

## WOMEN MIGRANTS: FOCUS ON DOMESTIC HELPERS :

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*The main bulk of rural-urban female migrants employed as domestic helpers migrated directly to the metropolis with no definite reason but "to see Manila." Most of them come from the barrios and never had an opportunity to move geographically. The paternalistic system is evident in the recruitment of domestics and in employer-helper relationships. Because of the discouraging features of domestic service (low prestige, low salary, transitory nature, and non-contractual relationship), it probably will gradually disappear as an occupation.*

### *Background of the Study*

The exploding population of cities in developing countries is largely accounted for by natural increase and rural-urban migration. Though the contribution of the latter is minimal compared to the former, there is a growing interest in studying the nature, characteristics, and role of migration in urbanization. Likewise, studies on migrant adaptations in the city have been conducted (Laquian, 1971; Hollnsteiner, 1973; Lopez and Hollnsteiner, 1976).

Migration in developing countries, particularly rural-urban migration, is usually seen in a negative light, as an alternative for people in the countryside who are "pushed" to the city (Hoselitz, 1955). There is also the contention that migration in Southeast Asia is not due very much to labor requirements in the city, an indicator of a "true urban revolution" accompanied by industrialization and economic

development. It is rather more of an escape from poverty or a "flight from the land" (McGee, 1965; McGee, 1970; Little, 1965).

On the other hand, rural-urban migration is reinforced by the role played by cities of developing countries. They act as centers of economic, political, and socio-cultural activities, thus developing them into "primate cities" (Jefferson, 1965; McGee, 1965; Doeppers, 1972). Being the important cities in the country, they act as magnets to the population in the countryside.

Compared with the Western experience, internal migration in Third World countries shows marked variations in age, sex, educational attainment of migrants and migration stream (Pascual, 1965; Castillo, 1977; Alvarez, 1976). An interesting feature of Philippine rural-urban migration is the higher proportion of females in the 15-34 age bracket, particularly among those moving into the metropolitan region.

Despite their large numbers, migration to urban areas has been seen as contributory to a "lowering" of the status of women (Boserup, 1970; Evangelista, 1974). In the farms, women would rank side by side with the men. By contrast, the city (especially the developing city) is a "man's world," and women can only find jobs in the services (or in the tertiary sector).

For instance, Concepcion and Smith (1977)

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show the better chances of male rural-metropolitan migrants to land in various jobs like the professions/sales, farming, transportation and communication, crafts and services, while female rural-metropolitan migrants end up in practically three types of jobs only (services, professions/sales, and crafts in that order).

The plight of young female migrants hinges on their inexperience and lack of skills. The sad status of urban women workers<sup>1</sup> mostly in service and tertiary jobs, in fact, had caught the interest of scholars. These include studies concerning hawkers and vendors (Guerrero, 1975), scavengers (Keyes, 1974), and some types of service occupations such as massage attendants (Evangelista, 1974), and hostesses and taxi-dancers (Bureau of Women and Minors, 1975). However, the main bulk of those employed in services, i.e., domestic helpers,<sup>2</sup> remain unnoticed. This study focuses on this group. It investigates the migration process of young women from rural areas who become domestics in the metropolis and their consequent life style, working conditions, and aspirations.

#### *Research Methodology*

This study is exploratory in nature and intensive in treatment and analysis. Seventy-nine female domestic helpers were interviewed (see Table 1). Using interactive sampling, "primary sampling units" or "starters" were first strategically picked and interviewed. Then, they were asked to identify their friends who were in turn interviewed and also asked to identify other friends, and so on (Coleman, 1970). The advantage of interactive sampling over other sampling techniques is that it captures the line of social relations between individuals or groups. This methodology is adopted to be able to study more intensively relationships between domestic helpers, and to understand their migration, recruitment, and adjustment to their new environment.

To compare domestic helpers in "middle class" and "upper class" residential areas, two

Table 1

#### *LOCATION OF INTERVIEWED RESPONDENTS USING INTERACTIVE SAMPLING*

Residential Area	No. of Interviewed Respondents
La Vista	28
U.P. Village	4
Project 4	31
Project 7	2
Project 2	3
SSS Village, Marikina	10
Cubao, Quezon City	1
Total	79

study areas were taken. Based on the classification of Consumer Pulse, Inc.,<sup>3</sup> a market research firm, Project 4 and La Vista, Quezon City, Metro Manila were chosen to represent the middle class and upper class residential areas, respectively. Quezon City<sup>4</sup> was particularly selected because of its function as a residential area where domestic helpers are usually found. It was considered also as a compromise between the commercial nature of Manila and the residential exclusiveness of the Makati areas.

It may be hypothesized that differences exist between maids from middle class and upper class residential areas. The underlying assumption is that maids who are exposed to employers having different life styles will have corresponding differences in terms of the variables investigated. Thus, there are two groups of respondents in the study: (1) domestic helpers working in "middle class" areas, and (2) those in "upper class" areas. For convenience in discussion, they will be called "middle class maids" (MCM) and "upper class maids" (UCM), respectively. Unless there are significant differences between these two groups, however, they will be combined and

treated as one in the discussion.

### *Discussion of Findings*

#### *Migration and Recruitment*

It was found that these young women from rural areas migrate directly to Metro Manila. Most have a variety of, but often, inter-related reasons. The recurring "purpose" has been "to see Manila" (32 percent, see Table 2). This curiosity about Manila intensifies as stories about the city are told by vacationing friends and relatives. The latter may make yearly visits and tell their experiences in the city. Alternatively, mothers, older sisters, cousins, and aunts who have been maids may invite their

daughters, younger sisters, cousins, and nieces to go with them to the city. Some of the respondents have simply come with those "taking a vacation" in the latter's return just for the fun of being with them. The desire to reach Manila has also been reinforced by the prestige associated with living in the city. To be referred to as "*nagtatrabaho sa Maynila*" (working in Manila) is an added status. In fact, one is admired because of her ability to get a job and survive in the city.

Aside from adventure, the respondents mentioned other reasons like "to get a job" and "to help parents and family." Some said they went to Metro Manila "to be able to help parents, brothers, and sisters." Thus, while the

Table 2

#### *REASONS FOR MIGRATION*

Reasons*	MCM %	UCM %	Total %
To see Manila (to adventure, <i>mamasyal</i> , etc.)	30	33	32
To work; to look for a job	20	24	22
To help parents and family	15	11	13
Boredom, desire to have cash, to buy what one wants	7	15	12
Family reasons (encouraged by family, rebellion, etc.)	7	11	10
To study or continue studies; to earn for tuition fees	17	3	9
Marriage (to escape married suitor, to separate from husband)	4	3	3
Total	100	100	101**
Sample Size	54	72	126

\*Multiple answers allowed

\*\*Due to rounding off

reason frequently given was "to see Manila," conditions at home played an important role also. Conditions like a big family, unproductive agricultural activities or insufficient family income, boredom and unemployment could have made stronger the desire to go to the big city. These conditions were usually identified as the "push" factors in migration in developing countries.

It is difficult to ascertain whether the young are attracted and "pulled" by the city lights or "pushed" by adverse conditions at home. While some writers believe it is more the "push" factors that affect migration in developing countries, it can easily be expected that such are coupled with "ambition" or "whim." On the other hand, Castillo (1977) says that the migration of rural population may be attributed to the glaring disparity in the delivery of social services favoring the primate city and the perceived chances for social and economic development therein.

The migration of respondents is difficult to attribute to one single reason. Most of the respondents seem to have no definite thing in mind in going to Metro Manila but "to see Manila." Being young (79 percent were 25 years old or younger) and single may also explain their "adventurous" behavior and lack of definite reason to migrate. This "ambivalence" led some social scientists to propose a population "drift" in migration (Cariño and Cariño, 1976; IDRC, 1973).

An important finding is the predominance of respondents coming directly from barrios (52 percent) than from towns and cities (see Table 3). This does not support the "step-migration" or stage migration theory. Instead, it shows a direct "jump" from rural areas to the metropolis. This direct move is buttressed by the finding that a majority of the respondents came from places where they were born and had grown up in (see Table 4). In other words, from the time they were born to their departure for Metro Manila, they hardly moved geographically. The lack of any "leapfrogging"

Table 3

*LACE OF ORIGIN OF DOMESTIC HELPERS  
BEFORE COMING TO METRO MANILA*

Origin	MCM %	UCM %	Total %
Barrio	66	31	52
Town	17	47	29
City	17	22	19
Total	100	100	100
Sample Size	47	32	79

$$X^2 = 10.48, df = 2, p < .01$$

may be because of the paternalistic system in the recruitment of domestic helpers. Employers go to the province and bring the daughters of tenants and poor relatives to the city. Maids are requested to scout for maids for their employers and friends. This is due to the preference of some employers for maids from the provinces over those already in the city. Thus, this type of recruitment enables the domestic helpers from rural areas to go direct to the metropolis.

Most domestic helpers are recruited in the province either by relatives or friends who were maids or by the employers themselves (see Table 5). Majority lack skills or do not have any work experience outside their homes. Many were contracted through parents who decided for the prospective helper and made the agreement in her behalf.

The role of the family in migration is clearly shown when relatives not only accompany the "neophyte" in her travel but also provide her lodging and assist her in getting a job. While most maids live immediately with their employers upon arrival, others who do not have employment contracts before leaving the province are helped by relatives in scouting for jobs.

Table 4

*ORIGIN OF DOMESTIC HELPERS  
BEFORE COMING TO METRO MANILA*

Origin	MCM %	UCM %	Total %
A. Same as birthplace	0	3	1
B. Same as place she grew up	4	3	4
C. Same as A and B	85	75	81
D. Different from A and B			
Barrio	2	0	1
Town	2	3	3
City	6	16	10
Total	99*	100	100
Sample Size	47	32	79

\*Due to rounding off

Table 5

*INFORMATION SOURCE OF JOB "OPENING"*

Source of Information	MCM %	UCM %	Total %
Kins (family members, relatives)	32	38	34
Friends (including neighbors and <i>kababayan</i> )	23	34	28
Employer/Employer's relatives/Agency	45	25	37
	0	3	1
Total	100	100	100
Sample Size	47	32	79

Board and lodging of the new migrant are then taken care of by the relatives temporarily until she gets a job. The stay of the neophyte with the relatives ranges from days to years depending on

the number of her or her relatives' contacts. In return, the neophyte helps in the household chores. It is expected that since relatives

usually come from the same socio-economic group, they "share" whatever is there in terms of food, housing, and the like. This behavior is part of what McGee aptly calls the "shared poverty" patterns of persons living in Third World cities. Family ties are also responsible for this system.

This "chain reaction" in migration and recruitment is reinforced when employer-families ask and recommend domestic helpers to each other, even as the latter recruit their own relatives. Consequently, a "family" of related maids may be employed by persons who are related to each other so that married siblings may have sisters or cousins for their maids. This resembles the "hacendero-tenant" feudal economic structure where the family of the tenant is directly dependent on the landlord and his family. As in the above system, the economic, socio-cultural, and familial welfare of the maids' family are taken over by the employer's family. The employer-helper system only differs from the former because the locale is in the city and there is greater ease in moving out of the paternalistic system. But the employe-maid and hacendero-tenant relationships are basically from the same mold.

#### *Employer-helper Household Relationship*

In most households, the paternalistic system is carried over into the employer-helper relationship. The helper often addresses her employer in familiar terms, such as *Ate*, *Kuya*, etc. The employer in turn acts as her guardian and places restrictions on her behavior both inside and outside the household, as a parent does. Some employers prefer to treat their maids as members of the family. These are rare arrangements however because maids are often shy to join in. For their part, employers also do not encourage this equality because they allege that this makes helpers abuse and forget their "place." Because of this, social distance is usually maintained by both parties. Conventional expectations prevail as soon as each enters into the "agreement." For instance, food and lodging of the helper are usually not the

same as the employer's and the former accepts this inequality.

The non-contractual relationship between employer and helper is also observable in the working conditions of the latter. For instance, even though the Labor Code says that domestic helpers should not be made to work for more than ten hours, in practice there is no definite limit on working hours because maids live with their employers. Moreover, the specific nature of tasks they are supposed to perform is also subject to change as long as there are "household chores." Hence, many maids aver that even where the employer promises before hiring the helper that she will do only certain specified tasks (like washing clothes or cooking), it rarely happens that she is not utilized for other purposes. To illustrate this, some girls working and receiving salaries as "helpers" actually work in *sari-sari* stores and *carindaria*. More serious cases are those filed at the Bureau of Women and Minors regarding "domestic helpers" doing such tasks as sewing teabags for use in the production and sale of tea.

The mode of payment of domestic helpers is also affected by this non-contractual relationship. Sometimes, employers keep the maid's salary and give it to the latter only when needed. Other employers delay the salary to insure that maids will not run away. Even the increase of salary of the maids depends greatly on the generosity and the paternalistic concern of the employer. As shown in the study, "career maids" receiving low salaries despite skill and experience exist.

Because of the non-contractual nature of their work, domestic helpers can be terminated for any reason, often depending on the whims of the employer. The predicament of the helpers is aggravated by their dependence on their physical well-being. To be able to work and earn, they must have a sound body. It may sound inconsiderate for employers to dispatch their helpers whenever they have illnesses. On the other hand, it is very unlikely

that employers would give the equivalent of a paid sick leave.<sup>4</sup> When maids are sick, they are threatened by termination and have to beg from the employer to pay their medical expenses by pledging their future monthly salary, thus leading to a possible perpetual bondage with the employer.

It is sometimes argued that the paternalistic system is more effective than the contractual system in controlling the behavior of helpers. Because of the personalistic values of Filipinos, helpers (and even employees in business and government bureaucracy) are treated as an extension of the family. In fact, some are hired as a way of helping the latter's family. In the house, this system is evident when they are considered as "just like members of the family." However, some employers lament the fact that maids when treated this way often get confused or may abuse this "privilege." The paternalistic system is actually confusing because maids are not exactly treated as "maids," yet they are expected to do all household chores. Because of their supposed "membership" in the house, they should not be made to work when they are sick; yet few

employers would be happy to serve their sick maids. What results is a confusion of roles and expectations because of the ambiguity of this system. What household arrangements and employer-helper relationships are favorable to maids' staying longer with the employer? Investigations made regarding factors affecting the length of stay of domestic helpers do not show any convincing explanation.

#### *Working and Living Conditions*

Findings in this study show that families served by domestic helpers are relatively small. Both family heads usually work (see Table 6). With pre-school and school age members, it would be difficult for the wife to manage the house alone and at the same time work. Thus, the presence of maids allows the two family heads to work. But there is a difference between upper class maids (UCM) and middle class maids (MCM). Relative division of labor is enjoyed by the UCM due to their number (average of four to five maids per house in La Vista). They perform more "specialized" tasks, while MCM work either

*Table 6*

#### *DOMESTIC HELPERS CLASSIFIED BY EMPLOYERS' WORKING STATUS*

Employers' Working Status	MCM %	UCM %	Total %
Husband and Wife work	79	53	68
Husband only*	11	44	24
Wife only	6	0	4
Both retired; old maid	4	3	4
Total	100	100	100
Sample Size	47	32	79

\*Includes widower; wife abroad; wife attends to own family business; wife retired but husband still works.

Table 7

*DOMESTIC HELPERS CLASSIFIED  
BY EMPLOYERS' NUMBER OF MAIDS*

Employer's Number Of Maids per House	MCM. %	UCM %	Total %
1 - 2	100	34	73
3 or more	0	66	27
Total	100	100	100
Sample Size	47	32	79

Table 8

*MONTHLY CASH SALARY OF DOMESTIC HELPERS*

Salary	MCM %	UCM %	Total %
P 59 or below	7	0	4
60 - 89	59	27	45
90 - 119	32	23	28
120 - 149	0	23	10
150 or over	2	27	13
Total	100	100	100
Sample Size	42	30	72

as "all-around maids" or share the tasks with only one other maid (see Table 7).

The average salary of the total sample is ₱88.00 per month but UCMs have significantly higher salary (see Table 8). The salary of UCM is twice that of MCM (₱128.00 and ₱62.60 per month, respectively). Variables found to be directly related to salary are (1) socio-economic status of the employer, (2) age of domestic helper, (3) "specialization" of the helper, (4)

length of stay with present employer, and to some extent, (5) place of origin of both helper and employer.

To determine how much domestic helpers approximately receive, their gross monthly salary was estimated by monetizing the privileges they receive like board and lodging, medical attendance, and gifts. This amounted to ₱182.70 for the MCM, ₱248.00 for the UCM, and ₱208.10 for the average domestic helper.



Compared with other low salaried jobs, domestic helpers are the least paid.

### *"Career Maids"*

In this study, "career maids" do specialized tasks and have worked for at least eight years as domestic helpers. They have long experiences as *yays* or cooks. Their salaries range from P80.00 to P400.00 with an average of P174.50. Despite their skill and experience, it is clear that they do not have significantly higher salaries than average maids. Instead, "career maids" may have higher pay only if they have stayed long with the same employer. Nevertheless, it is likely that the relatively low salary of career maids is compensated by non-monetary benefits like gifts and bonuses. This is also shown by cash advances (*vale*) allowed these maids. Career maids are also given more "freedom" in the use of anything in the house, and in setting days-off. They are also assigned to tasks of greater responsibility. Because of this, career maids attain higher status than average maids. These may be some of the non-material rewards career maids derive from their work which are still part of the personalistic system in domestic service.

### *Aspirations*

A sizeable 49 percent of migrant domestic helpers prefer to stay in the city. The main reason given is the availability of employment here. However, some 29 percent of the respondents prefer life in the province. Another 22 percent were neutral, saying the two (city and province) are just "the same." Some say that they were hard up in the province so they continue to work here or they want to support their poor parents so, what makes the difference? If this last group of neutral respondents is considered not really "happy" in the city, more than one-half had intentions of returning to their places of origin. In addition, even those who prefer to stay in the city have also intentions of settling down in their hometowns in the long run.

Despite the intention to return to the province, domestic helpers have high material aspirations. They want to own house and lot, appliances, jewelry, and other things. They also wish an improvement of status in life. These aspirations, however, seem to be unrealistic because majority do not think they would have the things they want in the next five years.

Marriage is not regarded as a vehicle to improve their personal lives. Some (mostly MCM) had boyfriends. The latter had occupations of higher prestige being employees, drivers, or skilled workers. Some are high school or college students. Apparently when maids marry, they become wives of men who have jobs of better status than domestic service. Though marriage per se is not regarded with optimism, maids aspire high for their future children (see Table 9). They want them to have college education and someday become professionals.

It is interesting to note that domestic helpers do not intend to remain maids for life. Asked what they see themselves doing five years hence, maids stated occupations in crafts, factory, sales, clerical, and other services (see Table 10). However, the model answer is that maids aspire to go home to the province and "do business" when they would rather not be maids anymore. A substantial number do not have any occupation in mind.

### *Implications on the Status of Women*

Various studies have been made to assess whether the status of women deteriorates with urbanization. Boserup, for instance, traced the pattern of women's work from the village to the town of Third World societies and found out that as society modernizes, women work side by side with men in the farms, and thus acquire some economic value. In towns, women work only in low-service jobs because the "modern" jobs are occupied by men. As such, the town is often regarded as a "man's world."

Table 9

*LEVEL OF EDUCATION ASPIRED  
BY DOMESTIC HELPERS FOR THEIR CHILDREN*

Level of Education	MCM %	UCM %	Total %
Elementary	2	3	3
Secondary	9	3	7
Vocational	16	14	15
College	72	79	75
<b>Total</b>	<b>99*</b>	<b>99*</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Sample Size</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>72</b>

\*Due to rounding off

Table 10

*OCCUPATIONS/ACTIVITIES ASPIRED  
BY DOMESTIC HELPERS*

Occupations Aspired/Activities Planned	MCM %	UCM %	Total %
Go home to the province and "do business"	34	45	38
Dressmaking and factory job	32	21	27
Salesgirl and clerical	11	21	15
Other services, domestic service, any job, none	23	14	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>101*</b>	<b>99*</b>
<b>Sample Size</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>73</b>

\*Due to rounding off

Another study claims that women have not kept pace with men in employment as the society moves toward the primary-secondary-tertiary sector direction of development. While men are employed in manufacturing, women are being channelled out of production and into

elitist services, some of which will become obsolete, and all of which depend on the distribution of wealth and the orientation of the economy towards "conspicuous consumption" for their very existence (Evangelista, 1974).

In other investigations, it was found that unemployment rates are higher in the urban than the rural sector and that there are more unpaid family workers among women than men. Women are also found to be concentrated in such "feminized occupations" as sales, upper professional, and lower services. But even in these occupations, males have higher incomes than females. Despite these evidences depicting the decreasing status of women, Lauby (1977) contends that "women do hold positions inferior to men in several occupational groups, but on the whole, the working women in the Philippines are given jobs with good standing in the community."

This discussion brings us to the relationship between domestic service and the status of housewives. It is shown by the findings of the study that domestic helpers enable the two family heads to work especially in middle class homes. In middle class homes, the domestic helper "frees" the wife of household work and allows the latter to work. If employment outside the home is a yardstick of the status of women, the presence of domestic helpers enables the housewife to attain higher status than simply "housewifing."

On the part of the upper class housewife, would this also hold true? It was found that some upper class maids have employers who either attend to a family-owned business or social functions required by their husbands' positions. It seems that in this case maids are not hired to allow the housewife to augment the family income. The average number of maids per house attests to a lifestyle often associated with "conspicuous consumption." Thus, the status of the middle class and the upper class wife may be affected differently by the presence of domestic helpers.

This study on domestic helpers cannot fully answer the question whether women's status declines as the society approaches urbanization. The "feminineness" of domestic service could be flattering unless its very low status and prestige compared to other occupa-

tions in the job hierarchy are known. In fact, working as a domestic helper can be a stigma in itself, which is akin to being in the "hospitality industry," minus the moral underpinnings of the latter. In terms of salary, domestic service is also not rewarding. Compared with workers in other industries, domestic helpers are the lowest paid. Among workers in other service jobs, the gross daily salary of the domestic helpers is low. Even among "career maids," there is a ceiling on how much they can receive plus the standards on rates of payment set by employers. It seems unprofitable then to stay in domestic service. Yet, why do some women work as domestic helpers? Aren't there enough jobs aside from domestic service?

In rural areas, women can be active in agriculture and small cottage and trade industries. But in urban areas, the only place for women without skills and educational qualifications is the "bazaar and service sectors" (Boserup, 1970). What types of jobs are in the bazaar and service sector? If one wants to have an "honorable" job, she can become a domestic helper but if she is not contented with the small pay, she can join the ranks of "hospitality girls."<sup>5</sup> If she does not find employment in any of these jobs, she can become a hawker or vendor.

It should not cause wonder why in developing countries, the "bazaar system" swells. It has been observed that the "bazaar system" is the chief absorber of labor force of Asian cities. This is reflected in the high proportion of the city population employed in the service sector compared to Western cities during comparable periods of urban growth. The family, being the institutional basis of this enterprise of the "bazaar economy" may explain this. Under the system each of the family members gets employment. Also, because of the inflationary quality of the bazaar system, the more members entering, the better the market. Thirdly, the agricultural population from the rural areas shifts to bazaar occupations easily and vice versa especially during sea-

sonal shifts in population movement. In economic terms, the tertiary sector is not seen as an indicator of "true urban revolution" because of the factors mentioned. Instead, it is regarded as inhibitive to economic growth, for it is characterized by urban underemployment and low productivity, but in social and political terms, it performs important functions as absorbers of labor which would otherwise be unemployed and be a greater burden — or even a threat — to the State (McGee, 1970).

Domestic service, like other bazaar-type occupations, provides employment for young women. It is also a family-generated occupation. Moreover, the transitory nature of this job is indicated by the patterns and motivations our respondents have upon entering it. Some become maids to gain "experience" (in city life?) after which they either marry, apply for other jobs, or return to the province. This means that domestic service is not really an intended lifetime occupation but a jumping board to something else. The type of occupations domestic helpers aspire for also supports this.

Because of the discouraging characteristics of domestic service — low prestige, low salary, transitory nature, and non-contractual relationship, it may be expected that it will eventually disappear as an occupation. Or to put it in another way, the low status of domestic service may be regarded as only temporary in a transitional society like the Philippines. If so, with industrialization, more jobs of different types will be available for unemployed women. As domestic helpers become scarce, the demand for them would increase and thus also their pay. In time, maids can even demand their price. At that time, the non-contractual arrangement will go and domestic helpers will truly gain the status of "workers."

#### *Recommendations*

##### *For Policy*

Compared with workers in other jobs, the

domestic helpers are the least salaried even if other privileges, such as board and lodging, are monetized. Because of the non-contractual nature of the job, their conditions are precarious, making them pathetic and helpless. The following recommendations are suggested for the welfare of these workers.

(1) Their present minimum wage of ₱60.00 per month should be increased to ₱100.00, for those in Metro Manila. The minimum cash wage approved in 1974 is too small to cope with today's inflation and higher cost of commodities.

(2) To maximize their potentials as human resources, training to provide skills should be available to them. Such training may be in the crafts or in other skilled jobs in industry. The jobs they aspire for indicate this and, as the country marches toward development, trained manpower along this line will be needed. To effect this, there should be an agency, preferably under the Ministry of Labor, which will be responsible for this program. Workers, aside from domestic helpers, interested to learn skills now in demand may be trained. This may include those in the "hospitality industry," hawkers and vendors, and scavengers who resorted to such means of livelihood because of lack of skills.

(3) Despite skill and experience, domestic helpers seem to lack the bargaining power to get what they want because not all "career maids" have high salaries. A wild recommendation is to have a "position classification." Maids, based on their experiences, skills, and educational attainment, may be categorized. Thus, the salaries of domestic helpers will be standardized. This will be advantageous for both employer and helper because each knows what to expect from each other. To reinforce this, there should be a sort of "education" for employers regarding treatment, relationships, and remuneration of domestic helpers.

##### *For Research Methodology*

The methodology used in this study was

basically the survey method using "interactive sampling." Samples were gathered by first interviewing primary sampling units or "starters," then asking them to identify their friends; these friends who were interviewed also identified their other friends, and so on. The advantage of using this procedure is that the pitfall of treating individuals as independent units is minimized as compared with random sampling. After all, society is composed of individuals who affect each other.

The use of interactive sampling can be considered also as an improvement over the case study method because aside from treating the individual samples intensively, it was also possible to trace interrelationships between them. Thus, the methodology used here can be an alternative to studying small and personalistic communities. In a society like the Philippines, family and kinship ties still prevail in the political, economic, social, and cultural affairs. In a word, personalistic and particularistic attitudes and types of relationship persist. Because interactive sampling is not strict with the "independence" of the samples, it can be used to obtain data from related individuals controlling important governmental, business, and other related activities. Moreover, it can be a useful methodology to obtain baseline data in rural areas where relationships are closer and more intimate.

The limitation of interactive sampling is that it is time-consuming when applied in extremely large samples. Also, because of its flexibility, it can be used to gather samples from the same exclusive groups, creating a "biased" sample. This makes the data obtained less amenable to sound generalization. Another problem surfaces in the analysis of social relationships obtained by interactive sampling. The applicability of results may be limited only to samples/groups of strictly the same characteristics. In this study for instance, the findings may not be generalized for the whole domestic helper population nor to the women migrant population in Metro Manila. Though caution was done in order not to create extreme bias

in the samples, the study is not free from the same difficulties characteristic of other exploratory studies.

#### *Areas for Further Study*

Because of some important questions and methodological problems encountered in this study, further investigations can provide more clarification. One important point of departure is to test the various findings and observations using a more representative sample. Other areas of inquiry such as duration of stay of domestic helpers with their employer may be investigated: Do they stay longer if they have more relatives and friends in the city? What are the factors which make them stay? How effective is the paternalistic system of employer-helper relationship? How valid is the contention that they become spoiled (and yield to fast turn-over) if the relationship of employees with them is contractual?

Another study area can be on how they evaluate themselves in the occupational hierarchy. Do they aspire for other jobs because of the low prestige of domestic service? Since most aspire for other jobs and since their salary is not entirely dependent on their experiences, what are their attitudes towards the job?

A third area of investigation can be focused on a longitudinal study of domestic helpers showing their occupational history. If domestic service is a "transitory" occupation, how is their future life different from those of other women who did not have a similar period of employment in the city?

Lastly, the significance of domestic service on women's status and internal migration will become clearer if the side of the employers is likewise explored. Employers have a role in the recruitment and migration of these women workers and have different attitudes towards them. It is recommended that such a study be done to fill in the gaps and provide more information to improve employer-helper relationship.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>The Filipino female professionals and those who hold administrative, executive, and managerial positions are but twelve percent only of the total female workers employed in the Philippines. Thus, they should not be mistaken as the typical gainfully-employed Filipinas.

<sup>2</sup>The 1975 *Census of Population and its Economic Activities of Metro Manila* show that domestic helpers comprise 68 percent of household population-gainful workers ten years old and over in the services group. Among the domestic helpers, 86 percent are females who are all private wage and salary earners. Basically, domestic service is a female-dominated occupation.

<sup>3</sup>Data in *Factbook, 1976*, Makati, Rizal, January 1976, also in Mahar Mangahas, Jaime B. Quizon, and Antonio Lim, *A Critique of the NCSO 1975 Family Income and Expenditure Survey*; a PREPF-UP School of Economics Project. Homes are classified into four groups: Class AB – upper class; C – middle class; D – lower class; E – extremely low class. The criteria used for the economic classification of homes were (a) occupation of household head, (b) total monthly income, (c) household utilities, (d) housing, (e) general appearance of house, (f) monthly rental, (g) other aids like number of household help and education of the housewife.

<sup>4</sup>Consumer Pulse, Inc., a market research firm, found out that Quezon City has 13,850 “upper class” homes, the highest number so far of the total 51,078 subdivisions and villages in Metro Manila.

<sup>5</sup>Phrase used by the Bureau of Women and Minors which includes masseuse, hostesses, waitresses, taxidancers, and a-go-go dancers.

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