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Producing Meaningful Work: An in-depth Study of Domestic Workers and Stratified Reproduction

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Producing Meaningful Work:
An in-depth study of Domestic Workers and Stratified Reproduction

Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of Social Studies
of Bard College

by
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Annandale-on-Hudson, New York
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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to deepen the understanding of how domestic workers are able to find resistance within their work place. Using eleven in-depth interviews with women working as domestic workers in New York City, this project contributes to the extant literature regarding domestic workers and stratified reproduction. I examine how domestic work is shaped by the intersections of race, class, gender, and citizenship status. These factors contribute to the conception of domestic work as low-skilled labor as well as the denigration and poor treatment of workers on the job. Though workers often have to sustain poor treatment due to their economic vulnerability, my research illuminates the various ways in which workers find resistance within their sites of employment. These interviews reveal the way in which the domestic workers interviewed produced meaning and restructured their work as important, meaningful labor. From my findings, I deepen the theory of stratified reproduction by asserting the importance of worker's methods of resistance.

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Preface

I met Sidney in front of Central Park, a couple of blocks away from my house. It had been over ten years since the last time I saw her. She embraced me and squealed about how mature I had become in the time that passed. The last time I remembered seeing Sidney, I must have been around seven or eight. I remembered her thick West Indian accent, and her beautiful long dreadlocks. But there were things about Sidney that I did not know and could never had known because of my age, and my relationship to her employer. She opened her bag and took out an old photo. “I wanted you to have this!” she said. Not knowing what to expect, I turned the photo over slowly. It was me and Abigail¹, my friend from childhood that Sidney babysat.



Abigail and Leigh playing piano, 2001

She explained to me that this photo was taken during a party Abigail’s family held for her green card wedding. Though the marriage didn’t work out, it lasted long enough for Sidney to become a citizen. After years of not working for Abigail’s family, Sidney still held onto that photo. We

¹ All individuals referenced to and interviewed for this project are given pseudonyms.

spent that afternoon on a park bench laughing and at times crying, while Sidney recounted her years as a domestic worker. Our two-hour long interview left me feeling excited about my senior project, but also reminded me why I was initially interested in speaking with domestic workers.

As a child, I grew up attending predominantly white institutions. I went to a Jewish preschool where celebrations of Hanukkah, Purim, and Passover were paired with learning ABCs and different parts of the body. My kindergarten class consisted of twenty-four kids and only two of us were Black American. As a child, I didn't recognize this as an issue. Children aren't equipped with the knowledge of structural and institutional racism and I surely wasn't looking for any differences between me and my classmates. The only time in I would question our differences was during pick up at the end of the day. Our teachers lined us up and took us downstairs to the cafeteria and we waited for our parents, guardians, siblings, and babysitters to pick us up. I watched the doors to the cafeteria as person after person would file through. I was confused. The people that walked through the doors were not the white mothers and fathers of the kids that were in my class. They were West Indian, Filipina, and Latina women. The only people in that cafeteria that looked like me were the ones that were performing care work. Because I was only six or seven at the time, I didn't think much of these differences. I recognized them but did not have the language or discourse to articulate my understanding of what I saw. I know now that the occurrence of women of color caring for young privileged white children is not by chance, but the product of a history of racism, classism, globalization, and gender-based subordination.

It is estimated that there are over 700,000 domestic workers currently in the United States (Burnham and Theodore, 2012). By domestic work, I mean labor that is enacted within the domestic sphere for wages. This includes childcare, elder care, housecleaning, housekeeping, and

disability assistance. Organizations such as the National Domestic Workers Alliance and Domestic Workers United argue that this number is much larger when taking into account workers that are placed through agencies or private services (Burnham and Theodore, 2012). These 700,000 plus workers are critical to the economy of the United States. Domestic workers provide base levels of physical, emotional, and social security for families throughout the United States. Employers return from their jobs to children that are fed and happy, and homes that are clean and tidy. The work that is performed by domestic workers allows for a functioning economy.

Though the labor performed by domestic workers is critical to the economy and family life, workers' importance often goes unnoticed. Both in the workplace and in the public sphere domestic work is rendered invisible. Workers are dispersed among various employers and are regulated by norms enforced by employers to perpetuate their invisibility. This compounded with the fact that many domestic workers are undocumented workers augments their invisibility. Workers are also rendered invisible through the lack of legal protections for their labor. Federal and state labor protections that operate in the workplace do not apply to domestic workers. Domestic workers are excluded from the ability to collectively bargain and form a union as a result of the 1935 National Labor Relations Act (Burnham and Theodore, 2012). Their exclusion from legal protections concomitantly renders them invisible. The inability to bargain for standardized wages and rights enables the exploitation and marginalization of domestic workers.

The invisibility of domestic work parallels the treatment and payment of domestic workers. Out of the ninety-five percent of domestic workers that are women, a majority of them are women of color (Burnham and Theodore, 2012). Because domestic workers are predominantly women and are largely undocumented, domestic work is positioned as low-status

and low-skilled. This results in labor exploitation as well as economic vulnerability. In a survey of 2,086 domestic workers performed by the National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA), low pay was established as a systemic problem. NDWA found that seventy percent of workers are paid less than thirteen dollars an hour, and twenty-three percent of workers were paid below their state's minimum wage (Burnham and Theodore, 2012). Workers' experience of low pay was in addition to abuse on the job and hazardous work conditions (Burnham and Theodore, 2012).

There is a rich body of literature that seeks to deepen scholarly understanding of the experiences of domestic workers. Work such as *Between Women* by Judith Rollins and *Domestica* by Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo uncovered the seemingly invisible world of domestic workers and how workers negotiated their low-status positions in proximity to wealth and privilege. These works as well as research done by Mary Romero, Bridgette Anderson, Arlie Hochschild, Shellee Colen, and Patricia Hill Collins act as a guide for this project. The research done by these scholars demonstrates the lives and experiences of domestic workers during the 1980s and 1990s. This project seeks to deepen this scholarly discourse by including the perspective of workers today. The work produced regarding domestic work in the 1980s and 1990s predates the surge of domestic worker organizing. In response to the precarious position that domestic workers have been in, many organizations have been created to render visible workers that are ignored by labor policy and employers within the globalized market. Social movement organizations related to domestic work are the forefront of a movement to alter the narrative regarding domestic work. As a sector that is comprised of low-wage, immigrant workers that are women, this movement strives to rectify issues regarding immigration, worker's rights, treatment of people of color, and treatment of women. This movement hinges on the complex ways that race, class, gender, and national origin intersect, while also focusing on

worker's rights to fair wages. This project is my contribution to the field of domestic work research and domestic worker activism.

Chapter 1: Literature and Framing

“I knew what I was giving to the kids, I knew my kids were cared for and they were loved and that I spent time with these kids. I was one of their first teachers. Teaching them everything from blowing their noses, to being potty trained, to washing their hands, to the alphabet, to writing their first letters. I was that person who had taught these kids, and there was not much that I feel like an employer could devalue me in knowing what I was contributing to the life of a child or a child that was in my care. It’s work that’s not valued. It’s work that’s done in the home, it’s work that is done by mainly women. For many years, I was so ashamed of being a domestic worker. Of pushing a stroller, or taking care of somebody’s white child. Because that was the narrative that I was fed. Like we don’t talk about this. Nobody goes to school and say when I grow up I wanna be a nanny, a housekeeper, or an elder care provider. There was so much shame in doing this work until I came onto the realization that what I was doing I enjoyed, what I was doing was legal, and I was caring for somebody else’s child. My employer could not have left me her bank account and felt safe, but she left me her child every single day. And I understand why my job is not on any application like do you want to be an astronaut or a domestic worker. But I feel like the work that I’ve done over the years have been the most important work, caring for the life of the child. And I long for the day to see application forms applying to be domestic workers. Because this work takes a whole level of skill set that no school could ever teach you.”

(Amelia).

The above quote highlights the themes of devaluation and worth that frame this research. Amelia begins by articulating the importance of her work through how she was able to provide for the children in her care emotionally and educationally. She understood the necessity of her labor because of the skill and care she enacted within the home. In knowing what she provided to

the children she cared for and thus the family, Amelia could not experience devaluation at the hands of her employer. Her understanding of the value of her work overcame the notion that her work is not important and unskilled. Though Amelia begins by identifying the importance of her labor, she explains how she initially internalized society's conceptualization of domestic work as unskilled labor. She was ashamed because of the implications of caring for a white child as a West Indian woman. She was ashamed because of the implications of performing work that does not require a degree. She was ashamed because the narrative of domestic work she had experienced was shaped by shame and denigration. Embedded within Amelia's recounting of her experience is the way in which gender, class, and race frame domestic work within America. By finding value in her labor, Amelia resists the intersecting axis of race, class, and gender that construct the devaluation of domestic work and workers' experiences of labor.

Amelia's framing of her experience of labor and empowerment is a part of the goal of this study. She describes her own process of finding meaning in her work and counteracting the norms of subordination that are attached to domestic work. Drawing on Amelia's trajectory from devaluation to empowerment, this study seeks to reveal the way in which domestic workers produce meaningful work in spite of the notions of subordination that construct their labor. Using the framework of stratified reproduction, I examine how domestic work is shaped by race, class, and gender, as well as global processes such as globalization and transnational immigration. Stratified reproduction refers to the way in which individuals' experiences of reproductive labor varies based on race, class, and gender. Focusing on workers' recounting of their experiences through interviews, I illustrate how domestic workers encounter notions of subordination through immigration and first job experiences, how subordination impinges on their labor within the work place, and ultimately how they resist these implications and find

value within their work. To deepen the understanding of stratified reproduction, I uncover the way in which workers counteract notions regarding their labor and thus reposition themselves within a global hierarchy of reproductive labor.

My findings contribute to the extant research by scholars and activists regarding domestic work. Through in-depth interviews with eleven domestic workers in New York City, I discovered that the women's encounters with marginalization were often followed by moments of meaning making. By analyzing interactions with their employers, negotiations between work and family, and management of children's lives, I show how the labor performed by domestic workers both occurs within and contests social stratification. The structure of their work means inevitably contributing to the reproduction of social stratification in order to provide for themselves and their families. By tracing the trajectory of the domestic workers interviewed, from exploitation and marginalization to agency and ownership, I argue that through collective and individual resistance the women in this study reconstruct their work as meaningful.

In order to understand the influence of global processes and social stratification, this project utilizes the framework of "stratified reproduction," as well as sociological research on domestic work and more specifically gender, labor, immigration, and race. This chapter draws on literature regarding domestic work and feminist theory to situate my findings within the history of domestic work and the subordination of women's labor. Within the history of domestic labor, I argue that this form of labor has been historically associated with "inferior" people. I contextualize the contemporary period of domestic work and highlight the role of globalization in producing female migrant workers. Next, I use feminist theory regarding women's work to demonstrate the underpinnings of the subordination of domestic work. I conclude by introducing the theory of "stratified reproduction" and its integration into my project.

Historical Overview of Domestic Work

Domestic work is a field that is marked by subordination through race and gender. In order to understand domestic work's contemporary existence it is necessary to conceptualize the intersectional frameworks that construct it. In this next section I discuss the historical conditions of domestic work through the lens of race and gender. Historically, domestic work has been performed by individuals that are understood as racially inferior. Following the trend of scholars such as Judith Rollins and Mary Romero, I separate the history into three separate periods in the United States: the Colonial to Civil War period, the mid-nineteenth century to World War I, and the late 20th to 21st century which lasts from World War I until 1985 (Rollins 1985, Romero 1992).

Colonial to Civil War Period

In the colonial period, domestic service was comprised of “transported convicts, indentured servants, negroes, and Indians” (Rollins, 1985). Indentured servants were typically poor, homeless, vagabonds from England that were hired to rid the country of “undesirables” (Rollins 1985, Romero, 1992). Though indentured servants were of English descent, there was little distinction between their class and that of slaves. Masters wielded the same amount of control over servants as they did over slaves, and would use the terms servant and slave interchangeably (Romero, 1992). Both servants and slaves were treated poorly and shared brutal work conditions, housing, and hours (Rollins, 1985). While servants experienced slightly more legal protection, they were not free wage laborers and maintained inferior social statuses once their period of service was finished (Rollins 1986, Romero 1992).

Using census data from 1848, Romero (1992) notes that slaves comprised 98 percent of the domestic and personal service workers in America. She also notes that though domestic service was composed of both men and women slaves, the type of labor performed differed based on gender. Slave women were frequently put in charge of taking care of the children, washing, ironing, cooking, and cleaning (Romero, 1992). Though slave women were responsible for the “dirty work” and the reproduction of workers, this (re)productive work manifested into an isolation of slave women from their families and their children (Anderson 2000, Romero 1992). In contrast, mistresses were able to inhabit the role of nobility and purity in their lack of labor (Anderson, 2000).

Following the Revolution, domestic work began to embody the tension between the American notion of liberty and its racialized caste system. The distinctions that were once missing between servant and slave populations appeared, and illuminated racial differences. For Native-born whites, particularly women, domestic work served as a step towards better opportunities (Romero, 1992). Young women from rural areas were hired for short periods of time to “help” (Romero, 1992). These women were able to contribute to their family’s incomes and gain access to public education until they were married (Rollins 1985, Romero 1992). Hired help were not all subjected to the same kind of treatment – their work varied based on the status of their families (Romero, 1992). As well, because they were paid wage laborers, they were seen as social equals to their employers (Rollins, 1985). This treatment however was limited to the population of rural, Native-born servants and was not applied to immigrants (Rollins, 1985). It is evident however that Native-born women and their families benefited from domestic work.

While White native-born domestic workers experienced humanization in the eyes of their employers, slave populations maintained brutal conditions. Southern domestic work began to be

conceived of as work to be done by only Blacks. Simultaneously, women's role in domestic work and the production of labor began to gain importance. As noted in Bridget Anderson's work *Doing the Dirty Work*, the sexual exploitation and manipulation of slave women became an essential facet of slave systems (Anderson, 2000). Slave women continued to be used to establish the purity and privilege of white women. Because white women recognized that their importance was derived from the subordination of slave women, white women and black slaves were at odds (Anderson, 2000). Additionally, the lack of legal recourse for the abuse of slave women gave masters the ability to augment their slave population through rape, concomitantly saving for capital loss and oversea slave trade (Anderson, 2000). As slaves began to displace white domestic workers in the South, the master-servant arrangements transformed into a paternalistic relationship (Rollins, 1985). These relationships established the confluence of race, class, and gender which constructed both the socioeconomic position of slaves and significance of their labor.

Mid-nineteenth Century to World War I

The following period was driven by employer's attempts to concretize social divisions between themselves and their servants (Rollins, 1985). The influx of immigrant laborers within the domestic sector reified the need to enforce social divisions between servants and employers. While domestic work had previously encompassed mainly white and black workers, non-white workers began to predominate the field. The composition of workers varied based on region and immigrant settlement. This is articulated in Evelyn Nakano Glenn's work "From Servitude to Service Work: Historical Continuities in the Racial Division of Paid Reproductive Labor." Glenn notes that while there were differences within the racial composition of the populations, labor by

people of color and subordinated racial groups constructed the permanent servant stratum (Glenn, 1992). This translated to the predominance of Irish domestic workers in Boston, but an overwhelming Japanese presence in northern California (Rollins 1985, Glenn 1992).

Popular political rhetoric regarding difference among native-born White American's and their immigrant counterparts influenced the interactions of employers and servants as well as the justification for their work. Non-white women were described as "vulgar," "childlike," and "barbaric," impacting the way in which employers would regard them. Mistresses would ask domestics to use separate bathrooms and clean everything after a worker had touched it (Romero 1992, Rollins 1985). Forms of deference and behavioral norms became introduced and normalized (Romero 1992, Rollins 1985). Workers were expected to be invisible and silent, but also receptive of the needs of employers (Romero, 1992). This is evident in the stereotype of the "mammy." The "mammy" figure was introduced to represent the ideal domestic worker – one who maintained loyalty despite the exploitation of her employers (Nadasen, 2015). Occupations such as domestic work became representations of the racial superiority of White employers through the means of economic exploitation (Collins, 2000). By constructing narratives regarding the cleanliness and ethics of non-white women, White employers also justified the occupational stratification that relegated women to underpaid work. Aligning domestic work with the toxic interpretations of non-white women resulted in the flight of White workers from paid domestic labor (Rollins, 1985). The work became a symbol of racial exploitation, and the ways in which economic subordination assisted white supremacy.

The Late 20th to 21st Century

The third period of domestic work solidified the predominance of “inferior” women of color within the field with the assistance of War. The abundance of industrialization and factory work made more non-servant positions available to both women and men (Rollins, 1985).

Women began to leave the field of domestic work to work in factories and more professionalized fields of domestic labor (Rollins 1985, Romero 1992). Evelyn Nakano Glenn refers to these forms of work as “institutional service work.” What resulted was the confinement of women of color to “dirty”, “back-room” service jobs, while white women were favored in ones requiring physical and social contact (Glenn, 1992). This produced a decline in the number of women that were found within the domestic work sector. The decline in the amount of women however, indicates the low desirability of those remaining within the field. It is not that less women chose to perform this work, but that the women who had stigmatized ethnic identities had no other option.

The narrative of young migrant women assisting in domestic work until marriage became replaced by the trend of Black women and other women of color becoming “ghettoized” into the occupation (Rollins 1985)². Because women of color were excluded from forms of work that existed outside of the domestic and service industry, domestic work functioned to reinforce a racialized hierarchy that positioned ethnic women at the bottom. This was experienced both socially and economically. The racial subordination found within domestic work functioned to construct whiteness as a dominant economic and racial group. Membership in dominant groups was delineated by the necessity of employing one or more “colored” worker in social circles (Glenn, 1992). Even White working class families hired women of color for housework to

² Evelyn Nakano Glenn discusses the predominance of African American, Asian American, Latina, and Native American women in domestic work in “From Servitude to Service Work: Historical Continuities in the Racial Division of Paid Reproductive Labor.”

mitigate the difficulty of double shift labor (Glenn, 1992). In this vein, it is clear that domestic work operated as a way to reproduce racial hierarchy. It defined that specific groups were meant for service work, while others were meant to be served.

Following World War I, morals and manners that were once stringently enforced became less rigid and self expression became highly valued (Rollins, 1985). Feminists began to expand the public role for women and problematized the presence of women within the household (Glenn, 1992). Many feminist scholars looked toward the division of labor as an agent in gender based subordination. The division of labor that is present within the external social milieu is mirrored in the type of labor enacted by family members. Hartmann (1981) posits that family structures are thus agents in women's subordination. Men within the family experience the benefits of unpaid labor. Though Hartmann's work does not call for the liberation of women from the domestic sphere, it explicates a trend in feminist thought of the 1960s and 1970s. Activists and scholars were either pushing for women to become more active outside the home, or for a recognition of their labor within the home (Shelton and John, 1996). The push to liberate women from the domestic sphere concomitantly entrapped women of color in the very space they sought to dismiss (Rollins 1985, Glenn 1992, Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001, Chang 2006). This third period demonstrates fully the dialectical and systematic connection between the experiences of white women and women of color. White women's social identities and position within the labor market was predicated on the marginalization of women of color. Through each period, domestic work is utilized to elevate white women and their households while exploiting women of color.

Contemporary Period of Domestic Work (1980 to the Present)

While the historical analysis of scholars of domestic work only extends to the 1980s, the trends found through this research are still present within the domestic sector today. Domestic work continues to be heavily racialized, however racial underpinnings are now coded through the guise of immigration. As found in Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo's work *Domestica*, the number of immigrant and migrant women who find themselves among the domestic work force has increased in the last thirty years. Hondagneu-Sotelo refers to several social, political, and economic instances to explain this increase however, the most compelling argument is the increasingly globalized economy. Individuals that are considered poor and low earning emerge as significant sources of capital growth (Sassen, 2007). The increase in labor migration that has been produced by globalization is overwhelmingly female. In both highly regulated and illicit economic sectors, women are the ones making profit and contributing to both public and private economies (Sassen, 2007). While globalization produces high-end jobs, these are predicated on the force of low wage labor. What this incurs is a demand for labor that is made up of an internationalized population (Zimmerman, Litt, Bose, 2006). The supplies for labor have transitioned from Black women to women from areas outside of the United States. This is what several scholars refer to as the international division of reproductive care work (Zimmerman Litt Bose 2006, Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001, Glenn 2006).

Though women have become incorporated into the global economy as laborers, their involvement often works counter to their well-being, survival, and security (Gunewardena and Kingsolver, 2007). When the development of service-based economies favors the international migration of women laborers the role of the state changes to fit these patterns. Changes in immigration policies are made to accommodate labor needs and capital demands, which

maximizes the utility of workers but simultaneously restricts their physical and social mobility (Chang, 2006). In previous periods, the threat of being unemployed did not carry the weight of possible deportation. Domestic workers are thus put in an especially precarious position due to their gender, immigration, and racial status.

While domestic work is no longer equivalent to slave labor, the ideology of the past regulates the nature of the work today. Domestic work continues to be regarded as something other than employment (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001). Employers tend to confuse domestic work arrangements by referring to workers as a part of their families. This paternal language is rooted in the slave-master dynamic from the period of Slavery. Masters were responsible for their slave's morality, religious direction, material welfare, and eldercare (Rollins, 1985). Slaves were considered to be a part of the families of their masters and were referred to by the last name of their owners. Utilizing a paternalistic model however, enables employers to ignore domestic workers as workers and conflate their labor with natural expressions of love (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001, Nadasen 2015). The fact that domestic work is situated within the home also works to discredit the labor involved. Women's responsibility for housework and nurturing children is often construed as inherent to their identities as mothers. Domestic work is thus seen as an extension of women's natural tendencies to take care of children and produce a clean home. Lastly, the emotional labor that is inherent within the work is incongruous to our definitions of employment which muddles employer's ability to recognize the cost of this labor on workers (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001). These factors and more, which are rooted in the historical conceptualization of domestic work act to exploit the workers in this sector. This project contributes to this body of literature by continuing into the late twenty-first century.

Domestic Labor and Women's Subordination

As I demonstrate above, domestic work has historically been conceived of as low-status work performed by individuals with low social and economic capital. Though this history focuses on the racialized nature of domestic work, it is necessary to acknowledge the way in which feminization contributes to its conception as low-status, low-skilled labor. Because domestic work occurs within the domestic sphere it has been coded as women's work. Taking care of children, elderly, and disabled, as well as cleaning and readying homes, is often conceived of as work performed by women. This means that domestic work within the public sphere is understood as an extension of the deregulated and unpaid work that is done within the home.

Domestic work as a profession is subject to what Sherry Ortner (1974) describes as the "universal devaluation of women." Ortner posits that nature and culture are distinguished in opposition to each other, rendering culture as the superior. Culture is conceptualized as human consciousness and its products, whereas nature exists as a "nonhuman" realm (Ortner, 1974). These conceptualizations extend to the distinctions between women and men, whereby women are associated with nature, and men with culture. Using a biological determinist argument, Ortner claims that women's bodies and their inherent functions inhibit women's involvement in cultural processes. As a result, organic functions such as pregnancy, menstruation, and child birth are not only sources of great discomfort, but also interruptions of women's routines (Ortner, 1974). These bodily processes restrict women's involvement in activities and social contacts. Women are thus constrained to a life of reproduction. While Ortner's assertions pose the subordination of women as a product of biology's influence on culture, her understanding of nature and culture are pertinent to understanding the subordination of domestic work. Because

women's reproductive labor is viewed as natural, performing domestic labor within the public sphere is understood as an occupation that requires little to no skill. The naturalization of women's reproductive labor contributes to the underpaying of individuals who perform domestic work for wages.

Sherry Ortner's understanding of women's social subordination implicates biology and culture whereas other feminists focus on the role of patriarchy and the division of labor. Heidi Hartmann (1976) argues that women's subordination occurs as a mechanism to maintain capitalist society. Unpaid work that is performed in the household by women benefit men by resulting in both higher wages and less responsibility for house work for men. Deviating from Ortner's dependence on biology, Hartmann posits that patriarchy emerges from the establishment of "the state." As the state emerges in opposition to the tribal social structure, it places the traditional gender division of labor within a hierarchical relationship (Hartmann, 1976). The collective responsibility that was once embedded in social relationships becomes the authority of husbands in the private sphere, and lords in the public sphere (Hartmann, 1976). Woman's work was rendered private and solely for the benefit of the family, rather than the public (Hartmann, 1976). As domestic work became associated with the family, it became imbued with the power to reproduce households and laborers (Rubin, 1975). Preparing food, cleaning clothes, making beds, and caring for children became necessities for the production of efficient laborers. Women became identified as necessities for workers due to their ability to invest time within the home (Rubin, 1975).

In both the cultural and structural perspectives, women's subordination results in the relegation to the domestic sphere. Domestic work is used as a measure for exploitation and an expression of power relations between men and women. Women's labor and social subordination

is manifested into the symbolic and material denigration of domestic work and the individuals that perform it. The aforementioned scholars posit that the only way to combat women's subordination is through women's liberation from the domestic sphere. My research challenges the centrality of leaving the domestic sphere within feminist literature. I find that resistance can occur within the domestic sphere by workers to challenge exploitation and power.

Stratified Reproduction as Theory

Stratified reproduction is defined as “the understand[ing] that physical and social reproductive tasks are accomplished differentially according to inequalities that are based on hierarchies of class, race, ethnicity, gender, place in global economy, and migration status and that are structured by social, economic, and political forces” (Colen, 1995). Shellee Colen coins this term in her research of West Indian domestic workers and their experiences of motherhood in New York. Colen's posits that reproductive labor is experienced and rewarded differently based on specific historical and cultural contexts. By reproductive labor, Colen means the work involved in bearing, raising, and socializing children as well as maintaining households and people. The notion of stratified reproduction elucidates several aspects of domestic work that are important to this research. First, it articulates that interactions between employers and employees are demonstrative of broader social and political systems. Secondly, it notes that domestic work reproduces social stratification by intensifying and reinforcing the inequality from which it is based. Lastly, it highlights that experiences of domestic work are embedded in a history of social and cultural contexts.

Though Colen develops the frame of stratified reproduction, her work focuses solely on cultural constructions of parenting and childcare for West Indian workers and how they are

shaped by this framework. In this project, I use stratified reproduction as a conceptual tool to understand the way in which social inequality is embedded within labor. Drawing on Colen's explanation of stratified reproduction as a way to understand hierarchy's influence on work, I posit that stratified reproduction can be conceptualized as a process that shapes domestic workers' labor. Using the labor trajectories of the workers interviewed in this study, I argue that stratified reproduction is a necessary framing device for the way in which domestic workers come to understand, experience, and ultimately counteract their subordination.

Methodology

Because of the abundance of domestic workers and domestic work organizing, New York City is a particularly effective site for recruiting workers. Over 200,000 women work as domestic workers in New York City providing care for children, elderly, and disabled persons (DWU, 2006). The work done by these domestic workers is the backbone of New York's economy. Furthermore, New York has a history of domestic workers organizing. From protesting slave markets in the Bronx in the 1950s to contemporary organizing of domestic workers through Domestic Workers United in the early 2000s, New York City has been critical to domestic workers' acts of political and social resistance (Nadasen, 2015). Because this project focuses on workers' experiences of labor and resistance, it was important to recruit workers from a location where there was a large number of accessible workers.

To explore domestic workers' experiences of their labor and resistance, I gathered data using interviews I conducted with eleven women who are currently employed as domestic workers. I used several methods to recruit workers for interviews. In the early stages of my research, I interned at the National Domestic Worker's Alliance (NDWA) in New York. During

my internship, I met several women that were currently employed as domestic workers and were interested in being interviewed for my research. Because NDWA operates as an organization that politically mobilizes workers, I decided to additionally recruit workers outside of the organization. I recognized that I needed to account for the experiences of women that are not involved in political organizing to have a more comprehensive perspective of labor and everyday resistance. In order to find women who performed domestic work outside of NDWA, I relied heavily on the snowball method. This method is a form of acquiring participants whereby the individual interviewed would be asked to suggest additional people for interviewing. Because workers often have extensive informal networks of other women in the field, I felt that this was an appropriate method to grow my number of interviewees. I received information from friends who grew up with domestic workers as well as personal friends of my own family.

Prior to meeting with workers I would text or call them, providing an overview of the research. I suggested having the interviews in places that felt the most comfortable for the women, and were the most convenient for them to get to. Sometimes that meant traveling to far corners of Brooklyn, or staying in Battery Park following a NDWA outreach effort. I shared with the women that the interview was completely voluntary and if at any point they did not feel comfortable, the interview could end. Every worker read my Institutional Review Board consent form, and proceeded to sign it and keep a copy for themselves. At times, I found that workers were apprehensive of meeting because of the possibility that they would feel compelled to share information regarding documentation status or abuse, but as soon as we met they were not reticent about sharing stories. Interviews that were scheduled to last about 45 minutes would span as long as an hour and a half. We discussed topics such as immigration, family life, negotiating wages, judging their employers, and more. In addition, for the workers involved with

NDWA I asked questions regarding how they became involved and how the organization has impacted them. I have included a pseudonym chart to outline the eleven workers, their country of origin, and their organizational affiliation.

Pseudonym	Gender	Country of Origin	Organizational Affiliation
Jade	Female	Trinidad and Tobago	NDWA
Mia	Female	Trinidad and Tobago	NDWA
Amelia	Female	Barbados	NDWA
Sidney	Female	Trinidad	Independent
Pamela	Female	St. Vincent	Independent
Myra	Female	Antigua	Independent
Diana	Female	Mexico	NDWA
Sara	Female	USA	Independent
Amy	Female	USA	Independent
Ariane	Female	Ivory Coast	Independent
Polina	Female	Poland	Independent

Epistemology and Positionality

By using interviews, I draw from Patricia Hill Collin’s (2000) notion of “lived experience as a criterion of meaning.” Collins posits that individuals from marginalized groups, specifically Black women use experience as a tool of knowledge. Experience is a fundamental tenet of Black feminist knowledge and wisdom as a result of marginalization. The objectification of Black women due to both “blackness” and “womanness,” shapes the kind of knowledge that is essential to survival as a subordinate (Collins, 2000). This means that lived experience is considered as evidence rather than uninformed accounts. As workers that are marginalized because of their race, class, gender, ethnicity, and citizenship status, domestic workers experiences act as symbolic material for the nature of feminized labor. I use their recounting of their experiences as a knowledge claim that speaks for themselves and for others in similar circumstances.

While Black feminist epistemology shapes the way in which I regarded my data, my positionality as a Black woman impacted how I gathered my data. Because Black women's alternative epistemology reflects their position as both Black and female, it contests the conceptual procedures of sociological governing that are enacted by research both about and by predominantly white men (Collins 2000, Smith 1987). I recognize the way in which the researcher's own identity shapes the results and findings of an intellectual endeavor. As a young Black woman with Caribbean roots, I was able to access the population of domestic workers and achieve a comfortability with the women interviewed. Though a stranger, I was seen by many of the workers as a daughter or young family member. Following interviews, the women interviewed would offer to buy me pizza or a coffee, though they were the ones that were deserving of a reward. My positionality beneficially impacted the research process through my likeness with the women interviewed.

Limitations

I acknowledge that there were several limitations to the research that I was able to perform. Throughout this research process, I underestimated the difficulty that I would experience recruiting domestic workers. Typically, the women interviewed work five to six days a week, from as early as 7 AM to as late as 10 PM. The physical and emotional labor necessary to perform domestic work can be very draining, leaving women with little time for themselves. I wanted to respect this reality and make myself available to workers when it was most convenient for them, however this resulted in the complication of recruiting interviewees. As well, though I attempted to interview a broad array of workers, my own language restrictions limited the number of workers that I was able to recruit. As discussed earlier, domestic work is comprised of

a migrant work force that does not always use English as the preferred language choice. Many workers in New York speak Spanish, Tagalog, Nepali, or other non-English languages. Because of my inability to speak these languages, my research is limited in scope. To have a more comprehensive view of domestic workers' experiences, I would recommend interviewing a more linguistically diverse population.

Chapter Overview

The significance of this research is the ability to broaden the understanding of how marginalized workers experience subordination and ultimately engage in productive resistance. In order to explicate these accounts, this project is divided into sections that describe the various ways in which stratified reproduction is encountered, experienced, and resisted.

In Chapter 2, "Lessons Learned," I examine the experiences of immigration and employment of the domestic workers interviewed. From these instances, I demonstrate the way in which women's position within the global economy is revealed to them. The women's occupation options are limited due to their kinship networks and how social inequality influences the type of jobs available to immigrants, especially undocumented immigrants. Because of the predominance of low-status job opportunities, the women I interviewed became constrained by limitation. Once the women found work, the treatment they received from their employers informed them of their symbolic and material status as domestic workers of color. Chapter 2 also describes the way in which methods of acquiring work and treatment on the job vary by race. I demonstrate the way in which racial stratification shapes workers' experiences on the job. Using both their experiences of immigration and first employment, I establish how stratified reproduction is revealed to domestic workers and encompasses their labor.

I further these assertions in Chapter 3, “Working Women,” to show how domestic work is shaped by stratified reproduction on the job. Using the women’s experiences of motherhood, usage of emotional labor, and their involvement in concerted cultivation, I uncover the way in which workers become subject to stratified reproduction through the management of their labor. As working mothers, I demonstrate the way in which the feminization of globalization results in the embodiment of both “breadwinner” and “mother” identities. The economic vulnerability they face as marginalized workers however, challenges their ability to provide for their family both emotionally and economically. The women’s labor is also shaped through the employment of emotional labor. Because of their position within stratified reproduction, workers must use emotional labor as a resource to manage their environments and their own true feelings. Lastly, the women’s involvement in concerted cultivation reveals how they can be inadvertently involved in the reproduction of social stratification. These three instances articulate the way in which global processes impinge on the work place to make workers subject to stratified reproduction.

My fourth and final chapter, “Resistance,” outlines the different methods workers use to counteract stratified reproduction. Using both individual/symbolic and collective/political methods, I find that the women interviewed were able to resist the notion that domestic work is unskilled meaningless work. The women that resisted using individual/symbolic means were able to find meaning in their work through their roles as caretakers and experts in the field. They also used moments of contention between them and their employers as opportunities to express their worth as skilled laborers. As working mothers, the women were able to produce meaningful work through the way in which they delineated themselves from their female employers. Women that were involved in political/collective work however, used social justice organizing to create

comprehensive legal change for domestic work. Their involvement in this form of resistance transformed the way in which they regard their work and themselves. Though these two different methods have different outcomes, they both succeed in producing meaningful work for the women that are involved.

Chapter 2: Lessons Learned

How Stratified Reproduction is Revealed Through Immigration and Labor Process

When you come here you miss all your family. You're sad. I didn't know when you come to a different country that it makes it hard if you're not legal. You can't do nothing. You can't go to school. So after you learn English you have to go to college, you don't have a social security number to go to college. You're stuck. That's when you start looking for that kind of a job where they don't ask for much. (Ariane, nanny from the Ivory Coast).

Stratified reproduction seeks to capture the way in which global processes such as colonialism and capitalism are evident in intimate, daily events (Colen, 1995). Economic, legal, and social factors contribute to the way in which the performance of reproductive labor is stratified. This is captured in Ariane's recounting of her experience. The construction of illegal citizenship functioned to confine both her educational and employment options. Her feeling of being "stuck" is a result of large scale forces such as immigration reform, globalization, and exploitative economies that constrict her choices. Ariane finds herself within a bind that is representative of stratified reproduction. From her perspective, her lack of options due to immigration status, education, and language restrictions results in her confinement to domestic work. Ariane's experience of immigrating to the United States and encountering domestic work is defined by stratified reproduction. Hierarchies of class, race, place in the global economy, and citizenship status act to entrap her into low-status reproductive labor.

This chapter examines the way in which stratified reproduction is encountered by domestic workers. Through workers' experiences of immigration, kinship networks, and first jobs as domestic workers, I demonstrate how stratified reproduction structures their initial conceptions of their work. To begin, I discuss how kinship networks can reproduce race and gender inequalities that perpetuate cycles of low-status employment within the US. Following

this, I explicate workers' first experiences of domestic work and its resultant impact. I find that first experiences function as more than a process of acculturating workers to the US, they enlighten workers of their position within America's racialized economic hierarchy and thus stratified reproduction. Throughout the chapter I reveal how immigrant women's first experiences concomitantly entrap them in low-status positions while communicating to them subordinating ideals of their work and identities. This differs from other forms of low-status work in that domestic work encompasses histories of racial and economic exploitation that contribute to its contemporary conception. Next, I examine how reproductive labor differs across racial lines through the experiences of white domestic workers. This difference demonstrates how stratified reproduction is revealed along racial lines. For women of color, domestic work becomes a part of their identities as undocumented and immigrant women, whereas for white women – even white immigrants – it holds a transient position. This chapter investigates how domestic workers encounter notions of subordination based on race, class, and ethnicity. These encounters uncover their position within stratified reproduction.

Immigration Process

Irma Watkins-Owens examines the migration of African-Caribbean women to the United States in her work "Early Twentieth-Century Caribbean Women: Migration and Social Networks in New York City." Watkins-Owens finds that most African-Caribbean migrants travelled to the United States to achieve possibilities that were otherwise not available due to various constraints. For the women I interviewed, I found that these constraints appeared as both social and economic restrictions. Many women highlighted the lack of job opportunities in their places of origin. The economic restrictions compounded with the fact that many women had family

members and friends already situated in the US, compelled these women to leave their home countries for the US. For others, social environments pushed the women to migrate to the states. In the case of Pamela and Jade, their relationships with men were instrumental in their decisions to migrate. The two women established that their immigration was not only a step towards economic freedom, but an escape from abusive relationships:

“I was a runaway person to put it that way... I decided this was a good opportunity to leave my ex and just run away. Cause he wasn't a really nice person so I had to basically run away... I think if someone loves you they shouldn't try to abuse you cause I was really young so I decided to run away.” (Pamela)

“I planned my run away from that marriage from day one and hoped that one day I would get out and be on my own... It was not easy because it was not a marriage of love. So there was a lot of feeling of abuse you know.” (Jade)

Both social and economic restrictions contributed to the women's decision to leave their home countries and move to the US. Upon arriving in the US, the women relied on their kinship network to find positions for work.

Kinship Networks and Limitations

The extant literature regarding immigrants' social networks tends to focus on the importance of kinship networks and the opportunities they can provide. Kinship networks often function to provide new immigrants with jobs, places of residence, and information that reduces the risk of returning to their home country (Menjívar, 1995). Social networks are especially important for domestic workers. Most workers find their first positions through kinship and social networks (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001; Anderson 2000; Glenn 1986). This occurs for several reasons. First, women often arrive to the US without any knowledge of available jobs. Second, finding work through kinship networks saves immigrant women from paying for services such as

employment agencies (Anderson, 2000). Lastly, women often rely on their family members and friends to vouch for them for jobs that need references (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001).

While these kinship networks can act as agents of positive development they can also produce forms of exploitation and occupational ghettoization. Social networks often do not account for work conditions and cannot guarantee that workers will be in safe environments (Anderson, 2000). Workers must trust that the employers recommended by their family members or friends will not abuse or exploit them (Anderson, 2000). In Rocio Rosales' work "Stagnant Immigration Social Networks and Cycles of Exploitation," Rosales demonstrates through in-depth interviews and ethnographic research the process of exploitation that occurs amongst a group of immigrant street-vendors. Rosales finds that exploitation occurs within the community as opposed to the normative understanding of ethnic enclaves as safe-havens. For this community, the kinship networks failed to insulate immigrant workers from exploitation and funneled workers into suboptimal jobs (Rosales, 2014). Similar to Rosales' research, I found that the funneling of workers into occupations with low social status occurs amongst domestic workers. Women's reliance on social networks restricts them to domestic work, thus recreating cycles of exploitation by wealthy employers.

Amelia first arrived in New York from the Barbados at the age of eighteen. She had just graduated from high school and was traveling to visit her sister. When I asked about her original plans she replied, "My hopes were to enjoy all things New York, the lights, the sights, the shopping... all the things that you get on a vacation!" What Amelia did not anticipate was that at the end of her vacation her sister would inform her that she would not be returning to her home in Barbados; she was to stay in New York and work as a babysitter. Though Amelia's arrival to New York may be unlike the typical immigrant narrative, her familial persuasion into domestic

work is not. All the immigrant women interviewed discussed their reliance on familial networks to find work. In most cases, families acted as sources of information. Women who needed work were able to access jobs because of information provided by their families. Sometimes it is as simple as calling a cousin or a sibling, but other times it can be more complicated such as calling on “my mother’s coworker’s daughter’s cousin.” I emphasize this to demonstrate the predominance of domestic work within ethnic kinship networks. The reliance on social networks operates to provide women with work while simultaneously constricting them to domestic work.

Like Amelia, Mia’s arrival in the United States took an unexpected turn. Mia immigrated to the US with her daughter and the intention to go to music school. She had spent much of her childhood playing different instruments, but focused mostly on drums and piano. Mia had spent her last couple of years in Trinidad and Tobago teaching music theory for secondary school children and was excited to move to the states to better her skills. Ultimately, Mia hoped that she would be able to get involved in the music field in the US. She strategically arrived during the summer with her daughter, planning on setting her up for school and then enrolling in classes for herself come September. Unfortunately, Mia was never able to go to music school. When asked about how she found her first job as a domestic worker Mia claimed:

In my cousin’s household, they had another cousin there who was in the field of nanny and she heard about this person was going for 2 weeks’ vacation and practically begged me. And I was free because it was May or June and school was starting in September. So, it was giving me a long break and then my uncle who was retired at the time say that it’s okay I can go and he will help me with my daughter. Cause it was live in and I never really stay away from her so it was a challenge to me but because of the persuasion of my family I decided to go and they promise to take good care of my daughter while I was away.

The job that was purported to be two weeks, lasted for months. Mia never enrolled in music classes and continued to do domestic work for over twenty years. Mia’s experience demonstrates

the way in which kinship networks can restrict choices and opportunities for immigrant women. Her family's persuasion into domestic work limited her access to jobs with higher status.

Mia differs from most of the women I interviewed in that she arrived in the US with clear expectations and goals. She knew she wanted to pursue music and believed that the US would provide her with better opportunities. Though her intent might differ from the other women, her process of acquiring work is ubiquitous. The kinship networks most immigrant women are embedded in operate to support them, but tacitly perpetuate cycles of low status employment and exploitation. This is important to note because the low status positions are often in contrast to the positions the women would be able to hold in their home countries.

Sidney, a nanny from Trinidad and Tobago who is now working on her masters in social work, explains that her immigration was due to her uncertainty about the future. When she left home at eighteen, she did so because she didn't know what she wanted to do with her life.

Sidney explained:

I have two older sisters and younger brother and they were very focused. One is a doctor, one studied hotel and tourism management and my brother studied international banking. And I was always like the black sheep and I couldn't figure out what I wanted to do. So I felt like if I came to America I'll have more opportunities.

The positions held by Sidney's siblings point to her socioeconomic status within Trinidad. Her siblings' placement in fields such as international banking, medicine, and tourism, imply that if Sidney were to remain in Trinidad her occupation may have held higher status than what is attributed to domestic work. Upon arriving to America, Sidney was not greeted with more opportunities but a kinship network with restricted possibilities. The job positions offered were only within the field of domestic work.

While Mia and Amelia's experiences with their family demonstrate the limitations of finding work through kinship networks, they also illuminate the way in which family and thus

power shape African-Caribbean women's immigration and employment. African-Caribbean women are often socialized to support themselves and their families, making their kinship networks reliant on their hard work and economic affairs (Watkins-Owens, 2001). The women interviewed could not escape from these socialized norms by migrating to the United States. Their responsibilities to their families followed them into their new beginnings. Neither Amelia nor Mia challenged their family's decisions as to what they should do or reflected negatively on these choices. Amelia even felt as if she had no power to argue with her family and their decision. She spoke without remorse, "I was still a child and in our culture what adult says goes. I had no say, I had no place to argue about it. My only response was okay if you say so."

The women interviewed also expressed that their lack of knowledge regarding the process of documentation and green-card holding came from the silence of their kinship networks. Most of the women interviewed are African-Caribbean immigrants whom for most of their time as workers were undocumented. Some women attributed the silence of their kinship networks to cultural contexts, however they conveyed that they wished their family members and friends had accurately explained the difficulty of gaining citizenship.

"I knew about a green card – let me say that. But I didn't know the process and so the reality of what it entails is very different from what I expected. I could honestly say that if I knew back in Trinidad what I experienced, I would not have come." (Sidney)

"We don't talk about this stuff as a community. I can say my passage in the early 90s when I came here, the conversation of documentation was not one that we spoke about openly at all. And you don't ask you don't tell. So I held on to that, and held on to my status of being undocumented for a really long time before I started talking about it... Cause there's a narrative that you're not supposed to talk about your status, no one is supposed to know." (Amelia)

Both Amelia and Sidney's kinship networks failed to properly inform them of the realities of being undocumented. This did not manifest in either of these women being deported, but it did

imprint their experiences in the US. For Sidney, her process of gaining citizenship was through several possible “green-card marriages.” During her stay in the US, her father passed away and her sister married. Sidney could not attend these events because she would not be able to return to the US. In order to maintain a life in the states, Sidney had to forfeit her ability to return home for any cause. This was not communicated to her ahead of time by her kinship network.

Similarly, Amelia does not discuss the legal repercussions of exposing one’s documentation status (i.e. deportation and confinement), she points to the way in which the lack of discourse impacts individuals on a personal level. Their experiences were thus shaped by the difficulties of being undocumented in the US. Amelia demonstrates the cyclical nature of this process. She was not spoken to about documentation and internalized that narrative to mean that she should not speak about her experience. This cycle is what contributes to women like Sidney immigrating and not fully understanding the limitations.

What is notable about these findings is the way in which immigrant women’s limited options result in the performance of domestic work. The position becomes entrenched in their lives and experiences of immigration. The role of domestic work in their lives was not altered by ambition or socioeconomic status in their home country. Women are funneled into domestic work through the limits of their kinship networks and are thus constrained by the lack of opportunities outside of this work. This both perpetuates cycles of exploitation while reproducing gender, class, and race inequality. It is necessary to note that for most immigrants, especially undocumented workers, low status jobs are the only positions they can inform their networks of.

First Experiences as Constructive

While domestic work is physically and emotionally taxing, its social perception as unskilled labor marks immigrant women and renders them vulnerable to exploitation from employers. The women interviewed noted that this is most apparent in the most despised form of domestic work – live-in work. Upon receiving work, the women interviewed followed the trajectory that is articulately outlined in Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo’s work *Domestica*. Hondagneu-Sotelo notes that women initially begin domestic work as live-in workers and then move to work as live-out nannies. Live-in work has multiple functions for migrant women workers. In the early 19th century, live-in work functioned to acculturate rural women to urban settings (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001; Romero 1992). Classified as the “bridging occupation,” live-in work offered typically European immigrant workers an opportunity to learn the middle-class values and skills necessary to enter the job market (Romero, 1992). Through learning middle class norms and values, immigrant women were able to access the means for social mobility (Romero, 1992). Today, live-in jobs often function to safeguard undocumented immigrant women from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001). Because live-in jobs are in private homes typically situated in middle and upper-middle class neighborhoods, undocumented workers feel safer as these areas are rarely targeted by ICE (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001). Live-in work is also considered an initial occupational step because it often leads to other forms of domestic work such as live-out work and house cleaning (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001).

Many of the workers interviewed shared with me their disdain for live-in work. For most of them, live-in work was not only their first job as domestic workers but their first experiences working in the US. Sidney, a nanny from Trinidad and Tobago who is now working on her

masters in social work, exclaimed, “When I first came they paid me \$120 dollars a week and within six months of my being there they dropped it to \$50 cause I didn’t have any family. And then within the next six months it was nothing...it was slavery.” Sidney continued, sharing that the only way for her to leave that job was to escape late at night. Though she felt exploited as a worker, Sidney reflects on her first experience of live-in work as a teaching experience. Each immigrant woman interviewed considered their first experience to be constructive, though they often sustained poor treatment. The women’s conceptions of their first work experience parallels and deepens the historical perspective of live-in work. Most scholars posit that live-in work allowed rural and migrant women to acculturate to the city and learn new ways of living. For the women that I interviewed, their live-in experiences functioned as more than an experience of acculturation. Live-in work operated to uncover for newly immigrated women the social and economic context of the US. These first experiences of live-in work illuminated for these women their positions in America’s racialized socioeconomic hierarchy. From my interviews, I found that workers undergo specific experiences that transmit to them their position within stratified reproduction and America’s broader racial and economic hierarchy.

The interviewees often attributed certain moments of clarity to their first experiences of live-in domestic work. These moments of clarity encapsulated times in which women gained tangible skills or more seriously, recognized racial or economic differences. For some, the moments were as benign as the acquiring of skills such as communication, time management, and understanding cultural differences, but for others they uncovered one’s position within a broader system of stratified reproduction. For Jade, her new work environment produced her recognition of wealth disparities. Coming from a family of five in Trinidad and Tobago, Jade never questioned her surroundings or what her family provided for her. When she arrived to the

US, she said “I started questioning myself. Oh, maybe I was poor when I was in Trinidad. I started thinking a lot about what poverty is... I’ve never lived in a big house like that, I shared a room with my siblings where we had double decker beds, and we didn’t have a choice... So, I started questioning whether I was poor or not.” Jade continued to establish that she was never bothered by her family’s economic status in Trinidad. “I had a pair of sneakers and when it was worn out in the sole I would cut a piece of cardboard to the shape of the sneakers and fit it in there.... It didn't even give me a thought that hey you don't have a good pair of shoes. I was contented you know.”

While Jade and others became aware of economic inequalities, other women’s first experience of domestic work elucidated racial and ethnic politics within the US. Both Sidney and Myra became cognizant of their position as Black women upon moving to the US and performing domestic work. Myra immigrated to the United States from Antigua in the 1990s. She decided to follow her boyfriend at the time, who was an American citizen and did not plan to stay for long. Upon working in the US she noticed that people treated her different as a result of her race. When Myra and I spoke over the phone she mentioned that she had dreadlocks in her hair. In Caribbean islands, dreadlocks are quite common and a symbol of Yoruba and Rastafari culture, however in the states they are often interpreted as dirty and unkempt (Agwuele 2016; Chevannes 1994). Myra noticed that her dreadlocks incurred negative treatment and made people around her uncomfortable. As a result, Myra felt her first encounter with racial discrimination. She began to think of Americans as prejudice and felt inferior because of her race and ethnicity. Sidney also attributed feelings of racial inferiority to her earliest experiences of work. She noted:

Coming from Trinidad, race wasn’t a big deal because the majority of people are black and I’ve known white folks. I interacted with them but not like where I felt like I was less than...it was the first time that I ever experienced somebody just assume a negative thing

about me and that kind of changed my perception about life. A lot of experience in life, it just changed. I started to view it all very differently from that point forward.

Sidney and Myra's sudden understanding of their race and where they stand in relation to white Americans is a common phenomenon within social sciences. Scholars as early as Frederick Douglass (1845) and W.E.B. DuBois (1903) discuss their first instances of racial realization and its meaning, however this typically occurred during stages of childhood or adolescence. For the women interviewed, because the racial context of the Caribbean is less polarized, their encounters of racial consciousness come once they migrate to the US. Recognizing the racial and class based differences and thus racialized inequality gives workers an insight into their relation to white employers. By learning that they are poor and black, immigrant domestic workers are thus met with the harsh reality of their situations. What is produced is not the experience of "double consciousness" as coined by DuBois, but an understanding of their place within stratified reproduction.

These encounters function as moments in which women's position relative to their employers is clarified. Because domestic workers are often in opposition to their employers in terms of social and economic capital, the differences noticed by these women are indicators of more than varying house sizes and hair preferences. Disadvantage and social inequality are revealed to workers and implicate greater systemic issues such as race, class, ethnicity, and citizenship based discrimination. As outlined in the previous chapter, embedded within domestic work is the history of slavery and women's subordination. Compounded with the historical symbolism of this work are the immigration policies that are made to accommodate capital demands while denying laborers citizenship (Chang, 2006). These symbolic and systematic forces contribute to the predominance of people like Jade, Sidney, and Myra within the field of domestic work.

Workers learn their position within stratified reproduction through racial and economic differences between them and their employers, but also through encounters with employers. First experiences of domestic work are constructive to worker's conception of stratified reproduction not only through realizations of disadvantage but through interactions with their employers. Because domestic work occurs within the private sphere which historically has been unregulated by law, workers often undergo forms of exploitation and abuse at the hands of their employers. In Patricia Hill Collins' work *Black Feminist Thought*, Collins discusses the importance of work in Black women's experiences of gender, sexuality, and motherhood. Utilizing Zora Neal Hurston's text, Collins demonstrates the nature of Black women's subordination through labor. Because Black women are likened to animals, they are dehumanized and thus exploitable (Collins, 2001). This occurrence arises through domestic work and the treatment of workers of color. Interactions between employers and employees reproduce social inequality and communicate notions of subordination to workers.

Most of the workers interviewed described specific instances in which they were reminded of their inferior position by their employers. While these encounters varied in intensity, they all reinforced the difference between immigrant workers and their employers. Jade's first job as a live-in domestic worker oscillated between good and bad. She described the daughter of the family to be sweet, clingy, loving, and everything that she wanted. The parents were more complicated. When the father of the family was around Jade experienced great treatment – she did not have to perform housework which she despised, and was allowed to join the family at the dinner table for meals. However when the father left, the mother would exercise her power over Jade through poor treatment. Jade explained with a disgusted look on her face, “When he was not there she put me in the corner with a little tray and told me you can have your meals here. And

feed Sasha the dog while you eat.” Her employer’s treatment not only denigrated Jade’s character and work ethic, but compared her to that of a dog. Through her actions, Jade’s employer communicated her feelings about Jade and the work that she did. Not only was she a domestic worker, but she was an animal who needed to consume food from the floor. From that point on, Jade knew that she no longer wanted to work in that environment, but could not leave because she needed the pay.

While Jade’s experience demonstrates the extremes of employer treatment, all the women interviewed shared stories of times when their employer either implicitly or explicitly devalued them and their work. Jade’s employer exposed her true feelings about Jade through making her eat with the family pet, but other employers communicated worker’s inferior status through more subtle means. Amelia came to understand how her employers valued her through her process of trying to acquire sick days. After a week and a half of taking care of two sick kids coughing, breathing, and even throwing up on her during 10-hour work days, Amelia came down with the flu. She called in on Thursday and Friday morning of that week to tell the father that she was too sick to come to work. She explained to me what happened when she returned to work that Monday:

“And by the Monday I got to work, he had some nerve to talk to me about being sick. And like why did I get sick? Or why did I not come to work while I was sick. And I was very verbal back to this employer in particular because I was so annoyed, um I remember saying to him well when I get sick I will ask God to make me sick on Saturdays and Sundays so I don’t have to inconvenience you.”

Amelia felt humiliated and angered by her employer’s actions. She was not angered by his disbelief of her sickness, but by his insistence that convenience had a higher priority than her health and wellness. She felt as if her employer proved that he did not recognize her as another human being that was able to get sick, but simply a worker in his household. As well, Amelia’s

employer demonstrated the boundaries between his children and his domestic worker. His children are able to get sick, however Amelia is not.

Jade and Amelia's experiences illuminate a theme amongst all the workers interviewed. Employers' treatment of their workers demonstrates their management of the boundaries between them and their employees. While workers interpreted their employers' poor treatment or lack of communication as denigrations of their character and humanity, it is apparent that the employers' treatment operated to reify social boundaries and thus stratification. These instances reminded the women of the status ascribed not only to their work but also to their communities. Diana experienced this several times on the job. At the young age of eleven Diana moved to the US. She was born in Mexico to a hard-working mother who performed domestic work both in Mexico and the US. Because Diana was born outside of the US she spent most of her life in the states undocumented until she received DACA in 2014. She explained to me:

If you're not like them or up to their level – they look down on you. Many of these employers they don't know that there are some of us who are lawyers who are teachers, nurses, doctors - they just think that just because the person doesn't speak the language they're not educated...they think we're stupid! We're not and I hate that!

Diana believes that her employer's poor treatment of her and other domestic workers comes from their position within a broader socioeconomic hierarchy. Because domestic work is interpreted as low-skilled labor that is done by inferior women, Diana's employers are at liberty to treat her poorly and assume her level of education and intellect.

Furthermore, workers are often enclosed in positions of subordination due to the expectations of their employers. The women articulated clearly their employers' expectations for workers to be agreeable and deferential. As demonstrated in Judith Rollins' (1985) work, domestic workers are encouraged to incorporate performances of ingratiation in order to mask

their real selves. These performances assist employers in viewing their workers as purely workers. By expecting roles of deference, employers are able to both confirm inequality and render their workers as invisible and subhuman (Rollins, 1985).

“Certain families you can say a lot but you can’t say too much cause they can fire you. You just have to follow their voice, whatever they want – you have to say yes all the time cause if you say you’re not going – you’re not getting the pay.” (Ariane)

“You tell ‘em what they want to hear... they don’t even know that I think!” (Sidney)

“When you prove to them that you're up to their level - maybe you don't have the degree but you're smart as they are - they don't want you to work there. They're afraid of you.” (Diana)

“I knew that working with people, they don’t want you to have the same thing they have. It was always that feeling of who are you, you’re just a nanny.” (Jade)

For the women interviewed, their employers’ treatment left them feeling as if they were not to be equal in any regard. By breaking the underlying hierarchy between employer and employee, workers risk forfeiture of pay or possible unemployment. Reproducing inequality becomes integral to sustaining their work. The treatment the women I interviewed endure during work as well as their employers’ enforcement of boundaries communicates to workers that both them and their work are to be undervalued, underappreciated, and unimportant.

Race Matters

At the start of this project, I expected to only interview immigrant women of color. This was a result of inundating myself with literature that only focused on the experiences of domestic workers who were immigrants or women of color. Although I did not realize it, I was rendering white workers invisible within a field of already invisible workers. Instead of perpetuating the silence that is often forced on domestic workers, I decided to broaden my research population.

From this I was able to interview three women whose experiences of domestic work vastly differed from the women who the former part of this chapter is devoted to. By extending my research population to include white women as well as European immigrant women, I found that race matters in conceptualizing of domestic work. Women's understanding of domestic labor and their relationship to the work varies across racial lines.

From their early stages of labor, white women's trajectory through domestic work differs from their immigrant counterparts. Instead of relying on informal kinship networks such as family and friends, white workers utilized different methods to acquire work. Sara found her first job through craigslist, while Amy used a highly-selective domestic work agency geared towards supporting college graduates. The application process for the agency was more intense than Amy had expected. The organization "SmartSitting," includes a six-step screening process, in which they vet the qualifications and background of the nannies and babysitters interested in being employed. "SmartSitting" is an example of top echelon agencies that place American "middle-class" white women with wealthy families exclusively as nannies (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001). On their website, "SmartSitting" states, "We support our babysitters and nannies from the job search all the way through employment by a SmartSitting family. We're committed to helping you further your personal goals, whether that's finding your next full-time, long-term family or a regular after-school position that makes it possible to live in New York while following your educational, artistic, or entrepreneurial pursuits" (SmartSitting, 2017). "SmartSitting" emphasizes the ability to assist workers in finding work and protecting them. Interested individuals must undergo a criminal background check, social security verification, and sex offender check. This is to ensure that families are matched with a certain caliber of workers. This process also operates to protect workers. Because the organization verifies families' information

as well, workers are protected from entering potentially exploitative and unsafe situations. Typically white, college educated, workers can assure that they will enter work environments that will not result in their debasement or devaluation. Employment agencies are also able to provide workers with a standardization of wages and ensure that workers will receive payment if their jobs are unexpectedly terminated. Workers are exempt from negotiating their wages and incurring awkward misunderstandings. The commitment to helping workers find jobs that are not exploitative and abusive not only protects workers but legitimizes their labor.

Though Sara and Amy underwent different processes to find domestic work jobs, their reliance on formalized methods rather than social networks illuminates key differences between them and immigrant workers. By using different tactics to gain positions, white women demonstrate their higher position within stratified reproduction. As explained earlier, I found that social networks often confined immigrant women to domestic work and limited their ability to find other choices. Informal kinship networks deterred women from pursuing their interests and inadvertently entrapped them in domestic work. Networks, lack of opportunities, and uncertainty regarding citizenship status forced immigrant women into careers in domestic work while white women entered into domestic work as tentative positions. The white women interviewed performed domestic work because of convenience rather than coercion from family or friends. Domestic work does not become a marker of identity for white women as it does for immigrant women. This is also signified by the language used by white women to describe their work. Throughout the interviews Amy would correct my usage of the word nanny, asking to refer to her as a babysitter. Similarly, Sara consistently referred to herself as a babysitter while describing the other Caribbean women she met as nannies. By using the term “babysitter,” Sara and Amy highlight the transitory nature of their work. A babysitter is someone who works

temporarily to make supplementary cash, rather than a professional in the field of domestic work. Emphasizing their identities as babysitters rather than nannies or childcare professionals explicates their position within stratified reproduction. They are not confined to this work, and thus experience labor differently.

While the immigrant women of color I interviewed felt as if their employers were in a constant state of boundary management, the white women interviewed rarely encountered this behavior. The white domestic workers, whether European immigrants or American born citizens, lacked interactions with employers that simultaneously reminded them of and reified their socioeconomic differences. Employers would even go to lengths to discuss explicitly their similarities with the white domestic workers. Rather than sense that their employers were constructing boundaries that established their higher status, the white domestic workers interviewed experienced their employers as relatable. Some workers even felt as if their employers went out of their way to ingratiate themselves with their employees. Sara, a twenty-four year old college graduate, explained to me the various ways in which her employers demonstrated their likeness to her. Like all her employers, Sara had attended a small liberal arts college and recognized the way this influenced her relationship with her employers. Speaking about her employers, Sara states, “Like she 'd get an alumni letter about all this stuff and she would complain about why is everyone up in arms. I mean that was another element like they saw me as like extremely relatable and I immediately had ease like comfortability that probably a lot of people don't get to experience.” Sara is cognizant of the way her race and class shape her experience with her employers. Her attendance at a prestigious liberal arts school allows her employers to perceive her as a social equal. While I cannot corroborate that Sara's employer found her to be extremely relatable, her understanding of their relationship differs greatly from

that of the immigrant women interviewed. Immigrant workers would describe instances in which they believed to have an amiable relationship but none ever believed that their employers related to them. Even Polina, a housekeeper who immigrated from Poland, explained that her older employers often saw her as a daughter. The ability to experience domestic workers as relatable not only led to better communication but preferential treatment. Amy's employers offered to host her wedding shower brunch at their apartment, Sara's pay her on days when they unexpectedly have to cancel, and Polina's spent hours talking her through difficult times. Though these occurrences might not seem extravagant, they diverge from the many experiences of immigrant domestic workers that have been interviewed.

In a broader sense, white domestic workers do not have to question their relationships with their employers and how their employers value their labor. When asked if they think their employers respect and value their work all three women responded immediately without hesitation, yes. Their relationships are uncomplicated by barriers such as language, race, ethnicity, citizenship, and class identification. Employers expressed appreciation for the white domestic workers I interviewed and lauded them through both material and immaterial means. This reveals that experiences of domestic work vary among race and class lines and in turn reproduce social inequality. The immigrant women of color who perform domestic work must discover methods to counteract the negative treatment that reflects their employers' true feelings about their work, while white workers are valued based on their race and class status.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I examined the women's experiences of immigration and first employment to demonstrate the way in which stratified reproduction initially appears in their

labor. Because of existing social inequality, the women I interviewed who immigrated to the US in hopes of finding more opportunities to work were met with restricted options. The reliance on kinship networks confined their opportunities and inadvertently constrained them in a cycle of exploitation that is marked by inequality. Once the women interviewed began to work, their interactions with their employers further emphasized their low-status position. The encounters between workers and employers revealed to workers their position within a hierarchy defined by race, citizenship, and ethnicity. These instances demonstrate the way in which interactions with employers can reinforce social boundaries and thus reproduce social inequality. The totality of these first experiences explicate how domestic work is shaped by stratified reproduction. Hierarchies of class and race become relevant within the work place due to the proximity between workers and employers. Within the experiences of the women I interviewed is a narrative of them learning their place. Their position within the global economy is embedded in the interactions that they have with their employers and the restrictions present within their labor options. This notion is further exemplified by the way in which experiences vary based on race, class, and ethnicity. The white domestic workers I interviewed expressed an ability to overcome social boundaries that immigrant workers of color were not able to cross. Because of their likeness to their employers through racial and class backgrounds, white domestic workers have a higher position within the global economy. The heightened value of their labor manifests into better treatment. White domestic workers do not encounter stratified reproduction in a manner that is similar to immigrant women of color because of their position within broader social stratification. From the experiences of the women interviewed, stratified reproduction becomes more than a way to understand how individuals experience reproductive labor, it becomes a wholly encompassing structure that their work is enmeshed within and shaped by.

Chapter 3: Working Women

How Domestic Work is Shaped by Stratified Reproduction

Scholars that focus on domestic work often discuss the way in which domestic workers become a part of the families they work for. Workers are often portrayed as part of the family and in some cases referred to as “mommy” by the children they care for (Rollins 1985; Colen 1995). In a sense, domestic workers become authority figures within the home that mimic the roles that are performed by parents. Workers’ day to day experiences involve taking children to their various activities, performing emotional labor, and at times putting their work before their families. The relationship that workers share with the children they care for as well as the families they work under can complicate their relationships with their own family members, and reproduce different forms of social stratification. In the previous chapter, I presented how stratified reproduction shapes workers’ pathway to domestic work as well as their first experiences. Stratification was reproduced through interactions with employers that functioned to edify workers of their low status positions. In this chapter, I discuss the way in which stratified reproduction structures the work process. By surveying the different day to day experiences of the domestic workers I interviewed, I show how stratified reproduction is not only a theory to understand their work, but one that shapes the work place. Through my examination of workers’ experiences as mothers, their usage of emotional labor, and their involvement in concerted cultivation, I demonstrate how workers become subject to stratified reproduction in ways they often cannot avoid.

Mothers at Work

Jade first moved to the US in 1998 after deciding that the economy in Trinidad was not suited to provide for her as a single mother. When she first arrived to the US, she resolved that it

was best for her son to stay in Trinidad and come once she was settled. She wanted to make sure that she was able to effectively provide for her son in her new setting. For Jade, she looked at raising a child as a collective experience. She explained that in the Caribbean, raising a child was a communal process in which “the village raised the child.” When she was at home in Trinidad she had family members that were able to help her raise her son, however her kinship network in the States was limited. After establishing a deal with her cousin in which he would homeschool Jade’s son and look after him when she was working, Jade was able to bring her son to the US. As Jade worked long hours, she felt comfortable knowing that her son was safe and being watched over by a family member. During a discussion of Jade’s management of her responsibilities as a domestic worker and as a mother, Jade responded by stating that her work, “put me in a place where I felt good about it. Nannying and going home to my son was great because I felt like I had just given so much of me, and I can share it with somebody who is really happy. So, I would go back home to my son even happier.” For Jade, negotiating the demands of work and family were easily managed because of the love she received from both her work kids and her real kid. Mothering for her was contingent on the care she was able to perform through emotion and financial stability. The relationship between work and family gave her mothering a depth that enabled her to appreciate both facets of her life.

In “Social Constructions of Mothering: A Thematic Overview,” Evelyn Nakano Glenn proposes a working definition of mothering that is contingent on cultural and historical contexts. Because mothering occurs within specific social contexts that vary based on one’s conditions it is important to understand mothering as a social construct, rather than a biological one (Glenn, 1994). Glenn’s introduction attempts to reconcile the differences between the hegemonic construction of motherhood and the lived experiences of women of color that challenge

motherhood's dominant conceptions. The relationship between motherhood and labor has been characterized by the various definitions of mothering and its relationship to gender and social norms. Mothering and gender are constitutive elements of each other in that mothering is assumed to be an inevitable consequence of women's reproductive functions (Glenn, 1994). Because it is depicted as natural, motherhood has often been used as a form of social control. Historically, women were relegated to private domestic spaces in a manner that was justified by the ideological power of "motherhood" (Glenn, 1994). Labor became an external entity that stood in opposition to mother's capabilities.

It is necessary to note however that these constructions of motherhood fail to recognize the diverse experiences of motherhood. Patricia Hill Collins and Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo tackle these divergent perspectives in their work. Collins demonstrates that the projected conceptions of mothering presume that mothers and children experience a degree of economic security, and have the ability to view themselves as individuals outside of a community (Collins, 1994). This contrasts the concerns and experiences of mothering patterns amongst Black women like Jade. Jade's cultural context emphasized the role of community in raising a child rather than an individualistic process. The traditional family model in which the family and work exist within separate spheres ignores the history of Black women engaging in low-paid service work (Collins, 2000). Labor and mothering are thus intertwined due to the financial stability Black women were able to achieve from finding work in the public sphere. Similarly, Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo and Enestine Avila's research describes how Latina women's diaspora communities reconstruct norms regarding mothering. Because women's involvement in work often means migrating to countries with more robust economies, mothering is conceived of as transnational. The women interviewed by Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila contest ideological

norms of mothering by incorporating forms of labor and spatial distance (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila, 1997).

From the group of eleven women I interviewed, six of the women had children of their own. The women that were also mothers explained to me how they navigated their responsibilities as parents and domestic workers. While workers' experiences contested norms regarding motherhood and labor, they also demonstrated the way in which stratified reproduction shapes their understanding of the relationship between motherhood and labor. Throughout the interviews the women discussed the difficulty of raising children and being a domestic worker. Workers often arrive at their place of employment early in the morning and leave late at night once the children they care for are asleep. These hours are often incongruous with workers' own children's schedules meaning that the women interviewed can go days without seeing their children. This is especially difficult for workers with young children. Diana initially became a domestic worker because she gave birth at a young age. As well, because she was undocumented she found it difficult to find work with a wage reasonable enough for her to support both herself and her newborn daughter. While her years as a domestic worker gave her the ability to support her daughter financially, she lamented the lack of memories she had of her daughter's early years. Diana explained, "The first time she walked, I wasn't there. The first time she said Mom, I wasn't there. I missed so many things when it was my job to do it, but I just couldn't cause I had to go to work. I'm the one supporting the family, so I feel like I owe my daughter four years of her life." Though Diana was spending the time away from her daughter working to financially support their family, she continues to experience pangs of guilt because of the loss of time.

Like other mothers interviewed, Diana realized that working unfortunately meant staying away from her child for long periods at a time. Workers expressed that the tension of negotiating

work and family intensified during holiday seasons and special occasions. While holidays and special occasions are perceived of as family events, they often result in employers requiring more help because of the expectation to entertain guests and extended family members. These events are emblematic of the tension between work and family for domestic workers with children. Ariane, like other workers, explained to her employers that because those days were significant she wished to spend them with her son rather than the family she worked for.

I would like to be home Christmas and New Years with my child. One time she didn't tell me and I was blindsided. I didn't even ask. When we went to the Caribbean we stayed there for Christmas and I got a little bit mad and I didn't show them but I got mad. Before we go she said when we come back we're gonna raise your money. She never raised the money. I never spent Christmas with my son, not even New Years.

Though Ariane clearly stated to her employers her preferences, their needs took precedent over hers. As a worker, Ariane was expected to support the family that she worked for and ignore her desires for her own family. Ariane's recounting demonstrates the way in which working mothers must incorporate work into their methods of mothering. Because Ariane's employer placed her in a situation in which she had to choose between her wages and time spent with her son, she had to negotiate the outcome of each decision. For her, being a good mother was contingent on providing care both emotionally and financially. The promise of a wage increase led Ariane to believe that the time spent away from her son would be worthwhile financially. Though she did not receive the payment, Ariane's experience demonstrates how domestic workers navigate their status as mothers and vulnerable workers.

Diana and Ariane's negotiation of work and family is not specific to domestic work. As shown in Arlie Hochschild's work *The Second Shift*, women's experience of labor and family are constricted by norms of motherhood and gender. Hochschild outlines the different ways in which families navigate labor both within and outside the household. Women often juggle the

responsibility of maintaining the home and children with the responsibility to be competent and competitive workers (Hochschild, 1989). In time, the additional labor performed within the household amounts to an extra month of twenty-four hour days a year. This transforms work within the house from a responsibility into a chore like shift (Hochschild, 1989). Diana highlights this when she states that taking care of her daughter was her job, but nannying was her work. While Hochschild's research does not focus on domestic workers, it is important to note that domestic workers experience additional constraints based on their economic vulnerability. When workers negotiate between their families and their work, the outcome could result in the forfeiture of pay or the loss of a job. In the event that workers are fired by employers, there is no legal precedent for domestic workers to receive any form of severance. For this reason, the ramifications and lasting impact of the negotiation between the first and second "shift" is greater for domestic workers.

Though negotiation of work and family can be found outside domestic work, the domestic workers interviewed managed identities of both the breadwinner and the mother. The women I interviewed recognized the way in which their families are reliant on their emotional care, but more specifically their wages. They pointed to the fact that their job is to be there for their family members, but to also provide for them in the form of financial stability. The workers' interviewed demonstrate the way in which the feminization of globalization impinges on their experience of labor and mothering. Women play a critical role in the global economy as migrant workers. International migration patterns show that migrant work forces disproportionately consist of women (Sassen, 2007). This means that women are involved in the maintenance of both public and private economies. The feminization of globalization results in women identifying as both mothers and breadwinners. These two categories symbolize the

importance of their contributions economically and emotionally. Being the forefront of migrant work however, does not protect domestic workers from experiencing economic vulnerability. Their economic prowess is often paired with exploitation and labor marginalization, which is evident in their position within stratified reproduction. The economic and social stratification that renders them vulnerable to exploitation while simultaneously responsabilizing them for their families economic and emotional well-being demonstrates how stratified reproduction shapes their labor.

Navigating Emotional Labor

In Arlie Hochschild's pioneering work *The Managed Heart*, Hochschild introduces the term emotional labor and defines its role in service work. Emotional labor refers to labor that requires the suppression or production of emotion in order to complete the task of work (Hochschild, 1983). While certain jobs necessitate expending physical labor, jobs that tend to be within the realm of service work require performing different forms of emotional labor. Hochschild finds that for flight attendants emotional labor is critical to their jobs as it becomes a part of the work (Hochschild, 1983). Though Hochschild focuses on flight attendants, her analysis of the emotional labor and its importance in the work place is necessary to include within the discussion of domestic work. Because domestic work involves the process of raising children and engaging with difficult employers, work often includes an aspect of performing emotional labor. As well, because of the vulnerable economic position many domestic workers are in, the necessity of performing emotional labor well is integral to their ability to maintain employment. Emotional labor exists in many forms for domestic workers. For some, emotional labor is deployed during the process of negotiating feelings of love for children, while for others

it arises when workers have to brave physical and emotional abuse. In this next section, I outline the various ways in which domestic workers manage their emotions to navigate the work place.

Similar to flight attendants, domestic workers work in a field in which workers must negotiate both the public and private sphere. Hochschild (1983) refers to this as the “transmutation of an emotional system.” Public and private actions become interconnected and are managed by large organizations and profit motives. In the case of domestic workers, the management of private and public relations is enacted by a single employer rather than a large-scale corporation. In addition to the isolated relationship, workers are often in close proximity to their employers which heightens surveillance of behavior and emotion while simultaneously intensifying how workers must perform emotional management. How parents’ wishes for workers to engage with their children and their homes is thus a crucial part of domestic workers’ profession. However, it became apparent through this research that the domestic workers’ performance of emotional labor often complicated the relationship that workers had with their employers.

Upon being offered a job as a nanny for a family, Diana was told by her employer to not give the children too much affection. This was a challenge for Diana because she was used to being affectionate towards her own child. She explained “I’m not like that. With my daughter, I hug her and kiss her and I tell her I love you. I tell her you look great you look beautiful every single second. And for me to not be able to tell these little girls... I don’t know.” For Diana, acts of emotion came easily. She saw affection as an extension of her positive feelings towards others and did not find it necessary to filter those acts. Her employer’s parameters demonstrate the tension between the public and private management of emotion that occurs for domestic workers. Because the children Diana cared for were involved in a market transaction of labor and profit,

they became identified as a part of the public though her work often used parts of her private self. In order to keep her job, Diana needed to negotiate the feelings that arose through caring for young children as work.

Diana's challenge of managing her affection towards the children was compounded by their emotional response to her. Like the flight attendants, the domestic workers interviewed had to manage not only their own feelings but the feelings of the children they cared for. When asked how the children would respond to her leaving at the end of the day, Diana responded by describing how loving the children were. She noted, "They would come and kiss me and hug me and I tried not to cause she [the employer] would look at me and I was like I can't do anything. I would stand there and let them do it, I wouldn't touch them." In Diana's case, emotional labor was performed to manage her emotions towards the children as well as theirs towards her. Instead of giving in to the affection of the children, Diana had to work to appear neutral for the sake of her employer. Her negotiation of both her emotions and the children's emotions made her job more difficult because of her need to preserve the wishes of the parents.

While Diana navigated the emotions of herself and the children she cared for to benefit the parents, other workers navigation of emotions was enacted explicitly for the benefit of the children. Sidney expressed this sentiment when discussing the relationship with one of the children she took care of. While her relationship with the mother was less than great, Sidney felt a very strong connection to Emma, the woman's daughter. Though young, Emma had been going to therapy for some time and was prescribed medication such as Ritalin to help with her ADHD. Sidney explained that when her employer met with Emma's therapist, the therapist would say, "Do not get rid of Sidney!" She continued, "Because her parents were divorced and she always felt that I was the stable person in her life. So she [the therapist] would say the worst thing that

you could do to Emma is to get rid of Sidney.” For Sidney, domestic work was not solely navigating her emotions as a worker, but also the feelings of this young girl. The emotional labor involved in Sidney’s work was augmented by Emma’s dependence on her presence. This complicated Sidney’s ability to leave once she was fired by Emma’s mother. Because Sidney’s employer was jealous of the relationship between Emma and Sidney, she physically forced Sidney to leave and asked for her to not return to the job. Sidney understood how important she was to Emma both emotionally and mentally, and could not leave without letting Emma know she was not abandoning her. Sidney articulated, “I just wanted Emma to know that I loved her and I still cared. It wasn’t about her.” In this instance, Sidney’s emotional labor was not for the benefit of herself or her employer, but the child she was taking care of. She was cognizant of the impact her departure would have on the young girl and enacted emotional labor to demonstrate her care for Emma.

For Diana and Sidney, emotional labor encompassed the management of their feelings as well as the feelings of the children they took care of. Their awareness of the children’s affection towards them added another dimension to their work that often complicated the relationship the workers had with their employers. Diana and Sidney’s emotional labor operated to assuage the feelings of parents and children, but left them vulnerable to emotional distress. Other workers interviewed accounted for this by using emotional labor to distinguish between their work emotions and their outside emotions. Some workers described moments in which they actively tried to emotionally distance themselves from the children they take care of because of the vulnerable position emotion can put them in. When asked if she felt like a mother figure for the children she cared for, Pamela responded by stating “I try not to cause sometimes it’s hard once you quit a job.” For Pamela, emotional labor is enacted to maintain a barrier that protects her

emotions from becoming a part of the work. She must manage her emotions in a manner that allows her to perform her work efficiently for both herself and the family. Similarly, Amelia noted that during her work hours she acted as if the children she took care of were hers. She stated, “From the moment I walk in the house to the moment I leave, they’re my children and I protect them like they’re mine even though I don’t have kids. And I feel like a mother bear with her cubs, make certain that everything I do is centered around these children because I know they’re learning from me.” Though in this instance Amelia appears to conceive of the children she cares for as her own she later stated, “I never saw the kids as my kids, my person kids. I knew they were my work kids, my kids that I was caring for, and I understood that clarity. I was very very clear about that.” These two instances demonstrate the mental and emotional work that the domestic workers interviewed underwent in order to distinguish their roles from those as familial care givers. For Amelia to perform her job, she needed to construct a mental category in her mind to describe the position of the children she performed care for.

For both Amelia and Pamela, emotional labor was used in their favor rather than for the benefit of their employers and their respective families. Because care work often utilizes skills and emotions that appear in individual’s private lives, workers are susceptible to conflating their work families with their real families. This resulted in the workers interviewed employing different methods of emotional labor. The vulnerable economic position also influences workers need to perform emotional labor. For all the workers discussed above, emotional labor became a factor in workers’ attempts to keep their jobs or make their work environments better. Emotional labor becomes imbued with power both economically and emotionally. Workers’ different techniques of incorporating emotional labor into their work enable their management of the tenuous divide of the public and private realm that is their work environment.

The criticality of emotional labor for the domestic workers interviewed implicates a larger structure of gender and economic inequality. Throughout Hochschild's (1983) research she indicates the gendered division of emotional labor. Though both men and women perform emotional labor, women's usage has a greater importance in their livelihoods. Because women have less access to wealth, power, and status, emotional labor becomes a resource that they can use to make up for material resources they lack (Hochschild, 1983). Hochschild's analysis can be extended to understanding the performance of emotional labor amongst domestic workers. The many ways in which emotional labor is used by the domestic workers interviewed is demonstrative of how emotional labor becomes a resource within the work place. Like skills of time management and organization, emotional labor is cemented as a tool for domestic workers to use to manage their work environments. Because the work environment of domestic work is situated within the global economy, the techniques used within the work place have broader implications. The incorporation of emotional labor into domestic work explicates the vulnerable position that workers are in and how stratified reproduction shapes their labor.

The Burden of Concerted Cultivation

During the interviews, women shared stories about the way in which they had to manage the hectic schedules of the children they were paid to care for. Typical days for the women interviewed consisted of taking children to activities such as art classes, music classes, play groups, swim lessons, and the like. In order for these women to work for these families they needed to be able to navigate the high demanding schedules of the children they were caring for. Though parents sign children up for intense schedules that require a lot of time and energy, the people who will be navigating those schedules will be their domestic workers. The women's

experiences demonstrate the conditions that they work in as well as the way in which they must manage high demands in order to maintain employment.

The children cared for by the domestic workers that I interviewed were involved in a form of childrearing termed concerted cultivation. In *Unequal Childhoods*, Annette Lareau outlines the way in which parents' social class impacts children's life experiences. Lareau posits that economic constraints influence the methods of parenting used by different parents (Lareau, 2003). For working class families, parenting tasks are providing food and housing, getting children to bed on time, and having them ready the next day, whereas their middle-class counterparts facilitate strategies of concerted cultivation (Lareau, 2003). Concerted cultivation is described as parents' role in developing children in order to cultivate certain talents (Lareau, 2003). Children that engage in the process of concerted cultivation tend to have busy schedules that include many activities such as piano lessons, dance classes, and team sports. Lareau's research focuses on the implications of concerted cultivation in children's lives as they mature, however concerted cultivation has strong implications for women performing domestic work. The parents that have the economic ability to structure their child's lives through the cultivation of skills tend to be the ones that can afford to employ a domestic worker to manage the child's life. In an era in which concerted cultivation is an important method to raising children, domestic workers often have the burden of organizing and managing the hectic schedules of the children they care for.

During her research, Lareau described stories of family members "racing from activity to activity" (Lareau, 2003). Family life revolved around the activities the children were involved in. Younger siblings were forced to come along while entire days and leisure time was consumed by the children's activities. I encountered these stories during my research, however it was from the

perspective of the domestic worker. Instead of parents facing hectic schedules, the domestic workers interviewed expressed that they were often the ones left to juggle the multiple activities and obligations of the young children.

In some cases, managing the children's hectic schedules translated to workers spending money on matters that should be paid for by their employers. In discussing her experience of managing children's hectic schedules Ariane explained:

You have to take the children – they're going to the library or to ballet dancing – they ask you to use your own car, they offer gas, and they don't buy the gas. You have to use your own money to get the gas, but you're driving their kid. Some of them give you the credit card to buy the gas once – for them that's like a year of gas you're buying and they don't even reimburse you. Before you say too much you have to look back. If you're fired it's not easy to get a job.

For Ariane taking the children to their various different activities and events cost her money. Instead of being paid extra by her employer to take the kids to their necessary pastimes, Ariane had to incur the payment herself. In certain instances this might be an oversight of her employer, however that does not detract from the fact that Ariane had to take on financial responsibility in order to properly perform her job. While part of her job was managing the schedules of the young kids and taking them to their activities, the burden of paying for transportation was pushed onto Ariane. Incurring this extra fee was not a choice because of Ariane's economic vulnerability. She felt coerced economically to allow her employers to take advantage of her role as a care taker, for if she pushed back and asked for reimbursement she was at risk of losing her job. Ariane's experience demonstrates the way in which concerted cultivation becomes another facet of the work that is emotionally, physically, and economically taxing.

Concerted cultivation impacted workers economically through the money they would spend on providing for children during long days, but also when workers were forced to recount

the days to their employers. As noted by Lareau, middle-class parents often envision their raising of their children as a process of developing them to cultivate certain skills and talents (Lareau, 2003). Because parents see themselves as involved in the process of their child's maturation, they often feel entitled to the knowledge of children's days and activities. Sara explained that after long days of nannying, her employers would express their interest in her day. In discussing the questions her employers would ask her Sara stated:

Oh my god, every day Grace's mom. Every day I'd leave and she'd be like what did you do today? She would be like let's have a check in. It was kind of annoying and kind of intrusive. At the same time there's an entitlement cause it's her kids. But like literally, [she would ask] well did you do this? How'd you do this? Who'd you hang out with. I'd be there for 10 minutes telling her about the day every fucking day.

Sara was clearly frustrated by the constant check-ins that her employer forced her to have at the end of the day. As a parent that used concerted cultivation to raise their child, understanding the dynamics of Sara and Grace's day allowed the mother to inadvertently manage the daughter's schedule. However, as a beginning domestic worker Sara interpreted these interactions as her employer's entitlement to her time and disregard of her own personal schedule. The time consumed by the conversations between her and her employer bothered Sara more than the fact that they were having the conversation. After speaking to other domestic workers, Sara had a different perspective. She explained, "I would tell the other nannies this and they were like I would not deal I would just walk out. They would tell me to charge for that time." As more seasoned workers understood, time was money. Sara's employers' entitlement to her time indicated more than an interest in her day, but an exploitation of her labor. Similar to Ariane, the parent's usage of concerted cultivation to raise their children manifested into an unforeseen economic burden for Sara.

While Ariane and Sara's experiences with their employers demonstrate the way in which concerted cultivation became their economic and emotional responsibility, they also point to the ways in which domestic workers are involved in class reproduction. Lareau (2003) argues that concerted cultivation and its associated practices give children advantages that other forms of parenting can not. Because activities such as playing soccer or learning piano are more likely to become social and cultural capital, children who experience forms of concerted cultivation are more adept at interacting with institutions outside the home (Lareau, 2003). By interacting with adult authority figures to learning how to assert one's wants and needs, middle-class children learn how to make bureaucratic institutions work to their advantage (Lareau, 2003). In this sense, concerted cultivation is a process that engages in the reproduction of social stratification.

Working-class children whose parents do not have the means to enroll their children in various different activities are put at a disadvantage by not developing the skills to benefit from institutions and bureaucracy. By taking on the role of the parent who shuttles children from activity to activity, domestic workers are thus implicated in the reproduction of inequality.

The enactment of concerted cultivation works to expand the definition of stratified reproduction to incorporate children's experiences. In conceptualizing of reproductive labor, the emphasis is traditionally placed on the way in which performing domestic work reifies social inequality through the subordination workers encounter in the work place. Worker's interactions with employers and social institutions are used to demonstrate the reproduction of the notion that domestic work is low-skilled work. Scholars rarely focus on workers' involvement in the production of middle-class persons through concerted cultivation. Incorporating an analysis of concerted cultivation uncovers way in which domestic workers inadvertently become involved in the reproduction of social stratification.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I outlined the various ways in which stratified reproduction shapes workers' experiences on the job. Though workers encounter stratified reproduction through their experiences of labor and first employment, it continues to shape their work through workers' usage of emotional labor, the management of children's lives, and how they navigate mothering. As working mothers, the domestic workers I interviewed negotiated their roles as both mother and breadwinner. The feminization of globalization resulted in the women working to support their families, while also attempting to meet standards and norms regarding mothering. Their responsibility for the emotional and economic livelihoods of their families is a result of both gender ideology regarding mothering and globalization's influence on their social positions. The positioning of domestic work as a low-status occupation within stratified reproduction shapes workers' identities as workers and mothers. Stratified reproduction also instructs the work place through workers' usage of emotional labor. Economic vulnerability that results from labor marginalization manifests into workers' reliance on emotional labor within the work place. The necessity of emotional labor as resource is demonstrative of workers' broader limited access to power. Lastly, by being involved in concerted cultivation the domestic workers interviewed became a part of the process of producing middle-class children as functioning middle-class subjects. These three different occurrences on the job demonstrate how external processes impinge on women's reproductive labor and shape their experiences in unavoidable ways. The domestic workers I interviewed are thus subject to stratified reproduction and the global and economic practices that are embedded within it.

Chapter 4: Resistance

How Domestic Workers Counteract Notions of Subordination to Produce Meaningful Work

I met Jade at a national assembly for domestic workers in Washington DC. Though small in frame, Jade was a powerful worker and leader. Nearly every person I spoke to about my research implored me to talk to her. For several weeks we contacted each other back and forth, figuring out the perfect time to meet. Between working and maintaining active engagement in the domestic worker movement, Jade did not have much time to devote to an undergraduate thesis. She was excited about the project however, because of the great deal of worth she places in her work. After working as a domestic worker for over twenty years, Jade had a very clear view of her role as a domestic worker both within the family and within the greater economy. She refused to allow her employers to denigrate the level of her work and the skill that she had gained after years of work. As we sat in her apartment with Oprah Winfrey's *O Network* playing in the background, Jade shared with me moments in which she felt dehumanized and subordinated by her employers because of the work she did. At times, she felt as if her employers didn't care about her and saw her as just a domestic worker, rather than a person of importance. This lack of recognition upset Jade for several reasons. She was angered by her employer's insistence on making her feel unimportant, but more so the fact that they did not take her work seriously. She stated to me with great clarity in her tone, "I'm a professional nanny. I understand clearly the part I play and the job I do. There is no corporate job out there that is better than what I do. It's one of the most important jobs and I do take it seriously!"

Jade's frustration toward her employer's disavowal of the importance of her work was not unique. Many of the women interviewed discussed moments in which their employer's acts of devaluation upset them because it confirmed their lack of appreciation for care work. When employers would ignore their worker's grief about the children acting up, or question workers

about their ability to handle the work load, the domestic workers felt as if their skill level was being questioned. While these interactions uncovered the lack of respect employers have for domestic work, they simultaneously demonstrate how valuable workers find their labor to be. For workers, the recognition of their worth was often provoked by recalling unfavorable interactions with employers in which the women felt as if they had to assert their value. These interactions operate to assist workers in the construction of meaningful work. In this chapter, I outline different moments in which workers challenge the notions of domestic workers and domestic labor. Some workers relied on forms of resistance that was individual in nature. These methods targeted the symbolic conceptions of domestic work through interpersonal relationships and intellectual work, meaning the performance of skills and moments of personal recognition. I refer to these methods as individual/symbolic. Other workers were involved in resistance through collective/political methods. This consists of the involvement in the social movement organization the National Domestic Workers Alliance. Through both individual/symbolic and collective/political methods, I found that the women interviewed resisted notions of domestic workers as submissive, unskilled, and unimportant.

Individual/Symbolic Resistance

More than a Mother

In the previous chapter, I discussed the way in which the mothers interviewed experienced their labor as domestic workers. The mothers interviewed conceptualized of their work in reference to the benefits it had on their children. They recognized that though they were not always present during crucial childhood moments, their ability to financially support their children gave their work meaning. The meaning produced through the recognition of the

financial impact of their work enabled workers to push through long hours and compromising conditions. Motherhood is thus constituted by the ability to provide financial stability. This parallels the extant literature regarding transnational mothering wherein children are entrusted to family members while the mother's care is demonstrated through financial contributions (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001, Lutz 2011). Women's relationship to work informs their conceptions of motherhood and vice versa. Though scholars of domestic work examine how work and family simultaneously construct each other, they do not address the way in which these constructions assist workers in the production of meaningful work. I found that the mothers interviewed utilized a conceptual framing of performing domestic work as more than mothering that allowed them to resist the denigrating conceptions of domestic work as demeaning labor. By framing domestic work as "more than mothering," workers underscore the importance of their labor as well as the skill necessary to enact it.

During the interviews, I asked the workers who were also mothers whether they believed there was a difference between nannying and mothering. The six women uniformly responded yes. From their assertions of the distinctions between providing care as a mother versus as a worker, the interviewees demonstrated the intensity of their labor. Ariane explained that as a domestic worker "you're more than a mother cause you do more than the mommy's doing." These assertions were not wrong. Workers' shared stories of long work days that were made more intense due to the lack of assistance from employers. "When you come home what do you think you should do. You should help! But you go upstairs, you're on the phone and they're calling you 'Mommy! Mommy!' It's a little bit exhausting," Ariane continued. While employers have the ability to mentally check out in their homes, domestic workers must maintain high levels of attention and energy to perform their jobs. This alters the significance and positionality

of domestic workers. “Mother” becomes a position that requires less commitment and resilience than the domestic worker. Mia noted that the distinction between mother and nanny is embodied in the protection of the child. Because the children that domestic workers are paid to care for are not their own, workers described feeling more pressure to care and protect them. Mia shared:

It’s different because you are the nanny and the protection is a number one cause. When it’s your child you can always do what you want to do and it will be your responsibility. The other one you have to be more accountable, it’s a difference. You protect that child more than you protect yours cause it’s a job and you’ve been paid for it.

The implications of raising a child as work rather than as an act of love manifests in workers feeling overprotective of the child. The payment that is incurred for taking care of a child imbues power into the position that is not assigned to mothers.

The interviewees conception of the difference between their work and mothering functions to resist the notion of their work as demeaning, as well as the hierarchy between worker and employee. Mary Romero (1992) emphasizes the role of domesticity in the construction of women’s identities as mothers and wives. To be a good mother or wife requires caring for one’s family’s needs as well as performing domestic work within the home (Romero, 1992). By hiring another woman to perform household labor, women challenge the instrumentality of household work to their identities. This however defined domestic work as an unskilled occupation for women laborers (Romero, 1992). Similarly domestic workers function to reproduce the mother’s higher status in contrast to herself (Anderson, 2000). Workers’ ability to distinguish their role separate from the mother’s symbolically challenges the perception of work as unskilled. By recognizing the significance of their work in opposition to the mother, the domestic workers interviewed are able to produce meaning in their work. Similarly, the distinction between the two roles allows workers to consider their work as “real work” rather than labors of love.

Within the act of separating themselves from their female employers, the domestic workers I interviewed expressed judgement based on race and class to invest power back into their work. As discussed in Ariane's discussion above, workers are often bothered by the lack of time and energy the mothers they work for put into taking care of the children. In describing the demands that she has at work, Pamela forcefully stated:

You know sometimes it's just not fair. You need to come home as a parent at a certain time cause you remember that child is getting older and that child wants to sit down and eat with you and that is very important. You can't be coming home at 8, 9 at night, you need to read to that child... They don't do their part. I take care of all my kids, that's my job.

Pamela points to the discrepancy in the amount of energy she puts into her role as a parent versus how much time is spent by her employer. As a domestic worker, she recognizes the importance of spending time with children and showing them affection. Pamela's understanding of being a good parent is being physically and emotionally present for the children, an act she believes is not done by her employers. Through the process of judging her employers' roles as parents, Pamela is able to boost her confidence as a parent and as a worker. She views herself in opposition her employers because of the care that she can provide to her own children. Diana expressed a similar sentiment throughout our interview. When asked to compare the difference between herself and her employers she noted, "Those kids need love from their parents and their not getting it. It's a busy work I guess but they make sure that they have a house and I don't know a car and bank accounts and then their kids. To me maybe we might struggle a little bit but my daughter she knows I love her a lot." Similar to Pamela, Diana's judgement of her employers functioned to inflate her identity as a mother. She believed that for her employers their signifiers of class such as extravagant houses, luxury cars, and bank accounts, were more important than

their relationships with their children. In contrast, Diana and her daughter may not be as financially stable, however their emotional relationship has more depth.

While Pamela and Diana's criticism of their employers repositions them as good parents and workers, embedded within them are class based judgements. Though working long hours and becoming financially secure can provide for children economically, it is not demonstrative of emotional care. The domestic workers interviewed saw their employers high paying occupations as a hindrance to their relationships with their children. The women interviewed however did not recognize the parallels between them and the lives of their employers. As discussed in the previous chapter, the domestic workers interviewed were often forced to forfeit time with their families because of their commitment to their work schedules. Economic vulnerability made work's primacy in their lives a necessity. In contrast, the employers of domestic workers are often middle to upper class individuals. Their lives are not plagued by the economic vulnerability that shapes domestic workers' lives. For this reason, the women interviewed view their employers' devotion to work as superfluous. The domestic workers believe that because they have the stability and security to spend time with their children they should. The judgements that the women interviewed made regarding the parents of the children they care for reinvested power into domestic work and symbolically repositioned workers' status within stratified reproduction.

Blowups and Dignity

In Pierette Hondagneu-Sotelo's work *Domestica*, Hondagneu-Sotelo finds that job terminations and other moments of contention between workers and employers signify the way in which work is valued. Through arguments with employers and firings, workers recognized that their work was not being recognized as real, skilled labor. Hondagneu-Sotelo focuses on

how the women interpret these instances as indicators of employers' lack of appreciation for workers, however it is important to analyze what these occurrences mean to workers as well. Examining the moments in which workers choose to leave jobs and argue with employers similarly uncovers the significance that they attribute to their labor and thus themselves.

For Sidney and Ariane, moments of disagreement with employers enabled the women to reconstruct their position as submissive workers. Rather than allow their employers to disrespect them and denigrate their character, these women pushed back to protect the meaning of the work they performed as well as their value as workers. When Ariane began working as a domestic worker she rarely negotiated her wages with her employers. Because she desperately needed the work and did not recognize its significance she decided to take whatever the parents offered to pay. While working as a nanny for a family of two, the mother became pregnant and promised to increase Ariane's wages to match the addition of another child. Once the baby girl was born, Ariane waited patiently for her employer to raise her wages. She didn't want to burden the mother and assumed she had forgotten due to the birth of the new child. As well, during that time the car that Ariane would drive to work and take the children to lessons in would sometimes break down because of its old age. After three months of waiting for a pay increase, Ariane's employer purchased a new car and told her that the car was a raise. Ariane explained:

She bought that car for her children, cause my car was old and I had to fix it all the time. She said that's your raise you can take the car home and you can drive the children home. We can help you sometimes to buy gas. So I said no, that's not my raise. That's your children's car to go anywhere they want to go. It's not my raise. You [the mother] promised you're gonna raise my money and she never did. So I quit that job.

For Sidney, one employer's jealousy of her relationship with the daughter manifested in what Hondagneu-Sotelo (2001) would consider a "blow up":

When she fired me and said I had to get out of her house, that was the biggest show down cause she saw the real West Indian. When she said get out of my house I said okay I'm getting out of your house. And she put her hands on me and she said, you will never be anything and your life is nothing. And I said get your fucking hands off of me and she never heard me talk like that and I let her know. I said I will get out of your house and I'll get on with my life and I will be okay, but you will always be fat always in therapy and always on medication. Those were my parting words, and she just burst out crying. And she went into her bed and it was like take that! For everything that you have ever done to me, take that!

Though these two instances differ in intensity and outcome, both Sidney and Ariane did not accept their employers' poor treatment and tacit denigration. Both workers utilized moments of contention with their employers to challenge their role as submissive workers that will sustain any kind of treatment. Rather than be exploited and undervalued, Sidney and Ariane found the ability to push back and resist their employers attempts to exploit and disparage their work. As well, through these instances Sidney and Ariane uncovered their appreciation for the work they do. Sidney discovered that she could have a voice within her work and not allow her workers to have control over her life, while Ariane found that she could advocate for her rights in terms of payment. Through these experiences both workers realized the worth of their labor and their ability to have agency in their treatment.

While Sidney and Ariane used contentious moments to revalue their work and challenge their position as subordinate workers, Amelia's response to employer's treatment challenged the notion of domestic work as unskilled. During Amelia's twenty years of working as a nanny, she worked for several different families. From working with various different children and families of different sizes, Amelia gained a skill level that she did not have when she first became a domestic worker. She explained that her work "took a level of discipline and rhythm that I had to create for having two kids because the youngest child goes on the oldest child's schedule and its only me the adult throughout the entire day coordinating two kids with two sets of activities that

are not in the same location across the city so it was really becoming rhythmic.” Though Amelia recognized the amount of time and effort she put into the logistical aspect of domestic work, her employers continued to see her work as unskilled. She recalled one day in which her employer questioned how she was able to manage the children she cared for. Amelia responded with an annoyed look on her face:

I was taken aback. I'm with these kids five days a week, 50-60 hours a week and you're asking me how I manage two kids in the playground. My response was to the dad, I take my head off and I leave it at the gate. How do you mean how do I handle them, I have to handle them! When it's me alone and two kids, I have to teach my kids that they're both in the same play area at the same time. Two kids... magic!

While Amelia was annoyed by her employer's questioning of how she managed her work, it appeared that she was more annoyed by the lack of recognition of her skill as a domestic worker. By stating that she takes her head off in order to properly perform her job, Amelia is articulating her belief that her employer sees her work as not needing a head and therefore intelligence. Effectively taking care of children comes together as a result of magic, not years of refining ones skills. When an employer questioned her ability to perform her duty, it felt as if they were challenging Amelia's experience as well as her skill level. This instance demonstrates the employer's lack of recognition of Amelia's work ethic, but also the importance of this work to Amelia. She takes pride in her ability to perform this work and finds dignity in her skill level within domestic work. Amelia's response to her employer indicates that she understands the importance and difficulty of the work that she does. It is not magic that makes her able to manage two kids, but her expertise after twenty years in the industry. The interaction between Amelia and her employer functioned to remind Amelia of the development of her skill as a professional domestic worker. Similar to Sidney and Ariane, her contentious moment allowed her to find power and challenge the conception of her work as unskilled.

Roles and Responsibilities

Ariane begins her work day at around 7 AM every day. She commutes from the Bronx to New Jersey for her 12-hour work day. When she arrives at work, she starts running the bathtub – she has to make sure the kids are bathed before school. While running the tub, she heads to the kitchen to begin preparing breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack. In the midst of this process, Ariane has to wake up the kids – with no assistance from the parents. She must remember to turn off the tub water, coax the children to take a bath, finish the meal preparation, and give her happiest smile to her employer. Once Ariane finally gets the kids dressed and ready, she drives them to school and returns to the house to continue her other tasks for the day. She starts to do the laundry and clean the house in a timely manner so she can make it to the kid’s school by 3 PM to pick them up. After explaining this all, Ariane says “it’s a big role, a big responsibility.”

During my interviews, I began to realize that the workers’ understanding of their roles and responsibilities for the lives of the children they cared for varied, however consistently implicated the importance of their work. Ariane explains that the choices that she makes and the management she must enact is a large undertaking. From the process of making choices regarding banal parts of life to teaching political and cultural lessons, the workers articulated both the worth of their work and how they wanted it to be perceived.

Some workers conceived of their role in the children’s lives as an opportunity to influence children’s socialization. Workers that were interviewed wanted to impart their political and social views onto the children to contrast hegemonic ideology about people in marginalized positions. Both Sara and Amelia retrospectively interpreted their work as domestic workers as their moments to reshape the children’s views on race and gender. Through her work as a domestic laborer, Sara focused on restructuring the children’s perceptions of gender roles and

racial difference. When discussing her relationship with one of the girls she took care of, Sara explained:

She was always like girls like Barbies and Fairies. And I'd be like boys could like Barbies and Fairies as well! Her last babysitter was like you're a princess, and I was kind of like anyone can be a princess and you're not a princess, okay? I cared about gender roles a lot. In every family home I went into it was like letting the little boy dress up in the dresses if he wanted to. That was where I found meaning.

Sara views her work as an opportunity to challenge both the children's perceptions of gender roles and the dominant ideology regarding gender. Her ability to open up the children's options in regard to gender gave meaning to the work that she was doing. She believed that by influencing the way in which the children think about themselves and others her work was having a meaningful impact. As a young white domestic worker, Sara recognized that to a certain extent she reflected the social position of the children she worked for. She explained that by being a young white woman, she often felt like a role model for the young children. The children Sara took care of were cognizant of this difference as well. One day while working, one of the children Sara nannied questioned why she was a domestic worker. Sara explained, "She would tell me you're not black... why are you a nanny?" Though Sara was surprised by both the child's innocence and ignorance, she utilized that moment as an opportunity to edify the young girl about race and the implications of such a question. Amelia similarly leveraged her position as a domestic worker to influence the children's perceptions of race. She explained:

I remember one day we were traveling the bus together and this was the first time I had a race conversation with her and she innocently just looked at me and said to me, 'Amelia why is your skin dark and those people's skin is pink?' And I'm like what do I tell this child, I don't know what to tell this child! And I remember turning to her and saying, 'It doesn't matter what the color of someone's skin looks like, it matters how nice these people are to you!' And that has always been my lesson to my kids. It doesn't matter, because I know they would get to a stage where they would see my skin color was different from theirs, and I know they would get to a point where they would begin to

understand racism. I wanted to be very clear to them about how I was shaping their lives when it came to race. Having these real conversations that sometimes adults don't have makes me know that my years of being with them have been impactful.

Like Sara, Amelia's work felt meaningful when it consisted of influencing the children's constructions of broader social issues. By assisting in the children's process of socialization, workers understood that their work was more than caring for children, but it was also educating children about the world and matters that are important to the workers. Sara and Amelia's roles have dual functions. They operate both to produce meaningful work for themselves, but to also symbolically reconstruct social inequality. Tackling tough issues with children at a young age challenges the propensity for domestic work to reproduce social inequality. As noted in earlier chapters, domestic work can often reify symbolic boundaries and thus social inequality between workers and their employers. These boundaries are informed by racist, classist, and xenophobic ideology. By incorporating social education, the domestic workers I interviewed work to alter the children's conceptions of difference in order to challenge the perpetuation of white supremacy and gender subordination. When workers' labor encompasses both care and social education, they break the cyclical nature of the reconstruction of social boundaries that construct stratified reproduction.

While Sara and Amelia experienced their work as meaningful when they were able to impact their children's social conceptions of difference, other workers found meaning in their work through the moments in which they were able to demonstrate their expertise and agency within the field. After working as a domestic worker for twenty-seven years, Jade understood that there were some aspects of child care that she knew better than her employers. She stated, "If you're an experienced nanny there's things that you would know and if they're new parents there's things that they can learn from you. There's some parents who are open to that and there

are some who would get the Dr. Spock Book and read. I love when I can have conversations with parents and let them understand that I have the experience.” Jade finds meaning in her work when she is able to impart her years of wisdom and knowledge on to her employers. For Jade, it is not only the sharing of information but her ability to show that she is an expert and a professional. Similar to Amelia and Sara, Jade finds meaning in her work through sharing wisdom through an educational process.

In Jade’s explanation of sharing her experience as a professional domestic worker with her employer, she points to an important part of workers’ individual/symbolic resistance. Jade notes that while some parents welcome the conversations about childrearing, others would rather read about it. Jade however, is not bothered by this difference. This is because Jade and the other women I interviewed that found meaning in their work through individual/symbolic resistance, produced meaningful work for themselves. Amelia and Sara’s feeling of worth in their work is not contingent on whether or not the children internalize their lessons on difference. Their ability to find meaning is produced by the fact that the conversation occurred. Their challenges to the symbolic conceptions of domestic work as unskilled and unimportant were interpersonal and often inconsequential. Rather than enacting resistance that alters public ideology regarding domestic work, the women involved in individual/symbolic resistance used interactions and the performance of skills for their own personal recognition of their worth. In contrast to the way in which their work can be inevitably shaped by stratified reproduction, the workers find meaning for themselves through the agency and decisions that they in the work place.

Collective/Political Resistance

Though individualized methods of resistance were used to reject the trope of domestic work as low-skilled, four of the workers I interviewed were also involved in forms of collective/political resistance. In response to the precarious position that domestic laborers have been in historically, grass-roots organizations have mobilized to render visible workers that are ignored by labor policy such as the 1935 National Labor Relations Act, within the globalized market (Burnham and Theodore, 2012). Because domestic work has been excluded from major labor laws, the women who perform the work are rendered invisible and disposable (Nadasen, 2015). For this reason, mobilizing communities of domestic workers is both crucial and challenging. Domestic worker organizations have been successful in restructuring law and policy regarding domestic labor, while personally impacting the women who are involved in the work. Organizing has resulted in comprehensive Bills of Rights in New York, Hawaii, California, Massachusetts, Oregon, Connecticut, and Illinois. These legal protections act to protect domestic workers position within the economy as well as their rights as workers. Domestic worker organizations have not only produced change in terms of legislation, they have also been at the forefront of creating a community and dialogue for workers and their families. Organizations focusing on domestic work are responsible for reframing the conceptualization of domestic work and its importance in both families and the economy. The workers I interviewed often attribute their ability to navigate employer's demands and work negotiation to their involvement in collective organizing. While organizations operate to equip workers with skills that improve their experiences in the work place, they also impact workers' conceptualization of the work they perform. As workers were empowered through the acquirement of tangible skills, they were also empowered by the conceptual reframing of domestic work as crucial to a global economy. By

empowerment, I mean that workers were able to feel a sense of ownership and agency within their work that was not there before. Workers' involvement in domestic work organizing functions as a catalyst in transforming the way in which workers perceive of themselves and resisting the notions of domestic work as low-skilled, irrelevant labor.

NDWA utilizes techniques of "framing" to alter both the hegemonic narrative regarding domestic work as well as the legal protections. Social movement scholars employ the framework of "framing" to establish the way in which social movement organizations (SMOs) construct and challenge meaning for their points of interest (Benford and Snow, 2000). Frames assist in producing meaning out of events or occurrences in order to organize for social action (Benford and Snow, 2000). Within the perspective of framing, scholars found different methods of frame development and generation that were utilized by SMOs to mobilize individuals and garner attention for the movement. Discursive, strategic, and contested processes are understood as the way in which "frames are made" and disseminated to offer insight into SMOs (Benford and Snow, 2000). Strategic processes are associated with frame development that is more utilitarian and goal oriented. SMOs deploy frames that assist in member recruitment and resource providers (Benford and Snow, 2000). Contested processes are informed by challenges both within and outside of movements. They take the form of framed disputes within movements as well as opposition to movements by opponents and the media (Benford and Snow, 2000). Lastly, discursive processes encapsulate the discourse and rhetoric of movement activities. Written communications as well as talk and conversation are examined in relation to the activities of a movement. Frames are articulated through the highlighting of issues and events that function to symbolize the larger frame (Benford and Snow, 2000).

Framing as a tactic is crucial for NDWA. As an SMO that functions to support vulnerable and marginalized workers, framing enables NDWA to imbue domestic work with meaning and power that is otherwise ignored. NDWA utilizes framing to reconstruct the position of domestic workers both symbolically and legally. The organization mobilizes resources and members through the assertion of domestic work as essential to the globalized economy. As an organization, NDWA employs discursive processes to disseminate the frame of the movement and alter workers' conceptualizations of their labor. The rhetoric used by the organization parallels their action in acquiring more legal protections for domestic workers in the form of a bill of rights. By using a discursive method in the process of reframing domestic work, NDWA challenges the symbolic norms regarding domestic work that influence the tangible experiences of the labor.

NDWA and Worker Transformation

The National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA) is the leading organization in current domestic worker movement. As an alliance, NDWA consists of over sixty affiliate organizations throughout seventeen states in the US. In their mission statement NDWA states “Domestic workers care for the things we value the most: our families and our homes. They care for our children, provide essential support for seniors and people with disabilities to live with dignity at home, and perform the home care work that makes all other work possible. They are skilled and caring professionals, but for many years, they have labored in the shadows, and their work has not been valued. These workers deserve respect, dignity and basic labor protections. Domestic work is the work that makes all other work possible.” In opposition to the narrative of domestic work as inconsequential work, NDWA asserts that work done by domestic workers is necessary

for other forms of work to exist. From the perspective of NDWA, without domestic workers working parents would not be able to leave their homes in order to participate in the greater economy. Elderly family members and people with disabilities would be forced to take care of themselves and homes would stay in compromising states of disarray. NDWA's understanding of domestic work complicates the historical narrative of domestic work as demeaning work for women. By emphasizing the economic and social importance of domestic work, NDWA actively works to reconstruct narratives used to undervalue domestic work and therefore domestic workers.

While NDWA works to reframe the general conceptualization of domestic work, the women involved in organizing feel the impact of the work within their daily lives. The influence of the organization is evident through engaging with socio-political transformation, as well as the workers' feelings of self-transformation. During my attendance at the NDWA National Assembly, I found that workers utilized their narratives to illustrate the significance of being involved in worker mobilizing. Each woman that spoke during the plenary session constructed their narrative through a trajectory of devaluation to empowerment. Workers claimed that before discovering NDWA they felt powerless and undignified. They internalized the popular notion that domestic work was not "real work" and accepted poor payment, ill treatment, and overall exploitation. The women that were undocumented noted that their lack of citizenship complicated their ability to speak up for themselves and in turn felt powerless. The worker before NDWA is plagued by insecurity and poor treatment. She has not acquired the skills and confidence to confront her employers about unfair treatment and believes that it is what she deserves because of her low-status work and positionality within a greater hierarchy. The women continued by expressing that once they encountered NDWA they began to feel empowered. For

the first time, workers realized that their work was dignified and they deserved rights and support. As well, they learned that their citizenship status did not alter the ability to attain rights as a worker. Workers garnered strength and power from being involved in the organization and believed that the organization and the bonds found within transformed their work and their selves.

This narrative appeared during the interviews with women I had with women who had been involved in domestic work organizing. Jade first began attending meetings of *Domestic Workers United* after seven years of working as a nanny in New York. During an outing to the park with the children she took care of, a young woman approached Jade and handed her a flier describing the need for domestic workers to organize. Though apprehensive at first, Jade decided to go and “see what it’s all about”:

My very first meeting with Domestic Workers United in 2005, I sat in a room and I’m listening to a women telling her story of abuse. And when I looked around the room everybody in that room was in tears. And I suddenly got that urge that this is something that I need to be apart of. Something that I need to help change. So I got involved with Domestic Workers United in 2005, and the fight began. Time to make changes, time to allow people to feel like they’re respected and they’re human beings... It opened up a part of me that I never knew I had... I didn’t even think of what are the consequences of being undocumented... I just knew that I felt the pain of my sister out there when I listened to her, and when I looked around the room I felt the pain of everybody else with tears in their eyes. And I understood that subconscious voice talking to me that something had to be done.

Jade posits that the process of being involved in NDWA organizing altered something within her. She believes that from being involved in the political action of organizing domestic workers, she has accessed a part of her that was otherwise unknown. This was apparent among all the interviewees involved in domestic worker organizing. For these women, the transformation they experienced from the organization altered the way in which they interacted with their employers. They were emboldened to demand for their rights in the work place, and deconstructed

internalized notions of subordination because of their identities as undocumented low-status workers.

Workers mentioned that the confidence acquired through organizing with NDWA manifested into their ability to demand both tangible and symbolic measures of change. Like Jade, Diana believed that being involved with the organization gave her more confidence to communicate with her employers. Diana explained, “This time I was able to go up to my employers and tell them there’s a bill of rights. I know about it and you should know too. I knew I worked this many days and I asked for sick days.” This contrasts to times in which Diana felt as if communication was too difficult due to the many symbolic and cultural barriers between her and her employers. As well, workers involved in the domestic worker movement discovered that their confidence empowered them to demand for immaterial changes in addition to tangible ones, within the workplace. Amelia noticed a change in how she regarded the meaning of her work and how she internalized her position as a domestic worker:

The way I internalized employers was they’re white they’re right. They’re employers, I’m an employee. They say yes, I cannot say no. I quickly bent myself out of that thinking. I felt like they were employer, I was employee. I felt like they should be respected, I should be respected... Because I knew what I was giving to the family, I knew what I was giving to the kids

Her newfound confidence and activism carved out space for Amelia to find respect and dignity in her work, not only for herself but also for her employers. Being a part of the movement for domestic workers transformed these workers and the way in which they conceptualized of the labor they perform. Through organizing, the women interviewed became cognizant of their role in their employer’s life as well as the greater economy.

Transformation of Stratified Reproduction

Colen (1995) posits that stratified reproduction coheres with individuals position within greater hierarchies of race, class, ethnicity, gender, and citizenship status. Individuals experience reproductive labor differently based on historical and cultural contexts that construct the meaning of reproductive labor for their specific social groups (Colen, 1995). In this sense, work that interacts with reproductive labor results in the reproduction of stratification by intensifying and reinforcing social and political inequality (Colen, 1995). Colen's framework for analyzing the experience of domestic workers hinges on their position as low-status and undervalued workers. Because domestic workers are predominantly undocumented immigrant women of color, they experience the value and meaning of their labor through their marginalized identities. Though stratified reproduction articulates the way in which reproductive labor and thus domestic labor is experienced, Colen's portrayal of worker's experiences fails to encompass moments in which workers resist their position within the hierarchy of reproductive labor. Stratified reproduction poses worker's experiences as static and unchanging, rendering workers agentless and unable to reconstruct their position. By incorporating aspects of political and collective resistance, and individual resistance, stratified reproduction is able to reinvest power in domestic workers and recognize their ability to alter both the socio-cultural and economic constructions of their labor.

NDWA uses discursive methods within reframing domestic work that alters the social and cultural norms about domestic work, while concomitantly challenging the framework of stratified reproduction. The statement, "Domestic work is the work that makes all other work possible," is both an assertion for the recognition of domestic work's value and a restructuring of the hierarchy between employer and employee. Rather than posing the employee as one who is dependent on the employer, this assertion posits that the efficacy of employers and thus the

globalized economy is contingent on the work done by women that perform domestic work. If domestic workers experience their labor through marginalized identities that renders their work vulnerable and exploitable, by altering the narrative regarding domestic work NDWA reconstructs workers' experiences of labor. The notion that domestic work is important counteracts the reproduction of social inequality that takes place during domestic work. Workers' are given status that is incongruous with their positionality within broader hierarchies, which lessens the ability to diminish and devalue their labor.

It is important to note however, that discursive framing has both benefits and limitations. The usage of discourse as a mechanism for framing can alter individuals' perceptions regarding domestic work but without social action and legislative change, discursive framing cannot manifest into tangible change. In this sense, law is constitutive of the social reality for domestic workers. The broader perception of domestic work is influenced by the lack of legal protections and vice versa. For this reason NDWA must utilize tools of discursive framing that manifest into legal change. NDWA organizes to alter the low pay and lack of benefits that plagues domestic work and degrades the economic value of immigrant women of color's labor. Worker leaders campaign to raise the minimum wage for all work in their respective states, as well as organizing for a bill of rights that gives workers the right to ask for sick days, vacation days, and health benefits. This work functions to alter the hierarchy within stratified reproduction. Colen articulately states that reproductive labor is experienced through the historical and cultural contexts of social groups. Changing legal protections for domestic workers changes the contemporary cultural context by rendering their work visible and bringing it into the realm of "real work." As a form of labor that has historically been unregulated and ignored by the

collective bargaining of labor unions, advocating for social change functions to restructure the hierarchy of stratified reproduction.

NDWA transforms stratified reproduction by targeting socio-cultural and legal factors that position women as low-wage workers while concomitantly conceiving of their work as low-skilled. The organizations involvement in social action manifests in the altering of workers' conceptions of themselves and their work, which contributes to the reconstruction of stratified reproduction. Workers involved with this work felt transformed which in turn emboldened them to resist the exploitative and precarious positions their employers placed them in. Both workers' conceptions of domestic work and behavior towards their employers was altered. NDWA equips workers with skills that enable them to both resist and advocate for themselves. As noted earlier, Diana claimed that by being involved in organizing for domestic workers' rights she was able to cross the cultural boundaries between her and her employer and advocate for her rights as a worker. Rather than experiencing interactions with employers that reify and reproduce social tension and inequality, Diana and the other women interviewed involved in NDWA utilized their skills as organizers to reconstruct their position as vulnerable, marginalized workers. The interviewees who had experience in domestic worker organizing were able to resist poor treatment and transform their placement within a broader hierarchy.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I explicate the two methods of resistance used by the domestic workers interviewed. Both individual/symbolic and collective/political methods operate to reinvest power and worth into the work done by the women interviewed. Individual/symbolic resistance occurred through workers' interactions with their employers and the children they took care of.

These forms of resistance often operated to give workers a way to find meaning within the work place. Mothers were able to produce meaning in their work by distinguishing themselves from their employers as parents. They used class based criticism to inflate their self-concept as mothers and workers. Other workers were able to find meaning in their work through their ability to use their position within the household to educate both parents and children. For some workers this came in the form of edifying children about important social issues such as gender identity or racial subordination. For others, expressing their expertise as caregivers was demonstrated through lessons they gave to parents about childrearing. Instances in which individual/symbolic resistance was used also encompasses moments in which the domestic workers I interviewed experienced contention within the work place. Arguments with employers, quitting from jobs, and responding to moments of denigration, were leveraged by the domestic workers interviewed to find voices that often felt silenced. Within finding the power to respond to employers, domestic workers reminded themselves of their worth and their skill within their work. Using individual/symbolic forms of resistance functioned solely to produce meaningful work for the domestic workers. Their acts often result in them feeling good about their work and their responses which influences their conceptions of their self rather than a broader understand of domestic work.

In contrast, the collective/political methods workers were involved in produced meaningful work both symbolically and politically. By targeting discourse regarding domestic work, NDWA and the workers involved in political organizing were able to achieve comprehensive legal protections that function to alter the position of domestic work as vulnerable labor. As well, by articulating the criticality of domestic work to the functioning of the global economy, NDWA restructures the hierarchy that symbolically positions domestic

work as inconsequential and unimportant. The collective/political form of resistance was able to enact large scale changes that cannot be effected by individual/symbolic methods of resistance. Collective/political resistance did have similar results as individual/symbolic resistance on the workers involved. From being involved in collective/political resistance, the domestic workers I interviewed and the ones I observed at the NDWA national assembly experienced a transformation within themselves that enabled them to find meaning within their work. In this sense, both forms of resistance result in workers producing meaningful work for themselves. However, only collective/political resistance has the ability to reconstruct the broader hierarchy of reproductive labor.

Conclusion

Throughout this project, I outline the various ways in which stratified reproduction shapes domestic workers labor. I begin in Chapter 1 by reviewing the history of domestic work and the way in which racial and gender subordination contribute to its marginalization. In Chapter 2, I demonstrate how the women interviewed initially encounter stratified reproduction through the process of immigration and first work experiences. These instances uncovered women's position within a hierarchy of race, class, and gender. For the domestic workers of color, their first experiences emphasized their low-status position whereas for the white domestic workers, their value as white women manifested into better treatment. I further this in Chapter 3, by outlining the various ways in which stratified reproduction appears on the job. As working mothers, emotional laborers, and managers of children's lives, domestic workers become subject to stratified reproduction in an unavoidable manner. Cultural and structural influences impinge on their labor and shape how they navigate their work place. Chapter 2 and 3 demonstrate the way in which stratified reproduction becomes a structure that domestic work is embedded within and shaped by. The interviewee's experiences articulate the aspects of domestic work that arise from its conception as unskilled, low-status work. In Chapter 4, I examine two methods of resistance that domestic workers use to contest the perception of their work as demeaning and unskilled. The women interviewed found ways to produce meaningful work for themselves that allowed them to feel empowered in their jobs. Resistance was enacted by the organization National Domestic Workers' Alliance through political mobilization and legislative change. I argue that by producing meaningful work, the domestic workers interviewed were able to reposition themselves as highly skilled, important workers.

My research argues that while stratified reproduction is a useful framework for conceptualizing domestic work and the different experiences of women involved in reproductive labor, it fails to incorporate the experiences of women as agents in the restructuring of social hierarchies. By advocating for change in work conditions and legal protections, works invested in domestic worker organizing are at the forefront of reconstructing the narrative of domestic work and thus the position of domestic workers within the globalized economy. Stratified reproduction must be broadened to encompass the ability for workers to challenge their position in regards to employers and greater systems of inequality. Ignoring these possibilities renders domestic workers docile actors that experience inequality, rather than agents of change. This is not to say that instances of exploitation are the responsibility of individual workers. I emphasize this to demonstrate the reality that when workers' have power to change their circumstances, they have power to restructure hierarchies.



Though part of this project focuses on moments of dehumanization and exploitation, it is important to honor the moments in which women are able to find meaning and appreciation

within their work. The women whose stories became the crux of this research perform a job that is critical to both families and the economy, however their labor is often overlooked and underappreciated. By finding meaning within their work, these women reveal how marginalization can be overcome through both political activism and the improvement of self-concept.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. How old are you?
2. Where are you originally from?
3. What is your highest level of education achieved?
4. What were your reasons for leaving your home?
5. What was life like before migrating to the United States?
6. What were your plans and hopes when you originally migrated to the United States?
7. How did you become a nanny?
8. Can you talk about your first experience nannyng?
 - a. Have your experiences changed the more you have worked?
9. How long have you been nannyng for?
10. How many families have you worked for?
11. How did you meet the family that you currently work for, as well as the families you have worked for in the past?
12. If you have worked for multiple families, do you see think the status of the family influenced the way you were treated?
13. What does your typical day look like?
14. What is your relationship like with the family that you work for?
15. What is your relationship like with the mother of the family you work for?
16. How do the children respond to you leaving at the end of the day?
17. What do you see your role is for this child?
 - a. Do you think that that differs for your own family?
18. Does nannyng differ from mothering, if so how?

19. How do your responsibilities differ at work from at home with your own family?
20. When did you first learn about NDWA?
 - a. How did you learn about NDWA? How did you become more involved in their work?
21. How has being a part of NDWA changed how you look at your work?
22. Do you think your work life has changed since you became a part of this community?
23. How does the work that NDWA does fit into greater social justice movements?

Date: May 24, 2016

To: Leigh Taylor

Cc: Megan Karcher, Allison McKim

From: Pavlina R. Tcherneva, IRB Chair

Re: May 2016 Proposal

DECISION: APPROVED

Dear Leigh,

The Bard Institutional Review Board reviewed the revisions to your proposal. Your proposal is approved through May 24, 2017. Your case number is **2016MAY24-TAY.**

Please notify the IRB if your methodology changes or unexpected events arise.

We wish you the best of luck with your research.

Pavlina R. Tcherneva

tchernev@bard.edu

IRB Chair