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Filipina Domestic Workers in São Paulo

An Explorative Case Study on the Social Reproduction of Class, Gender and Race

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The study is a first attempt to academically investigate the case of Filipina domestic workers in São Paulo. In brief, it aims to outline these migrants' life and working conditions, their insertion and function within class relations and in regard to a gendered and racialized work regime. The overarching theoretical framework is social reproduction feminism that originated from the 1960's socialist domestic labor debate and that has since then been renewed by postcolonial, Black feminists and queer studies. The research builds on qualitative methodology. Besides the literature review, ethnographic fieldwork was conducted with 25 migrants in a two week timespan that included individual and group interviews as well as participant observations. In contrast to the initial literature review, the study finds that the majority of these women migrate and work in so called irregular situations. Even though there are considerable differences regarding their individual circumstances, nearly none of their work conditions comply with Brazilian labor regulations. The study furthermore shows that the migrants class position is central in understanding both the migration and work trajectory. An important function of the migrant's labor is the reproduction of the upper class that does however not necessarily form part of the citizenship population. In regard to gender and race, the study suggests that these women find themselves inserted in a transnational care chain and that gendered and racialized constructions of the worker are central in understanding both their exploitation and conception as excellent workers.

Keywords: São Paulo, Brazil, field study, Filipina, migrant domestic workers, social reproduction feminism.

Este estudo é uma tentativa de investigar academicamente o caso de empregadas domésticas filipinas em São Paulo. Tem por objetivo apresentar a vida e condições de trabalho desses imigrantes, sua inserção e função dentro das relações de classe e sua relação a um regime laboral racializado e discriminado. O quadro teórico abrangente é o feminismo da reprodução social que surgiu do debate socialista sobre trabalho doméstico no final dos anos 60 e tem sido renovado pelo pós-colonialismo, feminismo negro e estudos queer. A pesquisa parte do entendimento materialista ontológico e crítico realista da autora e de uma abordagem epistemológica fundamentada em conhecimentos específicos, sobretudo baseada em um modelo de pesquisa qualitativa. Em adição, um trabalho de campo etnográfico foi conduzido com 25 imigrantes em um período de duas semanas que incluiu entrevistas individuais e em grupo, assim como observação participante. Contrastando a revisão literária inicial o estudo aponta que a maioria desses imigrantes tem suas vidas e trabalhos em situações irregulares e mesmo que haja diferenças consideráveis no tocante as mesmas, quase nenhuma das suas condições estão em conformidade com as Leis do Trabalho Brasileira. As participantes, sendo todas mulheres e muitas vezes mães, encontram-se inseridas numa cadeia de cuidados transnacionais. Classe mostrou-se um ponto central para se entender a integração do trabalho das mulheres e da função reprodutiva além do lar.

Palavras-chave: São Paulo, Brasil, Filipinas, campo de estudo, trabalhadoras domésticas imigrantes, reprodução social.

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I. Introduction

In the month of March 2013, following years of collective organizing Brazilian domestic workers succeeded to effectuate a constitutional amendment concerning their working rights. These *Resoluções Normativas n° 103 e 104* or as commonly referred to, the *PEC das Domésticas* sparked significant public controversy. They formalized the working conditions for 6.5 million domestic workers to those of the legal workforce in Brazil. Amongst other things, this included a regulation of working hours, a minimum wage and access to comprehensive social security and health schemes (ILO, 2013; Presidência da República Casa Civil, 2015). A year prior, the Brazilian Ministry of Labor and Employment¹ in cooperation with its integrated National Immigration Council (CNIg) enacted a regulation that similarly affected the composition of domestic workers in Brazil. This new law extended the hiring of foreign workers to natural persons.² In practice, this regulation has been primarily applied for services in the domestic sector. The officially registered domestic workers that migrated upon the law's implementation are foremost women from Southeast Asia and particularly the Philippines (Campos Mello, 2015a). The estimated numbers of these domestic workers range, due to high levels of so called irregular immigration, from around 250 to 450 out of which most are located in the metropolitan areas of the largest cities, especially São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro.

This case of immigrant domestic workers is despite its relatively small sample size particularly interesting due to several reasons. As it constitutes the first recent significant presence of Southeast Asian working class migrants in Brazil it is a new phenomenon that has not yet been academically studied. The research published in private media outlets furthermore seems to convey a picture of the case that bears little representativity and depth. It points however to the highly gendered and racialized nature of the domestic work regime, a factor that will be explored in greater detail in this study. Due to oftentimes similar transnational and in particular South to

¹ In October 2015, the Brazilian Ministry for Labor and Employment merged with the Ministry for Social Security resulting in the Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MTPS) which is now responsible for the processing of working visa of immigrants (Portal Brasil, 2016). Since this absorption does not constitute a significant change in relation to these Filipino workers and since this paper is mainly concerned with the policy changes of the former Ministry for Labor and Employment, it will refer to the latter's name throughout the study.

² "A real human being, as distinguished from a corporation, which is often treated at law as a fictitious person" (Hill & Hill, 2016, para. 1)

South migration trajectories of the employer and the domestic worker, the role of class together with the worker's insertion in class relations as well as her reproductive function beyond the household will further be examined. Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How are the life and working conditions of these female Southeast Asian domestic workers in São Paulo?
2. How are these workers inserted in gendered and racialized class relations and what function do they fulfill in these?

In regard to the theoretical framework this study is revisiting the Marxist domestic labor debate sparked in the late 1960's and the social reproduction feminist strand that followed it. By incorporating recent contributions from postcolonial, Black feminists and queer studies and acknowledging the significant changes of settings and circumstances in which these women migrate and work more than a decade after the millennial break, the concept of social reproduction still is of great explanatory significance. Amongst other things, it succeeds, unlike mere intersectional feminist approaches to conceptualize racialized women's domestic work within a historically specific capitalist totality that significantly shapes the migrants' experiences. It does so however without the creation of class, gender and race as static or homogenous units, unlike orthodox Marxists readings of domestic work. It furthermore acknowledges the importance and hints to the social and economic function of domestic labor beyond the private sphere as a central factor in the reproduction of class relations and for the continuity of capitalism.

This case study employs a foremost qualitative methodology. Besides the literature review, the researcher conducted a two week long field study with 25 domestic workers in the metropolitan region of São Paulo - using ethnographic field work methods, individual and group interview sessions as well as participant observations were conducted. The process of data analysis employed primarily open coding techniques. Since this study constitutes the author's undergraduate thesis it has several limitations specifically regarding the research scope in terms of content, time and financial resources available. Nevertheless, this study does not state claims

concerning universality, but should rather be understood as a first insight and attempt to conceptualize this phenomenon from a social reproduction perspective.

This paper is structured followingly: After a brief contextualization and outline in the background section, the reader is presented an overview of the existing research on the specific case as well as on similar cases in different contexts. Subsequently, the theoretical and conceptual framework, the lenses through which the case will be approached is presented and justified. This is followed by an outline of the method and data to be continued by the study's central section, the analysis. In this part, the findings will be discussed in relation to the background, previous study and theory section. Lastly, these findings will be summarized together with a short outlook regarding further research and developments in the conclusion.

II. Background

The background sections aims to contextualize the phenomenon and to provide the reader with the necessary information to situate the case in wider societal processes and discourses to understand it in greater depth. The structure of the section is headed by a short outline of the slavery and colonial roots of Brazilian domestic work and its ongoing legacy. It is followed by an overview of current domestic workers in Brazil and particularly in regard to their working rights and recent changes in regulation. The author advances the discussion to recent modifications in migrant workers regulation, its consequences and the broader legislation and rights situation for transnational migrant workers in Brazil. Lastly, the case will be situated within the Philippines' labor export development strategies, as well as in the global processes of a feminization of migration and the commodification of care.

Research on domestic labor and migration in the Brazilian context stresses the need to contextualize these topics within the nation's legacy of colonialism and especially slavery (Carvalho, 2003; Espada Lima, 2005). Scientific evidence suggests the existence of slavery and the tenure of extra-familiar domestic workers already among pre-colonial indigenous societies. It is the employment of indigenous and especially afro-descendent domestic workers for white, European descendants however that greatly prevails in Brazil until today (ILO, 2010:p. 17-21; Melatti, 2007:p. 111-112). In his research about the collective political organizing of domestic

workers (2007), Bernardino Costa suggests that the Brazilian national myth as a society with a so called *democracia racial* [racial democracy] through migration processes and that of the good master are important symbolic factors in the legitimization of a historical persistence of serfdom. Frequent references to aspects of Brazilian slavery that was abolished only in the end of the 19th century in current media reporting on domestic workers, such as the *Casa Grande e Senzala*³ or *Mucama*⁴ concepts allow for similar conclusions concerning historical continuities (CartaCapital, 2013; O Globo, 2013; Pragmatismo Politico, 2014; RBA, 2015).

According to the International Labor Organization (ILO, 2013), Brazil is the country with the largest labor force occupied in the domestic sector. Due to a high degree of informality, the estimated number of people employed as domestic workers ranges from 6.5 (ILO, 2013) to 7.2 million (Portal Brasil, 2015) in 2013. The Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics includes both in-stay and ambulant domestic workers whose task extent from cleaning, cooking, washing to taking care of the children as well as private attendants, guards and janitors in their definition of the domestic work category (Lima, 2014). In 2012, 92.76% of these domestic workers were women, constituting 17% of the all women inserted in the Brazilian labor market (Lima, 2014). In 2012, 51% of these workers were black women who are furthermore often first or second generation migrants from the economic peripheries of north-eastern Brazil.

Recent changes in education and labor market policies during the legislative periods of the Worker's party (PT) from 2003 to 2016 resulted in a significant decrease of younger women within this work category, especially in urban regions. Further the number of *diaristas*, domestic workers who are working outside their home residence for various employers on a daily and hourly basis, increased simultaneously as the amount of in-stay domestic workers decreased (Sistema PED, 2011). The arguably greatest change however is the working rights formalization and adjustment process within the aforementioned constitutional amendment 72. This new law widened the labor rights of domestic workers significantly to a regulation of maximum 8

³ Refers to both, Gilberto Freyre's most famous work [The Master and the Slaves] on the formation of the Brazilian society and the actual *Casa Grande* [Big House] the slave owner's mansion and the *Senzala* [slave housing division] where the slaves and later its descendents lived. It is commonly understood as a symbol for a positively connoted 'miscegenation' process but also refers to economic inequality and racial injustice in Brazil.

⁴ The black female caregiver and domestic worker who was also used as a sexual servant by the plantation owner.

working hours per day and 44 per week, additional salary during night shifts, the right to a minimum wage, child care and preschool assistance, labor insurance and unemployment benefits as well as reimbursement in case of unjust dismissal (Federação dos Trabalhadores e Empregadas Domésticas do Estado de São Paulo, 2012). It sparked a vibrant and controversial public discourse, precisely because of its rupture with historical continuities of exploitation. Even though it unquestionably improved the working conditions for a great number of domestic workers, Brazilian feminist scholars such as Lima (2014) argue that far from being the promised *avanço civilizatório* [civilizing advance] (Barelli in Tuon, 2013) professional domestic work continues in its majority to be lowly remunerated and socially devalued.

On the background of the above mentioned increase of rights, the subsequent increase of domestic service costs and of the amount of women that work outside the home and on a daily and hourly basis only; the Brazilian National Immigration Council (CNIg) decided on new regulations that aimed to simplify the employment of foreign workers by enterprises located in Brazil. These *Resoluções Normativas n° 103 e 104* amongst others legally enabled natural persons to hire workers from abroad (ABRH Brasil, 2013). As mentioned before, the employment of foreign labor has foremost been located in the domestic sector with the majority of workers originating from Southeast Asia and especially the Philippines (Campos Mello, 2015a). According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2015) there were 426 Filipino migrants in Brazil in 2015. Information by the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (2014) that includes besides the permanent migrants estimations for temporary and irregular migrants points however to a total number of 805 Filipinos already by the end of 2013. A few aspects regarding this data have to be taken into consideration. Besides this overall estimation of Filipino nationals in Brazil, no reliable data has been published regarding the overall numbers as well as in regard to work category. The field data, that will be analysed in more scrutiny later on suggests however, that the arrival of Filipino domestic workers started only in 2011, whereas around 200 Filipino nationals employed in the oil sector, within telecommunications, Catholic missionary institutions and spouses to Brazilian-Japanese nationals were present even before. According to field data, the share of domestic workers likely increased after the Normative

Resolutions No. 103 and 104, most probably together with the share of so called irregular migrants.

Legislation for transnational migrants without citizenship status of Mercosur⁵ or the Union of South American Nations⁶ (USAN) membership countries is due to policy contradictions following the end of the military dictatorship in the mid 1980's double edged. Brazil is comparatively generous insofar it grants universal access to basic education and health. It allocates the same working rights and legal protections to registered non-national workers and migrants in irregular situations have the possibility to apply for support in hindsight and are exempted from legal persecution in relation to their prior illegalized residential status (Ciuffoletti & Dias Vieira, 2013:p. 507-510; Library of Congress, 2015). Yet, there are several restrictions and shortcomings. Immigrants are restricted in their exertion of civil rights such as the prohibition of organizing politically or the participation in labor unions (Ciuffoletti & Dias Vieira, 2013:p. 507-510, The Economist, 2015). In practice, the rates of inspection of regulation compliance are even among regular migrant workers low and amongst others therefore often surpassed. Significant bureaucratic barriers exist in the process of documentation and formalization with municipal and state authorities. As a country with previously negative migration rates, the public infrastructure for the integration of migrant workers is insufficiently developed, even to the extent that a separate state ministry for migration matters is still nonexistent. Due to the shortcomings in public service provision, migrants are often socially excluded and expected to rely on informal social networks to organize themselves in numerous ways (Granja, 2015).

Lastly, Filipino and women's transnational migrations are briefly outlined to display the case's interweavings in both national and global processes. The case of Filipina workers in Brazil is remarkable in so far as it represents a first accumulated presence of Filipino workers in Latin America and an expansion, following South East Asia and the Middle East, of Filipino South to

⁵ Mercosur is a regional economic and political association that was founded with the aims of promoting the free movement of goods, currencies and persons. Membership countries are Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay and Venezuela.

⁶ USAN is an intergovernmental association in which most South American countries are included. It works amongst others towards a defense, infrastructure and development cooperation and promotes the free movement of people.

South migration. Nevertheless, one might argue that it is merely one further extension of an aggressive labor export strategy that was introduced already in the 1970's as a reaction to unemployment and severe indebtedness amongst others caused by the structural adjustment programs of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (Rodriguez, 2002). It is used as a central development strategy. Around 2.3 million land based Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) sent personal remittances equal to 10% of the national Gross Domestic Product in 2014 (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2016; World Bank, 2016). Out of the total amount of these OFWs that are celebrated as the *new national heroes*, 51.1% are women and every third person is categorized as a household worker (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2016; Rodriguez, 2002:p. 341).

Further, this case requires to be situated within the global emergence of the female, transnational domestic worker in a process of an increased feminization of migration and the commodification of care on the background of a neoliberal globalisation project. Farris establishes the link between the neoliberal turn in the mid-1970s and these migrant women workers who “began entering the scene of international migration exactly in those years, initially as spouses or family members who joined those who settled in European countries, and, from the 1980s onward, increasingly as independent economic migrants” (2013, para. 5). The economic restructuring in many western countries during this period included privatizations and economic deregulations within a broader framework that ultimately dismantled the welfare state. This was a process in which previously collective responsibility via the state, such as care work was transferred to the individual and commodified as a service to be bought on the free market. These processes coincided with broader societal changes such as “the erosion of the standard employment relationship, the male-breadwinner and female housewife gender contract, the vertically integrated firm and the hegemony of the nation state” (Fudge, 2013, p.8) that in addition to shifting demographics created the necessity for low-paid migrant reproductive workers (Farris, 2013; Ungerson, 1997). According to data of the International Labor Organization (ILO, 2015), 53 million people are employed as domestic workers worldwide. 83% of this total amount are women and nearly one fifth are transnational migrants. Despite the formation of local, national and even international unions and labor organizations and late efforts in the institutionalized

sphere of global politics such as the ILO convention No. 189 on decent work (2011), professional domestic workers and especially migrant domestic workers are oftentimes still “confronted with additional vulnerabilities, leading to violations of their human and labor rights” (ILO, 2015b, para. 3).

III. Previous Research

This section aims to review existing research to identify common, different and conflicting themes in related studies, to determine the research frontier and to spot gaps and inconsistencies in previous works. Existing research on the same case, on similar cases in the Brazilian context as well as studies with a comparable theoretical approach will be revised.

To the author’s knowledge no academic research has been published, neither in the Portuguese nor the English speaking scholarly literature concerning the specific case of Filipina domestic workers in Brazil at this point of time. The literature review regarding the same case therefore focuses on accounts and reviews of the phenomenon in the only source publicly available: two articles published in *Folha de São Paulo*, one of Brazil’s biggest newspaper’s internet platform and its reviews online. In May 2015, international affairs journalist Patrícia Campos Mello wrote two articles under the name of “Empresa ‘importa’ babás e domésticas das Filipinas para o Brasil” [Company ‘imports’ nannies and domestic workers from the Philippines to Brazil] and “Filipinas são o maior país exportador de mão de obra no mundo” [The Philippines are the biggest export country of labor power in the world]. She highlights the role of commercial domestic work agencies based in Singapore and its associated corporations in Brazil in both, selecting the domestic workers and organizing the bureaucratic process with the Brazilian Ministry of Labor and Employment in return for financial remuneration by the employer and the domestic worker. The employer is responsible for the compliance of the working conditions in regard to national legislation, the *PEC das Domésticas*. As part of the articles, Campos Mello interviews a domestic worker and her employer who are in the majority of cases expatriates or Brazilians who have lived abroad themselves. The author succeeds in presenting a first concise overview of the phenomenon that includes many important key factors while not neglecting the individuals behind these processes through many direct quotations and space for both the

employer and the domestic workers to express their opinion on the matter. However, even in its briefness the text contains several weaknesses. Campos Mello presents a triple win scenario for supposedly equal beneficiaries - the agency, the employer and the domestic worker. The analysis consequently conceals existing hierarchies, especially between the latter actors. By highlighting the precariousness of the domestic worker's previous living conditions in relation to the comparatively high salary in Brazil, Campos Mello reinforces the impression of a 'good deal' for which the domestic worker can be thankful and which the employer can record as a somewhat charitable act (Campos Mello, 2015a, para. 14). The author further does not critically assess under which circumstances the domestic worker gains her living. The employer states that she was incredible, she went shopping, cleaned, cooked and drove. She even washed the car! [...] In Brazil, nanny is only nanny, the chef only cooks and the maid only cleans (Campos Mello, 2015a para. 15). By leaving such statements uncommented, she fails to acknowledge the precarity following from the work's flexibility. Lastly, the article's case lacks representativity which will be discussed in greater detail in the analysis section. The publication triggered considerable resonance online, especially in progressive social media platforms which were mostly very critical towards it. Blog entries like the widely read online feminist media collective *Blogueiras Feministas* [Feminist Bloggers] highlights the continued presence of the Brazilian *Casa Grande e Senzala* which is extended on to the back of the Filipina migrant domestic worker (Blogueiras Feministas, 2015). Although the article received significant attention within certain sections of the progressive Brazilian blog sphere, it did so only for a short time and without developing into a greater societal discussion on migrant domestic workers.

Followingly, studies of similar cases in the same context will be reviewed. Extensive academic production exists regarding domestic work in Brazil. Common themes are domestic work and its historic roots and continuities (Carvalho, 2003; Hunold Lara, 1998), domestic work in regard to normative oppressions and capitalist exploitation (Castro, 1993; Rosa da Silva, 2006; Soares Fonseca, 2015), labor organization (Anderfuhren, 2013: p. 17-32 in Martens & Mitter, 1994; Costa, 2007; Pedro 2009) as well as recent studies in regard to national and international social and labor policy (Gomes & Baviera Puig, 2013; Pinheiro, Gonzalez & Fontoura, 2012). The object of study are Brazilian citizen domestic workers or interestingly, Brazilian nationals who

themselves migrated to the Global North as well as internal rural to urban migrants from the north-eastern economic peripheries of Brazil (Carpenedo and Caetano Nardi, 2013; Piscitelli, 2008). Although they might serve as interesting samples for comparison, their theoretical approaches are too distant and the comparative scope too wide to be reviewed in closer detail within this thesis framework. The academic literature on specifically transnational migrant domestic workers in Brazil is at this point limited to the work of Delia Dutra. She similarly investigates a group of migrant women of the same nationality in a specific Brazilian urban setting: Peruvian domestic workers in Brasília. In her sociology dissertation *Mulheres, migrantes, trabalhadoras: a segregação no mercado de trabalho* [Women, migrants, workers: The segregation in the labor market] (2012), Dutra explores the production of the psycho-physical space in the city. Situated in the realm of social psychology, the author addresses the workers' reflections on their social integration in the city, their identity as migrant workers as well as their relation to past, present and future life and working trajectories. With reference to sociological classics, she creates a holistic portrayal of the experiences of ten migrant domestic workers that is situated within and influenced by particular historical and urban characteristics (Dutra, 2012, viii). Especially her ethnographic fieldwork proves peculiarly sensitive; allowing to capture the ambiguities of these women's lives; of sometimes tragic yet struggling existences: Women survivors, who beyond taking care, *live to serve*, who *fight* to one day be able to *live* their own histories, no more those of the others (p.216). The author succeeds in going beyond the common themes related to domestic work and to avoid the often obsolete dichotomies following from it. Nevertheless, her text holds several blind spots. Although she exceptionally well grasps how the spatial specificity of Brasilia effects and interacts with the lives of these domestic workers, her material analysis remains other than in the immediate micro-sphere absent. She fails to acknowledge the women's insertion in economic macro structures of capitalist societies that significantly shape and are shaped by their experiences and subjectivities beyond the specificity of the individual and the place.

“The focus in the gender and migration literature has moved from the recovery of women's experiences, to the mainstreaming of gender within migration studies, to intersectionality” (Herrera, 2013, p. 471). The latest research frontier, the intersectional feminist approach has

received various criticisms from social reproduction scholars who claim to have developed a framework that goes beyond intersectionality (Ferguson and McNally, 2015, para.1). Whereas the specific points of critique will be analysed more closely in the theory section, this last part of the previous research section aims to briefly review a case study of domestic workers that is both theoretically close to the author's study and that starts off with the intersectional feminist approach to subsequently develop it further. Case studies of migrant domestic workers with a social reproduction approach have been exclusively situated in Europe and Northern America; Gioconda Herrera's study *States, work and social reproduction through the lense of migrant experience Ecuadorian domestic workers in Madrid* published in *Beyond States and Markets: The Challenges of Social Reproduction* (Bakker and Silvey, 2008, p.93 - 105) is one example. Herrera examines how the structural processes of care crises in both Ecuador and Spain affect these domestic workers in their everyday life. She succeeds exceptionally well in understanding how the migrants work experiences are shaped and directly affected by macro structures of political and economic state processes and how in times of crisis, the domestic workers become the bearers of a highly gendered and racialized social reproduction regime of crisis. She does so without falling in the pit of polemics or overgeneralization, instead putting forward a neutral and differentiated analysis that acknowledges the differences between the workers and ambiguities in their experiences. As she investigates migrants in so called regular situations only, she however tends to overestimate the influence sphere of the state and fails to sufficiently acknowledge the zones of autonomy these migrants construct.

IV. Theoretical Framework

In this section, the theoretical underpinnings of the research are presented. First, the overarching theoretical framework social reproduction feminism is outlined and justified, followed by the introduction of the specific concepts used; Graeber's caring curse (2014) and Farris' analysis of migrant women in regard to the surplus population and the reproduction of the citizenship population (2013). This is followed by recent critiques of social reproduction feminism in relation to the categories of race and gender and the presentation of concepts applied in the study

in regard to the latter; Hochschild's concept of the global care chain (2000) and Andersson's thoughts on racist stereotypes in the creation of the domestic worker (2000).

The theoretical terrain in the sociology of work from a gendered perspective and more concretely women's integration in the labor market in industrial and post-industrial societies has been predominantly inspired by feminist scholars and theory. Especially second wave feminists appropriated the topic of work. Betty Friedan, whose bestselling book *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) is said to have sparked a renewed feminist movement in the United States in the early 1960's is representative for a strong feminist fraction who advocated women to leave the home for a wage labor position outside the private sphere. This position has attracted amongst others criticism from Marxist feminists:

“[...] it reflected the devaluation of reproductive labor. Its influence had a pernicious impact for those women who went out to work to perform care and other domestic occupations because it dismissed the worth of the housewife's labors at precisely the moment when service industries began their economic ascent and so fed into the undervaluing of the women who dared to call themselves “Household Technicians” rather than domestic servants, who rejected the designation, “the help.” (Boris, 2015, para. 8)

It is not until a decade later, in the 1970's that the previously neglected and invisibilized topic of work in the private sphere was brought to the theoretical forefront, both as a critique to the aforementioned strand of feminism and as a renewal and incorporation of feminist thought into Marxist theories of work and accumulation (Vogel, 1983). The central figures in the establishment of coherent theories on the insertion of unpaid reproductive labor within capitalist relations mostly originated from an Italian theoretical tradition that would later be referred to as autonomous marxism. The arguably most influential social reproduction authors are Silvia Federici who, building on the work of Leopoldina Fortunati discusses the fundamental importance of the expropriation of women's unpaid reproductive work as a central factor in constant primitive accumulation for capitalism's survival (2004) as well as Mariarosa Dalla Costa and Selma James who sparked the domestic labor debate with their work *The Power of women and the subversion of the community* (1973), arguing that women's unpaid work is not only reproducing the immediate private sphere but is fundamental for the functioning of capital.

The concept of social reproduction which was first introduced by Karl Marx in *Capital, Volume II: The Process of Circulation of Capital* (1885, part 3) is however even in the strand of social reproduction feminism contested and its meaning and usage not agreed upon. Whereas the term social reproduction in itself broadly hints to the act of ensuring the continuation of specific things and processes within a collective coexistence, there has been significant disagreement of what these things and processes are and in which settings and within which boundaries they take place. The term started to flourish during the above mentioned domestic labor debate in the early 1970s and in the beginning referred to the process and function of the immediate work in the so called private sphere:

“[...] activities that tend to the physical, intellectual, affective, and other emotional needs of partners, children, and elderly, ill, or disabled people. It includes tasks for daily life, including household maintenance (cooking, cleaning, washing, even shopping) and personal existence (bathing, feeding, turning over, ambulation). Sex-affective production can be part of care.”(Boris, 2015).

Besides this immediate function of social reproduction, it's impact is as argued above broader, fulfilling further functions in the societal macro sphere. In regard to the empirical data, this study will focus on domestic workers as reproducers of the upper class. In this research, class is defined in an unorthodox marxist yet materialist fashion as one's position regarding the insertion in capitalist relations. In these, the working class although unstable and internally stratified is forced to sell their labor power to economically sustain themselves, whereas others, the upper class are relying on the work of the working classes and are able to accumulate capital without having to perform the same work effort.

Two specific concepts will be reviewed regarding the reproduction of class. Firstly, David Graeber's (2014) popularized notion on the caring curse of the working class. The anthropological researcher argues that the lines of caretaking do not only proceed along the spheres of gender but predominantly along class. Referring to psychological studies on empathic accuracy in relation to class positioning (Kraus, Cote & Keltner, 2010) Graeber suggests that the working classes have a greater capacity to empathize with others and especially with the bourgeoisie that is not met with reciprocal care. This caring curse of the working class is

however, expressed as solidarity, simultaneously also its strongest trait. Due to limitations like the absence of a materialist analysis as well as blindness regarding the weight of the gendered and racialized nature of care regimes together with an overall low theory development, Graeber's concept will foremostly serve as a reference regarding the centrality of class in understanding care regimes. Secondly, Sara Farris' concept of women migrants not being exposed to the same risk of belonging to the surplus population as male migrant workers are, as well as their function as citizenship reproducers developed in her work *Neoliberalism, Migrant Women, and the Commodification of Care* (2013) is applied. She argues that this exception can be explained by their specific insertion in the labor market that requires flexible and low cost reproductive workers, professions that are indispensable yet certainly under these conditions not pursued by the citizen population. Concerning their function in the nation state context, Farris argues that these female migrant workers employed by citizens in reproductive activities, like cleaning, cooking, emotional or sexual caretaking fulfill the function of reproducers of the citizenship population. For the receiving state, the social reproduction by migrants comes at low cost due to the low public provision expense for non-citizens and specifically illegalized migrants and secondly due to migrant women's role as bearers of care in times of crisis and state austerity measures.

In Rada Katsarovas essay *Repression and Resistance on the Terrain of Social Reproduction: Historical Trajectories, Contemporary Openings* (2015) she states that "Marxist-feminist uses of social reproduction in the 1970 became a useful feminist lens for showing how patriarchal social organization was a structural element in capitalist exploitation [...]" (para.11). It's usefulness has not decreased since, especially so in regard to the last research frontier identified by Herrera (2013): intersectional feminism, which has been criticized by social reproduction scholars as Ferguson and McNally (2015, para 3f.) specifically in regard to:

"[...]intersectionality feminism's inadequate theorization of the social totality, the overall processes or dynamic in and through which discrete social relations intersect. This dynamic is either not theorized at all or is simply assumed to be neutral, void of power relations itself. And this means, of course, that despite claiming distinct oppressions are co-constitutive, they are in fact treated as ontologically distinct systems, crisscrossing or inter-meshing in space. The social

reproduction approach, on the other hand, posits a *capitalist* totality. A capitalist social whole is defined, in the first instance, by the separation of workers (by which we mean all people who work to reproduce themselves and their world, the social reproducers in other words) from the means of their subsistence (or social reproduction). This is a bare fact of existence under capitalism, and as such, it broadly shapes what is possible – within the labor/capital relation, to be sure, but also within our gendered, racialized, heterosexualized, etc. relations beyond the workplace.”

Nevertheless, especially early social reproduction approaches had several limitations in regard to the conceptualization of gender. It was not until later that Foucauldian influences highlighted the importance of technology in the regulation of gendered and sexualized subjects and the primacy of the body in relation to the performance of work (in Wolkowitz, 2006) as well as post-structural contributions in gender studies, particularly Judith Butler (1999) whose understanding of gender as a social construct has been adopted in this study. In regard to the gendered nature of social reproduction Arlie Hochschild's concept of global care chains, developed in her work *Global Care Chains and Emotional Surplus Value* (2000, in Giddens and Hutton, p. 130 - 146) is applied in this study. It builds upon the existence of socio economic structures that encourage women to pursue waged reproductive labor in capitalist centers outside of their familiar social and geographical setting in order to economically sustain themselves and their families. These women, who often happen to be mothers are further due to their employment abroad themselves in need of reproductive workers. Due to often poorly developed public care systems and patriarchal structures this work is in return for a small salary or sometimes even no financial reimbursement passed on to a female family member. The downward transmission of these reproductive responsibilities to women in the economic peripheries is referred to as a feminized global care chain.

In regard to race, defined as a socially constructed categorization of people based on ethnicity, second wave marxist feminists received multiple critiques and subsequently adjusted and expanded their theoretical framework in response. Especially Selma James' discourse of international sisterhood (2012) was considered eurocentric and based on evolutionary assumptions by feminists like Hazel Carby and Chandra Talpade Mohanty (in Katsovara, 2015, para. 19). They criticized amongst others that patriarchy was displayed as an universal, a-historic

system which did not consider the specificities of “[...] hierarchical value-regimes of labor, which mobilized racial, gender, and ethnic differences, as well as immigration status, to subordinate, dehumanize, and devalue black, brown, and immigrant bodies and lives” (Katsovara, para.17). For a closer analysis, Bridget Andersson’s thought (2000, p.2) on racist stereotypes and hierarchies used for the construction of certain women as more suitable for reproductive labor than others is reviewed in the analysis section.

V. Method and Data

The following segment aims to present an overview of the research design, its underlying principles and the methods used for data collection and analysis. This part is concluded by the study's limitations and ethical considerations.

The study departs from the author’s materialist ontological understanding, believing that matter and its conditions are shaping consciousness and ideas rather than vice versa. In relation to how these material conditions can be known, critical realism and feminist standpoint theory are adopted as epistemological frameworks. Critical realism is an additional epistemological strand besides positivist/empiricist as well as post-structural/relativist approaches that was, as a philosophy of social sciences most prominently developed by Roy Bhaskar. It proposes the idea of a reality autonomous of human consciousness, the so called intransitive reality and science and knowledge on the other hand, that as social products, can enable but may not necessarily allow the subject to understand the actual social reality (in Danermark, 2002, pp. 119). Standpoint theory, prominently developed by feminist scholars such as Dorothy Smith (1990) together with Donna Haraway’s concept of situated knowledges (1988) is a counter proposition to seemingly universal androcentric epistemological models. This framework acknowledges that a person’s understanding of reality in this case the researcher’s and study participants’ understandings differ due to and is strongly conditioned by one’s social standpoint or positioning, acknowledging various systems of social oppressions in relation to knowledge creation and it’s perception, without however falling into the postmodern relativist approach.

The research was initially conceptualized as a desk study. After an initial literature review however that pointed to a quantitatively and qualitatively unsatisfying output of secondary data

on the specific case, the researcher decided that an empirical primary data collection process would be necessary in order to pursue an accountable research. Therefore, the study was widened to an ethnographic research design that included primary data collection in the field. It employs foremost qualitative research methods to understand the ‘why and how’ of complex social structures and interactions as those experienced by the Filipina domestic workers in Brazil.

The data collection process was thus expanded to the field work that took place within a two week long period in the spring of 2016 in the metropolitan area of São Paulo, the city in which most Filipina domestic workers are employed. In consideration of a limited time and financial scope as well as in regard to ethical concerns that are stated below, the researcher decided to focus on the domestic workers as research participants. They were selected according to convenience and snowball sampling (Bryman, 2012, pp. 201) These methods were strategically chosen considering once more the restricted timeframe as well as initially low levels of responsiveness on the side of the domestic workers and an absence of a tight and decisive contact network in the field area. After initial difficulties in reaching out to the envisioned participants due to informal contact channels, the informants tight work schedule and first hesitations, a promising gatekeeper was identified. This gatekeeper, a Filipino English teacher whom I could convince that the study was legitimate and reliable followingly connected me to two domestic workers, who accepted my request to accompany their religious gathering in the outskirts of São Paulo, as a first site of contact with the workers. Overall, two semi-structured group interviews together with participant observations as well as three in depth individual life history interviews were conducted. The group interviews were conducted the same day. The first, after the religious gathering with a group of 8 women that lasted little less than one hour and the second in the collective self-organized living and organizing space of the social *Pinoy Action group**⁷ with a flux of around 15 to 20 women constituting a process of 4 hours. During the second group session, the researcher decided to allow space for more fluid discussions in which the workers had the opportunity to stir the conversation and have a say concerning the direction it would take, indicating the topics that were central in their regular discourses. In this instance the verges between focus group interviews and participant observation were intentionally blurred. This also

⁷ The star indicates that the names have been changed in order to guarantee the participants anonymity

allowed for parallel side discussions, for example if one of the participants was particularly interested in a certain topic or if her experience significantly diverged from the others. The individual in-depth interviews were conducted with Angela*, a Filipina domestic worker and founder of the self-organized *Pinoy Action Group**, as well as with Michelle* and Erica*, two female Filipino English teachers who migrated to Brazil primarily due to family reunion with their Japanese Brazilian husbands. The interviews were conducted in English, however if necessary with short Tagalog interventions in case of misunderstandings and at times Portuguese wordings concerning the specific Brazilian context. Following this fieldtrip, a second literature review was conducted, including the new themes that came up during the empirical study, specifically the concept of class and the workers insertion in it. In the process of data analysis, recurrent, connected and conflicting themes were identified through recapitulated processes of the application of open and selective coding techniques of the notes taken immediately in the field situations, the ones taken the evening after as well as on the brief results from the first and second literature review.

The study is limited by the choice of research type, a qualitative study that by nature lacks external validity. Moreover, the representativity of the sample bears restrictions due to the choice of limiting yet strategically necessary research methods such as snowball sampling that selects study participants according to their contact networks likely creating a low reachout return to those outside of it or involved in other networks. It is therefore possible that other results might have emerged if more migrants outside these social circles, specifically migrants in so called regular situations would have participated in the study. The timeframe, intrinsically connected to the financial sources available and the undergraduate framework is possibly the greatest limiting factor of this study as it directly affects the size of the sample and the research environment. Nevertheless, rather than trying to identify universal patterns or to guarantee a socially impossible reproducibility, the study aims to cautiously explore a previously unstudied social terrain and to hint to a possible way of understanding it.

Lastly, ethical consideration are outlined. The author and all of the research participants identify as women, a factor that facilitated the contact establishment and the ability to relate to and identify with each other more easily. Nevertheless, differences regarding further aspects

especially in relation to power are considerably high. The researcher is an even though young and little affluent, white university student from the Global North. Notwithstanding the initial insecurity of being in a new research site, the author was able to confidently explore the environment; speaking fluently English and Portuguese and moving without hesitations regarding residents permits or similar restrictions by the Brazilian state. Many of the study participants on the other hand even though often around the same age are already mothers and comparatively low paid workers, albeit most have acquired similar academic degrees. Their bodies are being racialized and their existence illegalized by the Brazilian state which in addition to their material circumstances arguably reduces their personal room for maneuver. Being aware of the workers' vulnerability, several measures were taken to accommodate their hesitations and concerns. Firstly, the research was carried out anonymously: specific places, names or trajectories were either changed or omitted. Concerning the frequent absence of legal residence permits and the consequential sensitivity of their statements, the author communicated clearly that neither the employer nor state authorities would be notified or involved in any kind as part of this study. During the actual fieldwork, the women were briefed on their rights concerning their participation within a framework of informed consent and the study was explained in detail beforehand. Although this research close to inevitable remains an unequal exchange, the researcher tried to counteract these tendencies by creating spaces in which the participants could find out more about the researcher's work and private life as well, together with spaces in which the workers could take ownership of the conversations. Lastly, once finished the study will be sent to the participants and if desired, discussed collectively.

VI. Analysis

The aim of the analysis section is to present the collected data and discuss the answers guided by the research questions in relation to the aforementioned theoretical framework and previous studies. Consequently it is divided in two parts: Life and Working Conditions followed by the second analysis section Insertion and Function in Class Relations and its Gendered and Racialized Nature.

A. Life and Working Conditions

The first research question addresses the relevant life and working conditions of this specific group of migrant workers in São Paulo. Already quite early in the fieldwork process the researcher detected various significant deviations from the information obtained in the initial literature review. In comparison to these, the data collected in the field will be descriptively outlined in the following paragraph.

Out of the 25 women interviewed, 24 grew up in the Philippines in mostly rural or semi-urban areas in different parts of the country. One woman is originally from Singapore. The age range of the research participants spans from 22 to 41 years with most workers in their late twenties during the time of the field work. 18 migrants have children, all of which live in the Philippines. Even though most of these mothers were previously married, many of them are no longer in a relationship not to mention in contact with the biological father of their children. Their offspring lives, according to their accounts frequently with their own mothers, sisters or female in-laws.

The majority of women completed higher education outside their current profession. Although there are some exceptions like studies in psychology or international relations, many pursued administrative or management apprenticeships or university studies at the undergraduate level. Eight of the research participants reported that they have been working in these professions previously which were mostly located in the metropolitan region of Manila, however both the financial remuneration and in accordance the urban accommodation were in poor conditions.

Even though there is an increasing number of very recent Filipina migrants who have worked in Singapore and whose migratory process and employment was arranged by a Singapore based agency, 18 out of the 25 women interviewed were neither employed in the city-state before nor were they hired through an external agency as means of finding employment. Instead, this group of migrants had worked for families in the Middle East, especially in Lebanon and Syria or in the Chinese cities of Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong previously. For them, the employment in São Paulo is the result of rather informal arrangements in which the domestic worker either followed the employer, was recommended to the employer's family members already present in

Brazil or decided to migrate due to an emerging informal professional network of Filipino domestic workers in São Paulo.

Interestingly, besides six workers, everyone is employed in the homes of persons with migratory background themselves. Differing from the information in Campos Mello's article (2015a) however these are not former expatriates with Brazilian citizenship, but non-citizens belonging to a diasporic community in Brazil themselves; historically rooted and affluent such as the Lebanese and Syrian populace or migrants who form part of an emergent Chinese business community. As described in the article in the *Folha de São Paulo*, the employer is in the majority of cases a woman.

In relation to the working conditions, one can find once more significant divergence from Campos Mello's (2015a) description. With the exception of four workers, all of these women's working conditions do not or only partly comply with national legislation; especially so in relation to working hours, salary and working contract. 18 women are working seven days a week with only a couple of hours of free time on Sundays. Whereas most are able to have time off during the evenings, nine of the migrants literally work 'around the clock' except for when they are sleeping.

Their monthly salary varies immensely from 1200 to 3000 Reais (around 350 to 870 US Dollars, 10.09.2016) which is yet in any case more than the minimum wage of 1000 Reais in the federal state of São Paulo (Governo do Estado São Paulo, 2016). It has to be taken into consideration however that even though their monthly salary is higher, their hourly wage is in some cases likely lower than the one of their Brazilian counterparts whose working conditions comply with current labor standards, especially so in regard to overtime work as well as in regard to savings for both remittances and the compensation for employer or public based social security provision.

The overwhelming majority states that they have negotiated a formal working contract with the employer. Due to the short interview time it has however remained unclear what agreements these entailed in each of the specific cases and if they followed Filipino, Brazilian, if any working regulations. Nevertheless, the likelihood of disparities among the different working contracts is high considering the vast differences in working conditions. Yet, it has to be taken

into account that a working contract might not always represent the actual working reality. Informal or oral agreements might outweigh the written contract in certain situations or the work tasks might not always be completely formulated yet nevertheless expected.

Due to the lack of knowledge concerning national labour rights in combination with few contacts outside their workplace and poor language skills, working rights violations are even by so called regular migrants rarely reported to the local authorities. The research participants were familiar with one case in which a Filipino domestic workers sued her employer; a case that was however apparently very difficult for the worker to pursue due to practical matters such as the collision of working hours and language difficulties.

The study could not identify an outstanding pattern regarding the migrants' social protection schemes and specifically regarding pensions, unemployment benefits and health care insurance. Most women state that their insurance is partly reliant on the Filipino state as well as on their own savings. Eight express that they are insured through the Brazilian social security system and five women receive additional payments from their employers. These eight women with Brazilian social security access whose residency and working status is in accordance with national migration legislation in Brazil are followingly, as Campos Mello correctly states (2015a) entitled to the same working rights as Brazilian national workers. Although not directly articulated, two women indicate that it is common that instead of saving for pensions, the money is directly sent back to the family which is then supposed to take care of the domestic worker once in old age.

The topic of residency and work permits has understandably been sensitive in the interview sessions and not all women wanted to respond on the point. Only later, during the individual in-depth interview, Angela* states that around two thirds of the women live and work in so called irregular situations and have entered Brazil with a tourist instead of working visa.

B. Insertion and Function in Class Relations and its Gendered and Racialized Nature.

The case of these Filipino migrants suggests according to Graeber's confined concept on the reproduction of the upperclass that the function of these women's labor expands beyond the mere reproduction of the home. It is not anyone's or their own bodies and private sphere these women

are additionally reproducing, but that of the employer who can afford to outsource these operations. This outsourcing is not based on an equal exchange. Monetarily, with a salary ranging from 1200 to 3000 Reais the workers are very likely not remunerated the value they produce that corresponds to the possibility for the employer to produce value in the time set free of being exempted to pursue unwaged reproductive work.

It is interesting that this phenomenon emerges in times of Brazilian national domestic workers organizing and of success in the improvement of their working rights. As domestic services by Brazilian workers in regular situations have become more costly and especially more restricted, the demand for low wage and flexible live-in workers continues. Kely, the employer interviewed by Campos Mello (2015a) confirms this assumption. In regard to Brazilian domestic workers, she states that she employed [...] more than ten nannies in here none of which worked out because they were in a bad mood (Campos Mello, 2015a, para. 11) whereas the migrant domestic worker [...] was incredible, she went shopping, cleaned, cooked and drove. She even washed the car! [...] In Brazil, nanny is only nanny, the chef only cooks and the maid only cleans (Campos Mello, 2015a, para.15). Farris' (2013) analysis of female migrant domestic workers as indispensable in performing straining and low waged, yet demanded work not any longer carried out by citizens is hence very relevant in this context.

Even though Farris (2013) point regarding domestic workers in relation to the surplus population is fruitful in the Brazilian case, her analysis on transnational female workers as reproducers of the citizen population bears limited applicability in this context. This argument revolves around two lines of thought. First, rather than reproducing the general citizenship population, one could argue that it is only a certain kind of citizenship population that these migrants are reproducing. Even though this citizens population might be equal in legal terms, they are not so materially. It is hence inadequate to conceptualize this citizen population as a homogenous unit. In practice, it is only a certain segment of society, the upper class who dispose of the economic means that enables them to employ these domestic workers. It is in consequence thus not the citizen population that these workers reproduce on a daily basis but the upper class. Secondly, this case shows that this upper class does not necessarily belong to the citizen population. In fact 19 out of 25 employers of the study's participants were non-citizens and migrants themselves. Both, the

worker and the employer can be considered female labor migrants, even with similar South to South migration trajectories. They are so, however due to their integration in capitalist relations under very different material conditions. Hence, class is central in understanding the experiences of these transnational migrants.

The social reproduction approach is thus a fruitful tool of analysis in so far as it places the migration case, unlike mere liberal intersectional approaches within a specific historical setting and a capitalist totality. Nevertheless, this approach also has its limitations. Most social reproduction scholars conceptualize reproduction within a nation state framework, social reproduction in this case however arguably transcends it and takes place in spaces which the state has not significantly penetrated yet. Even though these migrants are as outlined above reproducing the upper classes, they are through remittances unquestionably simultaneously intergenerationally ‘reproducing downwards’ and are often themselves being reproduced by women further down the global care chain, such as female family members that take care of the domestic worker’s children in the economic periphery (Hochschild, 2000 in Giddens and Hutton, p. 130 - 146).

All of the research participants are self-identified women and according to these all of the Filipino domestic workers employed in Brazil are women. They are occupied in a profession that is historically, predominantly performed by women and that bears connotations strongly associated with femininity. Even the few female Filipina non-domestic migrant workers in São Paulo are in professions with similar characteristics; working in a beauty saloon or as a language teacher which are precisely because of their historical femininity nexus lowly numerated and devalued.

It is however not only decisive that these workers are women regarding their status as the ‘perfect fit as domestic servants’ (Campos Mello, 2015a) but also the fact that these workers are Asian and more specifically Filipina workers. In the in-depth interview with the key informant Angela*, she points to the particularly hard working nature of Filipina women when asked why it is mostly Filipina migrant domestic workers in Brazil. She continues to narrate the experience of working in a household with additional Brazilian domestic workers. Whereas to her it is self-evident to finish the chores even if the regular working hours have passed, she describes that

her Brazilian co-worker was constantly monitoring the time and occasionally even left before the working hours were formally completed. She clearly takes pride in being ‘a good worker’ and condemns the Brazilian colleague for her lack of professional motivation and for working less than expected. It could be argued that beyond the exploitation of her labor inherent in capitalist relations, she works more than what she is not even paid for based on an internalized discipline in relation to being a good woman and Filipina, thus an obedient worker. There is however considerable room for ambivalence since it is Angela* who negotiated the best working conditions and the best wage of all the 25 women interviewed.

Her reflection reveals patterns of an essentialized understanding of race and womanhood which is also used by the employer Kely that Mello Campos interviewed. She states that Liza (the domestic worker) is always in a good mood and that she even has to ask her to stop working; the Filipino people like to serve (2015a, para. 3). It is a seemingly harmless statement that was most probably brought forward without cruel intentions and might even be interpreted as a sort of compliment in which the will to servitude is considered an honorable trait. Moreover, it is an absolute statement about an apparently homogenous ethno-national group in which all members intrinsically enjoy to perform servant activities irrespective of time and space. The choice of the wording, “to serve” instead of for example the less charged term “to work”, whether consciously selected or not, is furthermore predicative. Such framing reveals a justification of hierarchies grounded in seemingly intrinsic racial characteristics. Such processes of generating an obedient yet flexible, gendered and racialized subject serve the purpose to praise the professional excellence while simultaneously legitimize the exploitation of these ‘exceptional domestic workers’.

VII. Conclusion

This qualitative case study aimed to investigate the case of Filipina domestic workers in São Paulo regarding two aspects: the conditions in which these women work and live as well as their insertion and function in class relations as part of a gendered and racialized work regime.

The most surprising finding concerning the first research question is the irregularity under which these women migrate and work, especially considering previous studies pointing to contrasting

results. As a majority lacks the adherence to or a formal working contract altogether, the research participants' working conditions do in most cases not comply to Brazilian work regulations. Unclear or informal indications regarding working hours together with the lack of a transparent tasks framing create corridors for exploitation. Yet, differences exist among these women's work conditions especially regarding social security schemes, the legal status as well as in regard to the free time and the salary, that is even though low throughout for some women twice as much as the wage of others.

In relation to research question two, interviews in the previous literature review and the data collected indicate that within its limitations David Graeber's (2014) caring curse concept bears truth in this specific case. It is not just any group but specific segments of the upperclass that can afford to hire domestic workers, which these women are reproducing. This study has furthermore shown that Sara Farris' hypothesis on migrant women (2013) is applicable in this context. These workers are, by being employed in often irregular, low wage yet demanded professions that are under these conditions increasingly less carried out by nationals exempted from being members of the national surplus population. Nevertheless, her analysis on female migrant workers as reproducers of the citizen population does not bear explanatory significance in this case. Rather than a seemingly homogenous citizen population, the workers are as mentioned above reproducing upper class residents in São Paulo. These are however in 19 of the 25 interviewed cases non-citizens with migratory backgrounds themselves. It is the Global South elites that the working class Global South women are reproducing. Class is thus central in understanding these women's migration and work trajectories. As many of the 25 research participants are young mothers as well as instay domestic workers, the possibility of taking care of their close social environment is very limited and thus as Hochschild suggest (2000) passed on to family members in a global, unpaid, feminized care chain. Lastly, the study indicates that these Filipinas are through highly gendered and racialized attributions constructed as both excellent yet easily exploitable domestic workers.

This has been a first explorative study. Further research is needed to substantiate these findings. Additional aspects departing from the domestic worker's agency for example resistances on an individual and collective level or in relation to performances of gender could serve as further

areas of research. Lastly, it would be interesting to investigate how the recent economic and political crisis in Brazil has affected the migrants in relation to a renewed increase in numbers of citizen domestic workers (Versiani, 2015) as well as to look at whether these migrants if / once established regularly in Brazil after some time would be replaced by yet another cheaper and more flexible migrant labor force, similar to the case of Brazilian domestic workers today.

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