clear from the interview with her daughter Mariajose, that the material gifts Marta sent did not make up for her absence and the emotional impact of not having a mother present in Nicaragua. The discussion with Mariajose paints a very different picture of migration from the perspective of a child left behind. Mariajose, now 37 years

old, was 13 at the time of her mother's migration. Mariajose had a difficult time emotionally growing up without her mother. She often looked close to tears when she talked about how she felt having her mother gone.

I felt an emptiness. There was an empty space, that nobody could fill.

- Mariajose

When asked if her relationship with her mother, Marta, changed while she was in Costa Rica, Mariajose replied:

A little, because I never could have.... a good relationship with her, ...or trust, or talk with her, because she wasn't here.

Mariajose said that the main disadvantage of migration was that it broke down trust between her mother and herself.

Trust. Because, always, okay for me, I like to talk face to face with a person. To have someone here that you can share with even the smallest of things. For example finishing elementary school, finishing high school, work. To hear them say congratulations, good job.

Do you view migration as positive or negative?

(Long pause). I don't know how to answer you. But at the end, I think it's worth it, the sacrifice, for the support....

- Mariajose

Mariajose continued attending school despite her added responsibility of caring for her two brothers (one of whom suffered from disabilities) and working to support her household. She even continued onto post-secondary education, earning a diploma in computer programming. These accomplishments may have been contributed to, in part,

by the support Mariajose found in a church community. Mariajose stated that she felt overwhelmed, sad, and empty inside when her mother left.

> Until I started with a prayer group, and that helped me. I started to write down the things that I felt, get everything out and talk to people. I talked to the priest and people at church. And then it became a little bit easier.
>
> - Mariajose

This example shows how outside support, such as from the church, can contribute to better adjustment for children separated from their mothers. However, the fact that children understand the reasons for migration, or receive outside support, does not guarantee freedom from emotional costs. Mariajose still suffers from deep feelings of sadness and resentment over her mother's migration. Their relationship weakened while Marta was away, and outside support along with material goods could not make up for Marta's absence.

Migrant mothers continue to provide emotional support for their children from afar by talking to them about their problems or giving them advice. However, some mothers feel guilty about leaving their children. Even though they migrate to provide for them, they feel internal guilt at missing part of their children's lives, missing special moments or events such as birthdays or Christmas. Mothers try to provide support from afar, but sometimes they feel that the distance prevents them from truly caring for their children's emotional needs. When I asked Chilo, a mother who migrated to Costa Rica for 25 years, how she provided emotional support to her daughter while she was away, she responded,

> I felt bad, because I wasn't able to help with that. I felt bad because I had to go to Costa Rica, and never stay here. My daughter protested.

However, Chilo's daughter received care from her grandmother, continued to do well in school despite sadness at being separated from her mother.

> She felt sad, but for a short time because she had her family here. [She viewed it as] positive.

Chilo called home once every two weeks, and was only able to visit once per year. She became very close with the girl she provided care for in Costa Rica for 23 years. It is not a far stretch to imagine that she became closer to her charge in Costa Rica than to her daughter in Nicaragua, who she rarely saw. Despite staying with the same family for several years, Chilo reported having no support system in Costa Rica, and that she experienced discrimination from her employers. Her job was very busy, allowing her little time for herself. Chilo's lack of support in Costa Rica likely contributed to her inability to provide more support to her daughter in Nicaragua, and consequentially her feelings of guilt over this.

7.5 Blocked Communication

The relationship between migrant mother Belkis and her son began to disintegrate while she was away in Costa Rica. Belkis' son rebelled while she was gone, and refused to go to school, missing two years. Belkis said that her son did not understand why she had left, and believed she was looking for his father in Costa Rica.

I almost lost my son. My husband is not my eldest son's father. My son thought that I had left to go look for my husband. He did very poorly in his classes, he didn't pass two years of school, he didn't want to talk to me...obey me.

- Belkis

Belkis' son did not understand why she had migrated, and rebelled as a way to get attention or cope with the separation from his mother. Belkis commented that her relationship with her son worsened while she was away, but now that she is back in Nicaragua things are better between them.

Yes, many problems. In the times we were apart it worsened. He didn't want to talk to me, we had a lot of problems, he didn't listen to anything I said. Now, today, our relationship is a lot better than what is was when I saw there.

- Belkis

A number of women stated that their children rebelled while they were away. Many talked about how their children acted out or had problems in school. A couple women even returned to Nicaragua because they decided that their children needed them more, or were suffering too much without them. Every key community member interviewed cited rebellion as a key behavioural change in the children of migrants. Caregivers stated that the children they cared for would disobey them, rebel, or stop attending school as an act of defiance. One interview participant told me of case in which one migrant woman's daughter rebelled by dropping out of school and becoming involved with a much older man. Her mother was forced to return home to deal with the situation.

There are those who reject the rules of the house sometimes. There's a lot of resentment, and there's a lot of rebellion in order to get attention, or so that their parents will come back. It's also way to manipulate their parents into coming back....I remember one or two cases when the young people I've worked

with expressed resentment, or sometimes even hatred, because they feel completely abandoned by their parents.

<div align="right">- Celeste</div>

When the mothers migrate, the children don't have the same discipline. So you see more rebellion, there's more children in the street....last year there were two cases of kids who stopped going to school. When their moms aren't around you see a lot more rebellion, they won't get up to go to classes, they won't get ready, they don't study, or they'll say "I'm not going to school anymore until my mom gets back." And again, I see more rebellion in those children. They use the excuse that their mom isn't around for their actions, "Oh I'm not going to go anymore to kids club until my mom comes back."

<div align="right">- Lumbar</div>

Unfortunately, according to the teachers interviewed, it appears that some Nicaraguan families fall prey to Parrenas' (2005) concern that the children of migrant parents do not receive adequate guidance while their parents are away. Teachers Margarita, Maria and Rosalinda all noted that, while kids may rebel or do poorly in school, these issues sometimes stem from inadequate substitute care.

Sometimes the kids rebel. They don't pay attention to their grandparents or their aunts and uncles. A lot of times their grandparents are elderly and so they don't pay attention to them. You see the rebellious behaviour. They don't have their parents there, telling them that they need to study, to be strong and make them study. So you see the rebellious behaviour.

<div align="right">- Margarita</div>

Their caregivers don't make them go to school or give them help with school, they just hang out on the street. They hang out in the street, like bumming around, their talking is vulgar, so you see all of that.

<div align="right">- Maria</div>

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Last year I had two kids that came to class only about once a week, because they were embarrassed that they didn't do as well as the other kids and they didn't know as much. And it was when we had some foreign volunteers here, they felt that they just couldn't work at the same level. So they flunked that year. Their mom had gone to Costa Rica, and their grandmother wasn't really involved and didn't seem too concerned about their studies, or even their food. They often came hungry. The kids might come to school, but they have no support outside of school. So maybe they come, or they don't come all the time because they don't have support, and so they fail. They don't pass the school year.

The mothers say, "I have to go, I have to work," and we [the school] give them one meal a day. So there's some kids who only come to school to eat. Their parents don't care if they study or not, they just come here to eat. But there are benefits if they are left with people who are responsible, like there are some grandparents that are very on top of things and they see that the kids are going. But in many cases, like the kids who didn't pass the year, and especially in cases where the kids are living in extreme poverty, you don't see any benefits. Because their caregivers aren't responsible, and aren't on top of their studies.

- Rosalinda

The issue of inadequate care substitutes is linked to the misuse of remittances. Caregivers who do not emotionally support the children they care for, or are not concerned about their schooling or perhaps even physical needs, are also unlikely to use remittances primarily for the children's needs. However, in this study there were no migrant mothers who reported that their children received inadequate care in their absence. Rather, it was the key community members who observed and commented on this issue.

Both psychologist Celeste and community leader Lumbar point to the fact that children use rebellion as a way to seek attention and even manipulate their mothers into

returning to Nicaragua. In some cases, this strategy can work because mothers see that their children are not coping well without them. Lily recalled a case in which two children, now adults, were left in Nicaragua when their mother migrated to work in Spain. Although the children benefitted economically from their mother's migration, both continue to carry feelings of resentment, or even hatred, against their mother for leaving them behind. Both understand why she left, but still believe that their mother abandoned them and have deep residual emotional challenges stemming from this. One brother attends therapy to deal with the emotional pain that this separation still causes him.

> His mother lived in Spain for most of his childhood. He has deep feelings of resentment for his mother, they don't have a very close relationship. Even though economically he has a house, he has his car, he has things, because of the money that she sent back. Right now his brother has to go to a rehabilitation centre because he's going through these feelings. He has extreme hatred for his mother, for the time that she left him. Which was basically from the time he was 4 until the time he was 12. So, I see that a lot in the, with the adolescent youth. The rebellion, the high risk behaviour, drug use, um, dropping out of school. Many of them have been abandoned by their parents. Not only because of migration, but many times because of migration.
>
> - Lily

The responses below show that not all children understand why their mothers leave, and that not all children view migration as a positive thing for their families.

> [She views it as] negative. She's never wanted her mother to be there.
>
> - Carmen

> Children view it as a separation. They see it as something negative. A lot of times they lose the affection that they had towards their mother, and we saw that in the case of [migrant mother], where the child basically lost the mother-child

relationship. Children under 10 years old don't understand why their mom is leaving, and that it's to improve their household situation. They see it as a separation or abandonment, that they've been abandoned by their mother. The child grows up without their mother's love and without their mother, and that's what's happened in the case of [migrant mother].

- Lumbar

More than anything in the younger children they feel abandoned, and sometimes the parents, when they come back they'll come and talk to me and say "My son or daughter won't talk to me, they ignore me, they're not paying attention to me." I try to explain to them that they need to talk to their kids about why they're going, that it's to try and give them a better life. The parents need to sit down and explain that to the kids so they don't feel abandoned.

- Margarita

Mariajose said that her younger brother, Juan, showed some rebellion and resentment while their mother was away, especially because his mother missed important events in his life. Mariajose's mother did not return to Costa Rica for 14 years. Juan was cared for by his elder sister, Mariajose from the age of 6 until he was a young adult.

Yes, when he [my brother] started going to high school, around 14 or 15, he became a little bit rebellious.

How did he feel about having your mother away?

I think that was the reason for his rebellious behaviour in high school. And when he graduated he wanted to walk and to have his mom present, but she didn't get permission to come back. So he was really angry about that, and there were several times that he expressed his resentment over the fact that she was there.

- Mariajose

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Juliana recalled the difficulties she had with her eldest daughter when she migrated; reflecting that her daughter's rebellion was the price she paid for migrating to Costa Rica.

> My oldest daughter started being rebellious, she started hanging out with girls that had a bad influence, my sister told me. When I came back my oldest daughter was living in a different place, she had run away. I told her, "If you leave again, I'll kill you, because I would rather kill you than have someone else kill you." There was even a time when a guy came looking for her at the house, so I went outside with a machete and said, "Don't come back here, don't come looking for her." I would have stayed longer, but my daughter. It was a high price that I paid for going to Costa Rica.

Parrenas observes that children tend to view transnational mothering as "an insufficient strategy for the provision of emotional care," and that this view emerges from "socialized expectations of traditional mothering" (2005, p. 143). Children may feel resentment or bitterness towards their mothers because they do not believe that mothering from Costa Rica provides them with sufficient emotional care. Some may rebel because of this resentment, or as a way to gain more attention if they feel overlooked, abandoned, or forgotten by their distance mothers.

Once again, in some instances children suppress their emotions as a way to cope. They do not always explicitly express their feelings, but instead ask when their mother is going to return, or wonder how she was doing.

> They never really expressed that they missed their mom. They would ask, 'When is my mom coming," but they never cried or expressed that they missed her. But they would ask when she was coming back.

> There was once when the youngest one [my nephew] was, he would sometimes just be staring off and thinking a lot. So I would ask him, "What are you thinking

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about?" and he would say "I'm thinking about my mom." And I would say, "Well what are you thinking?" and he would say, "I want to know if she's okay in Costa Rica. I want to know if they're treating her okay at work." And I would say, "Of course they're treating her well, because if they weren't treating her well then she would come back, or she would go get a new job, you know your mom." And he'd say, "Okay, that's all. I just wanted to know that she's okay.

Does he ever talk about his mother's migration or how he feels about it?

No.

- Jessica

7.6 Section Summary

This chapter explored the impacts global cares on familial relationships, especially relationships between migrant mothers and their children left behind in Nicaragua. Central to the discussion is the finding that these chains hold significant emotional costs and changes for familial relationships, which stems from family separation. This erosion of the social-emotional commons, and this loss of care, has significant impacts for development. Using three ideal types of open communication, partially blocked communication, a breakdown in communication as a measuring stick, the different cases could be evaluated and fleshed out. Deviating characteristics were able to stand out, and could be attributed to factors such as the type of outside support both mothers and children received in Costa Rica and Nicaragua, and whether they engaged in the suppressing of their emotions as a coping strategy for familial separation. While some relationships, such as migrant mother Lolita's and her children, were strengthened by separation, in most cases it was apparent that family separation

resulted in emotional challenges, behavioural changes and decreased educational attainment. The findings correspond with Isaksen et. al's research on global care chains in Kerala.

> There are vitally important emotional – and not simply economic – realities unfolding with the feminization of migration. Although children have in the past and still today miss their migrant fathers, in most Third World cultures, the export of care work involves the export of women. Given local tradition, at least in Kerala, the export of women removes those who have been central in the care of children" (Isaksen et. al, 2008, p. 415).

The migration of mothers both separates them from their children and leaves a care gap in Nicaragua, which is usually filled by a female relative. The research indicates that the economic benefits of migration to Costa Rica do usually reach the children of migrant mothers, however, there are significant and apparent emotional and social costs associated with this migration. Children experience profound feelings of sadness, depression and resentment. Some children rebel against their mothers or caregivers, or suppress their feelings as a coping mechanism.

Children may view migration in both a positive and negative light, often depending on their level of understanding for the reasons for his or her mother's absence. It is clear that communication is of great importance in mitigating some of the potential negative emotional effects of migration, as well as the potential negative effects on education. The transfer of household and domestic responsibilities to children, emotional pain (and resulting behavioural changes or rebellion), and insufficient support at home can all have negative effects on the children's educational

achievements. Both emotional stress and negative impacts on education appear to be diminished or lessened when children receive support from their extended family, community or church, have a responsible surrogate parental figure or caregiver, clearly understand and recognize why their mother migrated in the first place, and have open communication with them. Children who lacked one or more of these aspects seemed to have more difficulty in adjusting to their mother's absence, and had more emotional or behavioural problems. All of these challenges point to the overall finding that the migration of mothers and the subsequent care gaps can have detrimental impacts on children left behind in Nicaragua. Considering the high number of women who migrate each year, this phenomenon has a tremendous impact on the development of Nicaragua as a whole. As care is transferred from Nicaragua to Costa Rica, a breakdown in the mother-child relationship occurs, which both mothers and children suffering the social and emotional effects of the resulting care gaps and erosion of the social-emotional commons.

Chapter 8: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

With high poverty levels and limited employment opportunities in Nicaragua, an increasing number of Nicaraguans emigrate as a strategy, however costly, to help financially sustain their families. An examination of migratory outflows has revealed that the majority of Nicaraguan migrant women are in the care and domestic sector of Costa Rica, a country whose increased demand for domestic care, and consequently domestic care workers, has occasioned an increased migrant flow of Nicaraguan women to meet this demand. This combination of the demand for domestic labour and care in Costa Rica, the commodification of reproductive labour and transnational migration, has resulted in the formation of South-South transnational care chains between Nicaragua and Costa Rica as women from the weaker economy of Nicaragua leave their families to care for the young, sick, disabled and elderly in the stronger economy of Costa Rica. This thesis has given rise to some conclusions which are specific to Nicaragua, and some which are broader and speak to the issues surrounding global care chains and development. Most have already been made throughout the thesis, but will be restated here and followed by a few, general recommendations arising from this research. In an attempt to avoid suggesting recommendations based solely on perceived-needs by myself or other researchers or organizations, the interview schedule included a final question for key community members on what they believed could and should be done to mitigate the negative effects of emigration on families, communities and the nation of Nicaragua. The following section reflects the felt-needs and opinions of community

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members interviewed, along with general recommendations based on the study findings and supported by the literature.

This project has aspired to fill some of the gaps which exist in both the academic research and policy arenas by addressing the issue of a 'South-South' transnational care chain between Costa Rica and Nicaragua. A great deal of data was collected from the twenty people who participated in this study, as well as from an extensive range of academic books and articles. The narratives of these women, alongside the analysis of gender and international migration, links the lived experiences of Nicaragua women with the broader macro processes which govern care chains. These migrant women's personal experiences indicate a system, political, social or cultural, which places high demands on the poorest and most vulnerable of Nicaraguan society, of which women comprise a major portion. It was shown that women often migrate to Costa Rica for economic reasons, because they cannot find adequate employment in Nicaragua.

The South-South migration of Nicaraguan women to Costa Rica for work in the domestic and care sector has led to significant changes in families and communities of origin in Nicaragua. Some of these changes include 1) economic benefits which extend to living conditions and education; 2) positive and negative changes in mother-child relationships; and 3) impacts on family and community gender and class relations.

The findings indicated that there can be positive economic benefits for families, which extended to improved living conditions and better education while also offering access to basic necessities such as food and clothing. Overall living situations can be

completely transformed through the increase in income. Nicaraguan migrant mothers in Costa Rica support and sustain their families back home through sending remittances; which may prove to be the difference between survival and death for some families. Women can also experience increased independence and feelings of empowerment through their migration and income-earning labour.

On the other side of the coin, it is clear that while migration can lead to economic benefits this is not always the case for some families. The misuse of remittances can mean that the potential financial benefits from remittances are never realized. The financial stability of the family rests increasingly on the shoulders of women migrants placing an unequal burden on them. The rise in the number of Nicaraguan migrant women is expected in the face of changing global demographics. Increased state accountability, protection and partnership are essential to enhance the positive aspects of migration and address the many challenges for development that migration entails. It may be of value to have programs which teach parents how to use their migration effectively as a survival strategy. For instance, workshops on how to administer household funds, how to save money, how to invest money, or how to allocate household resources could be effective tools to ensure that remittances truly benefit migrants and their families.

The positive benefits of migration, such as remittances, should not be used as reason to shift the responsibility of development away from the state. Transnational migration should not be used as the only tool for holistic development which focuses on

both economic and social benefits, or as a way in which to avoid state action in terms of employment creation or the implementation of state social programs and policies. Tharamangalam and Reed (2010) note that examining the role of the state is important, "since state action has proved to be so critical, especially in the third world, in producing human development outcomes that are inclusive and relatively equitable" (p. 171). Given that the primary reason for migration to Costa Rica is economic and stems from the high unemployment in labour markets in Nicaragua. It follows that the creation of stable and formal employment in Nicaragua would contribute to giving Nicaraguan women the option of staying in their own country to work, as well as to the development of Nicaragua as a whole.

> Just if there were more stable and formal employment, then people wouldn't leave, and even Nicaraguans over in Costa Rica would come back. When they opened the sweatshop here a lot of people came back, and if they got work, they stayed in Nicaragua, they didn't go back.
>
> Lumbar

> Some type of project to give advice or consultation, and something to generate employment.
>
> Maria

> At the macro-economic level there needs to be more jobs created here in Nicaragua, but jobs that pay a living wage, that provide decent employment. Even starting up micro-businesses that involve very minimal capital investment, but can create jobs for people, so they don't have to migrate. More foreign investment would create more jobs, but a lot of times those jobs don't have the best labour or working conditions, but it's some type of income. Education is key. There needs to be more money invested in education. I think we've seen most of the families who have migrated are families that live in extreme poverty and have very low education levels. So, education, education, education. Jobs, jobs, jobs.
>
> - Lily

MacLaren (2009) argues that more attention should be paid on helping women move from informal to formal employment. Similarly, Arrigada (2009) asserts that "opportunities for work and survival must be created in source countries, especially for women, to avoid their migration in search of better-paying but poorer quality employment" (p. 3). The Ortega administration has stated that it plans to focus on job creation, but at the same time, remittances comprise more than half the value of Nicaragua`s exports. Some argue that remittances are rescuing the Nicaraguan economy (Orozco, 2008). The number of recruitment and remittance-sending agencies throughout Nicaragua has increased to assist migrants in both sending remittances and moving to Costa Rica. However, as previously stated, this should not provide justification for shifting the responsibility for national economic growth or social programs away from the state of Nicaragua.

Economic growth and job creation are not going to happen overnight. For the foreseeable future, Nicaraguan women will be migrating to Costa Rica to work. Return migration is not a plausible solution at this point because of the reliance of Nicaraguan families on remittances for survival. Addressing the problem of unemployment in Nicaragua is foremost, needs to be addressed, but other measures should be taken, in both Costa Rica and Nicaragua, in order to mitigate some of the negative outcomes of migration. The IOM recommends initiatives designed to improve connections with the Nicaraguan Diaspora, develop links with Nicaraguan development, and even attract

migrants back to the country. More support is needed in the return of highly vulnerable migrants, as well as programs to improve reception, orientation, and integration.

This study found that South-South transnational care chains can result in strained relationships between mothers and children. Many Nicaraguan children grow up in divided households headed by grandparents, aunts or elder siblings, and the geographical separation of families causes emotional strain. The social effects on children left behind may well be the strongest argument against migration as a tool for development, and implies that migration is merely a temporary solution for Nicaragua. Unimpeded, it will take much more from Nicaragua's future than remittances can bring in. We cannot assume that the care leaving Nicaragua is surplus care. In fact, this research points to quite the opposite: that care gaps exist in Nicaraguan families as a result of migration. Ehrenreich and Hochschild write, "what is a solution for richer nations creates a problem in poor nations," and therefore the transfer of domestic labour to Costa Rica is in fact creating social problems for Nicaragua (2004, p. 54).

Children may view migration in both a positive and negative light, often depending on their level of understanding for the reasons for their mother's absence. Communication and outside support are important in mitigating some of the potential negative emotional effects of migration, as well as the potential negative effects on children's education. The transfer of household and domestic responsibilities to children, emotional pain, insufficient communication between parents and children, and inadequate support at home can all have negative effects on the mother-child

relationship, and on children's educational achievements. This study found that children who understood their mother's reasons for migration, or recognized their mother's sacrifice tended to do better than children who did not understand why their parent had left. Similarly, Parrenas reports that the emotional deprivation caused by separation does not necessarily have a negative impact on children's general well-being, as long as the children receive regular attention from their substitute female caregivers, their mothers' sacrifices are recognized, and mothers maintain regular contact while they are away. Ehrenreich and Hochschild (2004) point out that, "not only does communication ease children's emotional difficulties, it also fosters a sense of family unity, and it promotes the view that migration is a survival strategy that requires sacrifices from both children and parents for the good of the family (p. 48). Programs which encourage parents to communicate with their children and show them tangible benefits of their migration would help children to understand and value their mother's migration.

> To work with the families here, there needs to be more workshops with families, before they even migrate, to improve family communication, so that if they do have to migrate they're able to communicate better why they're migrating with their children, to make sure that they're provided with an adequate support network here, and adequate caregivers here.
>
> - Lily

Parrenas (2004) suggests community projects in order to increase transnational family communication and special school programs for the children of migrants in the Philippines. Mariajose, the child of a migrant mother, stated that her emotional pain was reduced after she started attending a church group in which she could express her

feelings. People and places which emphasize open communication and the opportunity to express one's emotions could prove extremely beneficial for the children of migrant parents. Community members expressed a wish for counselling services and other types of support groups to help children cope with familial separation.

> We would like to have a psychologist here, because a lot of times the teachers are the counsellors. Because all the problems come to them. And so in our meetings, we always talk about how we would like to have a psychologist here.
>
> -

Rosalinda

> Something to work with the children, to pay attention to them, to give support, to help them recognize the efforts that their parents make to help them. That they have some type of support group where they can talk about their feelings, and they learn how to talk to their parents and express to their parents how they feel. Because a lot of times they keep everything inside, and that causes them a lot of emotional damage.
>
> — Celeste

> For the children, to give them better advice, and some kind of support, so that they stay at home, that they're not out in the streets, that they study and behave themselves.
>
> -Maria

> It would be great to see psychologists in the school who could work with the children. It would be great to see more programs, not only involving sports, but some type of different therapy, maybe not even direct therapy, but even art therapy, or other types of therapy to work with children who have been abandoned, either because of migration or just abandoned because of the economic situation.
>
> - Lily

The negative emotional effects of familial separation are exacerbated by the length the of the separation. Undocumented migrants may not see their children for many years because they are unable to visit. This raises the importance of finding solutions for undocumented women which would allow them to freely enter and exit

their destination country in order to maintain and strengthen their relationships with family and reduce the negative effects of family separation.

This study found that domestic labour is under-valued, and linked to gender, class and ethnicity. Domestic labour is relegated from class-privileged women to lower class Nicaraguan women for low pay. Society can support migrant mothering by upholding more egalitarian views of child-rearing, recognizing women's economic achievements and contributions, redefining motherhood to include providing for one's family, and promoting the increased involvement of men in domestic responsibilities. From a preventative point of view, a gender egalitarian view of child rearing is essential for securing quality care for the children of transnational families. The Nicaraguan government and media could play a role in this by questioning the lack of male accountability for care work. Parrenas calls for men in the Philippines to take on a bigger role in the care of their children. In the same way, Nicaraguan men, including migrant fathers, should be called on to take more responsibility for the welfare of their children, regardless of whether they are separated from their partner or not. Some programs have already been implemented in Nicaragua to address gender relations and domestic and sexual abuse. However, the resistance to gender egalitarian views stems from deeply ingrained Nicaraguan machismo and views on women. Programs are needed to encourage responsible parenting, even from a young age. Bautista (2009) writes that one challenge lies in the widespread belief among both men and women that domestic labour is non-productive and should be solely performed by women because it is labour

which occurs in the private (home) sphere. She notes that this belief "continues to be passed down by families to their children," resulting in a situation in which neither government nor society nor the women themselves value domestic work" (Ibid., p. 70). As such, any initiative aimed at improving the conditions surrounding this sector must challenge the underlying views on gender and be undertaken by government, society and the women themselves.

Parrenas (2004) writes that there is a need for advocates to focus "not on calling for a return to the nuclear family but on trying to meet the special needs transnational families possess" (p. 53). She asserts that families would benefit from a reconstituted gender ideology and the eradication of legislation which penalizes migrants and their families in destination countries. Nicaraguan migrants often experience discrimination or exploitation in Costa Rica. Domestic work is often informal, under-paid and entails long working hours. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean also stresses the importance of protecting migrants abroad from exploitation and trafficking, writing that "the protection of all migrants under the provisions of international law is a matter of urgency" (ECLAC, 2006).

Migrant workers should enjoy the same labour rights as other workers, and in the absence of family networks in destination countries, it is also important for migrant workers to have access to caregiver services. Many migrant mothers do not bring their children with them precisely because they are not able to organize care for their children in Costa Rica. Arrigada writes that it is necessary "to introduce mechanisms for

workplace inspections and disseminate information on their rights among migrant workers," and that to do so will require political will and strong state support for resources directed to specific programs targeted for migrants (2009, p. 4). Given that migration to Costa Rica continues to grow each year, it clear that governments should develop long-term policies now and invest in providing housing, education and health services so that integration problems do not get worse. In both Nicaragua and Costa Rica, measures should be promoted to improve and reduce the costs involved in sending remittances and maintaining family communication. These types of policies and measures will require increased collaboration between Nicaragua and Costa Rica. Lily notes that there is a lack of both communication and partnership between the two countries, from which migrants suffer.

> There needs to be collaboration between the Nicaraguan and Costa Rican government. Because, it's clear that Costa Rica depends on Nicaraguan migrants to support many sectors of its economy. And it's clear that Nicaragua depends upon the work in Costa Rica. There needs to be some type of collaboration between the two governments at the national level to create programs to support migrants. To give them information before they leave, to make sure that they're not exploited while they're there, to make sure they're given some type of temporary work permits so that they at least have health care, their kids can get an education while they're there. So they're not exploited...and in Costa Rica, the estimated maximum 800,000 Nicaraguans living there, there needs to be dialogue between the two countries.
>
> — Lily

Host societies (in this case, Costa Rica) should be held more accountable for the welfare of migrants abroad, but Nicaragua needs to ensure that its citizens have the appropriate information before they migrate. Increased partnership between Costa and Rica and

Nicaragua is critical in order to address the issues surrounding migration between these two countries.

Some of the limitations of this study include the fact that it did not interview children. This would have added great depth and insight into the impacts on children left behind, and their feelings and experiences. It also would have been of great value to better examine the experiences of the caregivers of migrant children, instead of merely asking them questions about the children they cared for. Caregivers fell outside the scope of this thesis, but it is important to hear their narratives as well; the ways in which migration has affected them and how the ways they are impacted reflect gender ideologies.

Perhaps one of the most interesting findings from this study was that the majority of women interviewed were single mothers who were the sole providers for their households. This raises some significant questions: would single mothers still migrate if they received child support from their previous partners? Are single mothers more likely to migrate than women in relationships? While this study cannot answer this question, it does provide an interesting pilot for a larger study which could explore this phenomenon.

Another limitation to this thesis is that it does not address cases of Nicaraguan women who work as domestic workers for other Nicaraguan women who migrate to work in Costa Rica. This issue would provide an interesting area for further study and research, revealing insight into an entire other 'link' in the care chains between

Nicaragua and Costa Rica. A third limitation to this study lies in its inability to include current migrants in Costa Rica. This study only addresses the issue of South-South transnational care chains from the 'home' perspective, but it is important to recognize that care chains as a whole encompass more than one location, and include more than one family. It would be both interesting and informative to trace a series of single care chains between Costa Rica and Nicaragua, speaking to migrant mothers currently working in Costa Rica, their family and hired caregivers in Nicaragua, and then that hired caregiver's family, so that every link in the chain is examined. Each chain would likely reveal very different aspects and impacts, different ways of caring across borders and different outcomes in families and communities.

The transnational migration of Nicaraguan women to Costa Rica for work in the domestic and care sector has led to significant economic, social and emotional changes for families and communities of origin. The negative impacts need to be addressed at the government, society, household and individual levels. Global care chains point to numerous issues: the transfer of care resources from poorer countries to richer countries, the commodification of reproductive labour, internal and international migration, social divisions and inequalities, gender relations and roles in which women bear a disproportionate burden of care, a shift away from responsibility of the state to provide care for its citizens and a significant lack of employment opportunities, to name only a few. Such a complex concept and phenomenon cannot be addressed by simple solutions. Despite the benefits of migration from Nicaragua to Costa Rica presented in

this thesis, the risks are substantial enough to preclude its consideration as a viable development strategy. As long as the global order maintains its current form and the demand for low paid domestic labour exists, individuals and nations will rise to meet this need. This possibly suggests that development policies should focus on providing viable options so that women are not 'forced' to migrate to Costa Rica, and if they do choose to migrate, that they will be protected in their destination country and also receive support to diminish the negative impacts and pain of family separation on themselves and their families and communities left behind.

Women's Transnational Migration and Global Care Chains: The Impact of Nicaraguan Women's Migration to Costa Rica on their Families and Communities of Origin
REB File # 12-049

RESEARCH INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR MIGRANT WOMEN

Objective: To determine how global care chains have impacted Nicaraguan women at an individual level. What is their migration experience as care givers across borders? What challenges do they face in Costa Rica and how do they cope with them?

Living in Costa Rica

    a. What was your reason for moving to Costa Rica?

        I. Was it your decision, why did you decide to move there, was your family supportive;

        II. How did you find work as a care giver in Costa Rica? Did you obtain a visa and/or work permit? Why or why not?]

    b. How would you describe your life in Costa Rica?

        I. Work:

            i. hours,

            ii. duties (caregiving, cleaning, cooking?)

            iii. pay

        II. Did you get along with your Tico employers? Why or why not?

        III. Living arrangements: where and with who, conditions

    c. What do you view as some of the advantages and challenges to living and working in Costa Rica?

    d. Do you have a support system to rely on in Costa Rica? [i.e. support groups with other migrants, friends, organizations etc.]

    e. Why did you return to Nicaragua?

    f. Will you return to Costa Rica to work? Why or why not?

Objective: To determine the impact of global care chains at the family level, and particularly to determine how migrant mothers maintain their relationships with their children and provide care for them across borders.

Connections with Children

    a. How do/did you communicate with your children while you are working in Costa Rica? [Follow up: Were you able to visit? How often? Write, email, talk on the phone...etc.]

    b. Who did your children live with, and who took care of them?

        i. Did your children attend school? Who helped with their homework? How are their grades?

        ii. Who cooks, cleans and does other household duties while you are away?

    c. How do you provide support and care for your children while you are away?

        i. Do you send money or gifts?

        ii. What is the average amount that you send each month?

        iii. How is the money used?

        iv. Other kinds of support? (emotional, psychological)

    d. Do you think your relationship with them changed before, during or after you started working in Costa Rica? If so, in what ways?

    e. Do your children discuss [your] migration with you? How do they feel about you leaving? Do they view it positively or negatively?

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RESEARCH INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR

CARETAKERS OF THE CHILDREN OF MIGRANT WOMEN

Objective: To determine how global care chains have impacted Nicaraguan women at an individual level in Nicaragua, and who cares for the children of migrant mothers while they are in Costa Rica.

Caretaking of the Children of Migrants

    g. Why did the mother of _____ migrate to Costa Rica?

        I.   How long was she away?

        II.   What kind of work was she doing?

        III.   How often did she visit?

    h. How would you describe your life in Nicaragua?

        I.   Work:

        II.   Number of children (your own, and others you caring for)

        III.   Family Members living in household

        IV.   Caregiving duties

Objective: To determine the impact of global care chains at the family level, and particularly to determine how migrant mothers maintain their relationships with their children and provide care for them across borders.

Connections with Children

    f. How did _____ communicate with you and her children while she was working in Costa Rica? [Follow up: Write, email, talk on the phone...etc.]

g. Did the children attend school? Who helped with their homework? How are/were their grades?

    i. Who cooks, cleans and does other household duties?

h. How does their mother provide support and care for her children while she is away?

    i. Did she send money or gifts?

    ii. What is the average amount sent each month?

    iii. How is the money used?

    iv. Other kinds of support? (emotional, psychological)

i. Did the children discuss their mother's migration with you? How did they feel about you leaving? Did they view it positively or negatively?

j. What do you view as some of the advantages and challenges to having your family members live and work in Costa Rica?

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RESEARCH INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR KEY COMMUNITY MEMBERS

(NGO workers, health care workers, teachers or community leaders)

Objective: To determine the impact of global care chains at a community level. How many community members have migrated / migrate? How has this changed the community?

1. What kind of work do you do?

2. How long have you lived in this community?

3. How many women would you estimate migrate each year from this community?

4. Why do they migrate?

5. Who takes over the care of the children of migrant mothers?

6. How has migration benefitted your community?

7. Have there been any challenges or negative effects resulting from migration? [
    a. i.e. education,
    b. behavioural changes,
    c. family separation,
    d. economic gaps between families

8. Do the children ever talk about their views of migration to you? What are their feelings towards their parents for migrating? Do they view it positively or negatively?

9. Does the community provide any services to the children whose mothers are away for work? If so, what kinds of services?

10. If there weren't any economic or resource constraints, what would you like to see done to help the families of migrants? How can the community help them?

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