

Introduction

Migration is a highly complex phenomenon, a “**double-edged sword**,” as journalists say. My metaphor is that the phenomenon is like “**burning both ends of our candle**.” In both cases, there is a sense of loss of a vital population sector of our society, the productive manpower, who are being attracted to brighter globalized sites where their competencies can be best rewarded. The receiving country benefits from the productivity of migrant labor, while the sending country while losing the productive manpower benefits from remittances sent for the economic maintenance of their families, and contributes to national development goals.

The phenomenon is **multilevel** involving the macro, the government as it manages the social mobility of a million Filipinos leaving the country annually, representing the productive manpower which the country needs most, the meso, the institution of the family that is being separated, disturbing thereby the emotional life at the core of its nurturing function, and the micro, the children left behind who need their parents most at the time of separation. The impact multiplies as the process carries both intended and unintended consequences, “gains” and “pains” consistently shaping the adjustment of migrants and institutions they engage. The migrant upon reaching a destination site needs to relate to an entirely different culture where he is more an outcast, yet wanted and needed for their labor market. **Globalization**, in fact, has intensified migration and promoted the interconnections of countries to reinforce their labor market and initiated extensive economic exchange between cooperating countries, yet crossovers between national borders remain restrictive, and with the cultural environment still resistant rather than welcoming of migrants. Returnees complain of being harassed and discriminated, which make protection against discrimination of migrants remaining ambiguous despite international protocols and conventions on human rights promulgated at the higher levels of regulatory bodies such as the United Nations. Amid these contradictions and resistances, Filipinos have moved as early as the 18th century, successfully and unsuccessfully penetrating the sites of destination, and reaching the present, while quietly absorbing strands of prejudices and discrimination, whether as immigrants or labor migrants.

The paper will address data coming from the ground, conversations with students across the semesters who are children of OFW families, the reports and term papers they wrote which are crafted to discuss their conditions as academic papers required in their sociology courses which they were told will be materials for research, data from the files of NGOs directly addressing OFW needs, interviews and dialogues with returnees, mothers who have chosen to remain, and grandmothers taking care of grandchildren as surrogate mothers. These encounters enrich the teaching sociology courses which embed sociologists into a constant preoccupation and reflection of social issues, migration, among others, for they are relevant in the understanding of our own societal dynamics. The study further reviews studies that have been undertaken on the issue, and those talked about increasingly in conferences and various fora on migration. Although studies already done have gone through a substantial coverage of the conditions of migrants and their families, gaps in the literature are remaining which need to be addressed, and that a further need to consolidate the findings to provide the specific scenario on its effects on women, children, the spouses and the elderly are still wanting, not to discount its more specific macro impact on development.

The Research Problem

Thus the paper gazes at the established revelations of past researches, taking a new direction in viewing the issues on care which remains hardly recognized in the discussion on families left behind. It is the site not only for the biological reproduction of the population, and more significantly, the rearing and nurture of the human capital of society for its own dynamic survival, but which the present physical separation between members of the family now impedes. What is involved here is a **process** that happens in an inherently orderly sequence defined by the biological and psychological development of the person over a period of time. What is happening then to the performance of this function when separation happens during the period when active nurturing is required? The literature claims this is not a problem in Asia with the presence of the extended family who can take over readily in the care of children being left behind. This is precisely what is happening in our case with our extended family actively taking over the function. However, since Aunties and Uncles are themselves taking care of their own families, the burden of direct day-to-day care of young children falls on the elderly who willingly takes over, and actually feels the obligation to help despite

prevailing physical and psychological limitations. Age definitely sets a wide social distance between the young and the elderly, as the young constantly complain about not being able to relate to "Lola," and "Lola" in turn complaining of their difficulty in understanding the young. Dialogical communication is the need of the young and finding no one at home who can listen to thresh out the ambiguities of the transitional years brings the teenager to seek the company of other younger people who are equally searching for answers, and finding none. Add to all these the grandmother's need to be cared for by a distant daughter at a time which calls for a re-engagement in fact of the parental role to her grandchildren which her daughter has passed on to her. The emerging issue that engages us may not only be physical, but more significantly the quality and the differing kinds of care needed by specific members of the family at certain points of the life cycle, and how these are put into motion by the new relationship of nurture by a surrogate parent, and a distant mother to her children, and a distant daughter to her aging mother. These plural issues define the intergenerational concept of care as it invokes certain vital phases of the caring process within the life cycle of the family.

As a conceptual paper on Care, it will contextualize the conditions of the kinds and levels of care being addressed, a major issue being contested in all corners due to its mostly anecdotal nature, the reason perhaps why there is a certain evasion of the issue. The objection to anecdotes by positivist observers particularly has its own reasons for we need the concrete manifestation of issues to determine the appropriate social intervention. However, it should also be recognized that life as lived is both objective and subjective, and some subjectivities may not really be translated into numbers which are the only items positivists understand and can appreciate. The more human aspects of persons are more sensibilities rather than numerals, human meanings rather than numbers, the reason why both quantitative and qualitative approaches are needed to understand fully and appreciate the rising issues of human struggles. But this is not the issue here. To get back on track, **the paper poses the question on how do we problematize the issue of the process of care and caring, given the blaring reality of young children being separated from parents, and aging parents being separated from daughters who are supposed to take care of them? These are issues that are touching the core of the formation and care of the human capital of the family, and the nation which appear rather neglected and rendered invisible with the preoccupation on remittances and indicators of national development in relation to migration.**

There is definitely a rising consciousness among academic observers regarding how 30 years of Philippine labor migration are affecting the quality of care being received by children and other members of the family who are forced to separate physically because of the chosen path of a member/s to work overseas. While the 70s favored males as the oil money plowed in resources for the building of the basic infrastructural needs of the Middle East and which created a high demand for labor, females were staying home. As the physical construction reached completion, the face of migration flow necessitated more female labor as early as the 80s, reinforced by the booming entertainment industry in Japan, and the demand for female domestic workers in Hongkong and other Asian countries. As national development progressed in these countries, more women started leaving their households to pursue their careers or engage themselves in paid employment outside their homes. Hiring women from the developing countries where high unemployment leaves abundant female labor idle at home eventually became a solution to the problem. This development is now referred to as the feminization of labor, which does not strictly refer only to numbers but to the kind of work demands that transforms domestic labor as an unpaid labor into paid labor by the capitalist market. While this is the case in the home country when absent parents at times hire domestic help to provide direct care for the children under the supervision of the extended family, how about grandmothers who directly act as surrogate parents without hired help? In what ways are they compensated when family tradition defines family care given by a family member as "a labor of love" but it is labor nonetheless to be compensated. What are the rising family issues that are developing with regard to the growing reality of "distant caring" as government takes on encouraging overseas employment in the context of the formulation that "it is not the policy of government to promote OFW employment?"

Increasingly, more and more of our local women are leaving their homes stretching their traditional domestic labor for paid labor in the capitalist market. Today, 2000 to 3000 OFWs leave the country, 70% of them constituted by women from classes D and E, married, between the ages of 22-34, with an average child left falling within the age cluster of 3-6, or below 10 years old. Majority of the OFW women consisting of 86% of the women come from the bottom income bracket. For older women, teens are left behind. Both clusters are sensitive ages for these are children undergoing the sensitive years of moral formation with the teens specially searching for their models as they slowly shed-off their being a child as they take on the new adult's role. Altogether, a suggested calculation of 6-8 million children are currently left behind. During this period of the life cycle, the psychosocial development is at its highest formative stage. This number constitutes the future manpower of the country, with absent parents at the time

when the critical care needed to form the identity of the self and the values of basic citizenship are being learned at home, not to mention the care for the elderly who assume the duties needed to reinforce distant parenting. Unknowingly, the family may be caught in a "CATCH 22" situation where the trade-offs may be weakening the positive intentions behind migration. Or it may also be empowering depending upon the developments of the life course of the migrant and the family left behind.

Theoretical framework: The Transnational Family and the Concept of Care Deficit

The literature defines the family as a basic unit of human organization which biologically reproduces the population, and the first formative site in the cultural construction of the kinship lineage across the generations as established by the birth process. The family takes care of the basic socialization process of the growing child as a productive member of society. The main difference between the family and other relationships such as those between friends and work colleagues is the permanence of the lineage ties (Cox, F.D.: 1999). It is the family which initially molds competence and character, and provides the emotional anchor for the individual person both in routine and troubled times.

Childhood is a developmental phase in the life of a person. It is a crucial moment when the child learns the basic values and behavioral expectations of living in a society in the context of love and care which the family provides, especially that of parental care that builds the core of security and confidence which constitute the inner source of strength of the individual person for all his life time. Becoming the person we are is a process of development where adulthood does not come instantly; rather it comes gradually in stages as one goes through the life cycle of one's personal development. It involves the phases of growth in the physical, psychological and social aspects of the process of becoming within the life cycle of the individual person.

Bowlby (1975) and Brofenbrenner (1982) have identified the first prerequisite of psychological development as consisting of the strong emotional bonding between the child and an adult, usually the mother. Kissing, hugging, keeping the child close physically to the mother while feeding are all touching moments that altogether produce the basic sense of security in the child. Consistent sensitivity in responding to the child's needs are critical for bonding which in turn builds the core of security of the growing person. As a consequence, this basic bonding and the resulting security have direct effects on the social and emotional maturity of the child. That basic bonding is an imperative, a necessary condition for the full blossoming of physical, social, emotional and cognitive potentials of the growing child. "The child needs someone who is crazy about him or her," so says a child psychologist, "as this kind of warmth serves as the impetus for the growth of potentials. The presence of these details in everyday life of the child enhance the development of the becoming person.

Another essential element is the participation of a third person as partner and supporter to the principal caregiver. Someone who co-invests in providing care, affection and acceptance of the child, and this is the father. Given these condition of child-adult bonding and the responsiveness of the adult caregiver, the right environment for the normal psychological development can take place. That means, the issues of gender identity, social and cognitive skills, self-esteem and attitude toward achievement which are all necessary for the psychological stability of the adult can be properly resolved. These are the ideal conditions of the family for nurture that can take place in various forms and degrees of opportunities and deprivations.

This ideal family condition is deconstructed with the present decision of most families to choose migration to improve the economic stability of the household. Separation between spouses, and parent/s and children constructs a new breed of family structure and process that reconfigures the care and nurture of family members especially the care of children. The rise of a transnational family with parent/s as migrant labor totally brings a new concept of parenting. "A transnational family live at least part of the time geographically dispersed and spend periods of time in separate countries (Herrera, 2001). Despite the separation caused by national borders and distances they look after one another, share resources and maintain their social relations (Alicea, 1997, Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002) the members of transnational families also provide emotional care and guidance from afar (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997)." In most countries, and in the case of the Philippines, the aging grandmother takes over the daily parenting that guides children in their day to day activities , as they supposedly learn the values of family and the nation in its socialization process. Parental visits becomes the new source of personal face-to-face care of children instead of the traditional everyday interaction; visits that come far and in-between job contracts are the only ways to touch base with home grounds, at times reaching up to a continuing stretch of 5 to 10 years in the case of father-

migrants. Contracts for females/mothers are shorter but they can move from one contract to another and prolong their absence rationalized by the need to earn more for the education of children. Parenting at a distance, through phone calls or texting or the use of advanced technology for communication facilitate a virtual family connection that sustains the relationship. Other practices come into play such as sending gifts and commodities that excite children tending to replace the intimate touch of love and affection. Whether this kind of transnational care meets the natural need for critical care for children left during their developmental years when young mothers leave needs to be interrogated.

Given this theoretical frame, this paper argues from the discipline of the social sciences, and anchors its main argument on the concept of "deficit care," a condition where the child misses the critical care s/he needed at a certain point of her/his developmental growth, a phase that will never come back within the normal life cycle once missed. Whether the lack of care can be overcome in the future depends upon the circumstances in one's future life that can provide the basic emotional core from where the sense of identity and self-esteem of the normal person are coming from. Within this framework, children are not the only ones in transnational families left behind and are in need of care, guidance, resources and help. Also the older members are in need of help as they care for the children left behind. The grandmother in her advancing years, and often lacking the flexibility and patience needed in understanding children becomes the parental surrogate. Aging years signal the needed caring as well for the elderly who is given the role of a young parent in raising children. In both instances, while remittances can become a source of economic stability for the family, its contribution in the emotional and personal care for both can be subject to question on the area of how care is specifically conducted across borders in maintaining transnational families. These are the concerns for investigating the nature of care in maintaining families across borders.

Care defined

Care is both objective and subjective. It requires both physical acts and affective expressions that actualize concern for the other as a fertile condition in the growth and deepening of human connections. It is significant in its contribution to economic dynamism and human growth, and an integral part of human development. Historically care is gendered such that only women can give care, a source of tension in the initiatives of women for social equality, and in putting forward the efforts to liberate women from the confines of caring and caregiving. Shahra Razavi of the UN Research Institute for Social Development in Geneva talks of the need to recognize and value the different forms of care without reinforcing that only women can care.

Care is performance and which Razavi (2007) considers work which may be paid or unpaid depending upon the circumstances surrounding its execution. Care work involves direct care of persons. One form is the intense care needs of young children, the frail and elderly people with various illnesses and disabilities, but also able bodied adults also require and receive care. Another form is institutional care which is paid and includes nurses, nannies, care workers, domestic helpers either at home or institutions. Another form is parental care which is unpaid care work and which has long been contested due to its tendency to be a source of multiple burden especially when combined with paid employment outside the home for women. But the debate never ends for parental care is part of family commitment in the reproduction of family values and relationships, an obligation that comes with the loving and emotional care for family.

Fisher and Tronto (1990) conceptualize caring to refer to activities "that include everything that is done to deepen human connections," and for the thrust of this paper that discusses the care of children left behind by migrant parents, it is associated more with the affective horizons such as attachment and love made concrete by activities of everyday care. Taking care implies the responsibility for initiating and maintaining direct caring activities for the reproduction of the family. At times, they may not necessarily involve any overt action except a felt presence of the carer, compared with caregiving which refers to the concrete care work that demands time and resources, and the specific performance of an activity required to fulfill the function of care. The focus of this paper is parental care which random data show is unpaid when given by a family member like the grandmother, and paid when a domestic helper is hired to take care of children alone or under the supervision of a family member. This is also referred to as "kinship care" (Child Welfare League of America:2008), which is defined a full time care, nurturing and protection of children by relatives, members of their tribes or classes, godparents, stepparents or any adult who has a kinship bond with a child. It allows the child to grow to adulthood in a family environment.

Taken in the context of the transnational household, the migrant's household, care takes a different form with distance to overcome when the intimacy of family life requires the face to face personal care critically needed in

the formation of the growing person. The struggle against time and space that breaks the natural process of nurture to occur brings a new concept of nurture and love in the age of transnationalism.

Literature on the conditions of children left Behind: Narratives of "Gains and Pains" of Migration

A review of relevant literature coming from varied sources establish general and specific trends regarding the conditions of children. These trends, however, exhibit no consistency regarding a dominant trend that will specifically characterize the status of these children although they give a sweeping landscape of how they are addressing the issue of parental absence. John Bryant (April 2005) estimates that there are 3-6 million OFW children left behind in the Philippines. By January 2007 (UNDP) estimates there are 5.25 million children left behind by migrant mothers and fathers.

Some nodal points of these trends in relation to care are the following: (Scalabrini Migration Center: 2004):

- There is a pervading feeling of sadness in the family and a deep longing for the mother to come home. With this sadness is a need and wish for family togetherness – to be whole again.
- The parents' long period of absence gives an OFW child a feeling of "permanence of absence," very similar to those experienced by orphans and abandoned children. Most of them have not really gotten to know their parents well because they have not lived with them for years. Children can only associate their parents with the money, gifts and phone calls which parents initiate (Atikha and Balikbayani: 2002).
- Adjustments to parental separation differ across the different age groups: younger children in their primary school years adjust through play; the teens who are in their most difficult years of growing are angry, and harbor within themselves negative feeling against a parent or parents abroad. Yet they claim they understand why a parent/s have to go. Consumerism tend to replace parental absence.
- Remittances allow children to stay in school and enjoy private school education (Young 2004; Bryant 2005). There is a need, however, to determine the improvements gained and the learning quality achieved as a result of the privileges allowed by remittances.
- Remittances put more food on the table, allow for more purchase of consumables, and an earlier trend on neglect of using remittances for savings and investments. However, recent observations of the BSP (2008:September) reveals that OFW-supported households allot a high 30.4 percent to savings from a low of 7.2 percent in the first quarter of 2007. Remittances are now being channeled for various types of financial investments had doubled. Such investments include savings, other financial investments and the purchase of house.
- Studies on education reveal contrasting claims. Some are claiming negative effects of migration on education with mothers being missed as tutors or lacking in parental supervision, children are missing school rather than taking it more seriously. However, a recent study by Alvin Ang (UST:2008) contradicts the commonly-held belief that distant parenting strategy is not working. He asserts that absent parents keep OFW children in high school. His study claims that women's migration pushes children to stay in school. He claims, "The absence of the female migrant is a strong incentive to remain in school indicating that OFW children are studying hard despite the absence of mothers, dispelling fears that they are worst-off. Absent mothers increase the chance of children completing high school."
- Younger students (10-13) tend to perform better in school than older respondents. Females rather than males have above average to excellent performance in school. More females than males are perceiving school as extremely important.
- Dependency of the extended family that keeps growing in number can be taxing remittances and reducing the funds available for the care and education of children.
- While some fathers take on the combined role of being both mother and father to their children, the new arrangements disrupt family care and children become emotionally tense with the risks of fathers not being able to provide adequate care for infants and the critical teenage years.
- Children welcome the absence of father more who is associated with tough discipline. They prefer mother staying behind.
- In the book "Families on the Move" (2002), Fr. Nilo Tanalega, S.J. speaks of "Global Parenting as a long distance love affair synchronized with the fast paced developments of technology such that

parenting becomes technological too. The use of cell phones, emails, faxes and video cams are substituted to make their presence felt. The parents definitely miss the emotional bonding that requires the intimacy of physical closeness that develops and enhance their relationship with their children. They miss the joys and pains of the growing-up years of their children, and the opportunity to make a specific impact on the value formation that can provide the desirable shaping of their childrens' lives.

- Migration, remittances and children's rights: the first level of analysis of the impact of migration on children is in terms of negative effects: the indicators are increased juvenile delinquency, drug abuse, psychosocial maladjustments, loss of self-esteem, early marriages, teen-age pregnancies and family breakdown, practically disregarding the realization of the rights of the children of concerned families. In another case, the regularity of remittances provide adequately for the needs of children, upholding their rights to be cared for. There are no conclusive directions on these trends, and further studies are needed for their proper articulation.
- Voices of children:
- "I don't know my father. I met him only when I was 10 years old. When I first saw him I asked my Mother "Yan ba ang asawa mo?" (Is that your husband).
- " I could not hug my father nor kiss him," confessed a young girl in between sobs and tears flowing uncontrollably.
- "I get lost talking to my mother/father because I don't know what to talk about."
- "I'm 18 and I saw my father only twice. We are three girls in the family so I can get along more with girls. I love girls!. I don't need boys.
- My mom has a boyfriend. She tells me my Dad knows and they agreed that he can also have a girl. But that would only be while Dad is in Saudi which is also my agreement with my BF. We will be a whole family when he finishes his contract in Saudi.
- John, an 18 year old boy with three siblings, 15, 12 and 8 years shares their separation from both parents has brought deep sadness that could not go away. When their parents left, their ages were 12, 8, 5, and the youngest was a baby. While their grandmother and an Auntie took care of them with short visits from mother or father across the years, yet as children they yearn for their mother's presence. They miss mother especially when they are sick. Yet when she comes to visit they could go hardly go near her unless they are called.
- " I miss my Mom. I used to talk to her a lot after school. When she left, there's no one in the house to talk to. Lola feeds me a lot of food, and scolds when I don't eat. I miss her so much, I spend more time with my "barkada." I met a girl whose parents are OFWs like mine. We became very close as we talk about our experiences and share the same thoughts and feelings about family separations. We became so close and vowed not to be separated until she became pregnant. Now, I am lost and don't know what to do."

Narratives of the Elderly Taking Care of Children:

Unlike the amount of data from the children, there is definitely very little information on the elderly who are taking care of these children. Some brief interviews in an NGO organization brings out the concept of "Lola-Nanay" with carers being mostly grandmothers who are directly caring for the children. This is not only true to overseas employment but to internal migration which in fact is the start of international migration: the movement of women from the rural area to the urban. Initially the children are left behind in the province while mother or father works in the city. Later the family decides to stay in the city, and the grandmother goes along to take care of the children in the city. Eventually, one of them or both of them takes on an overseas employment. The obligation to stay on caring for the children strikes even more deeply at the grandmother's sense of providing support to her child who needs help.

There are two variations of this arrangement: "nakiki-alaga" when a maid is hired to take direct care of the children. This arrangement frees the grandmother from actually going through the physical care of children especially the babies and the toddlers. The grand mother's responsibility is supervisory and merely monitoring the domestic helper. The other variation is "nag-aalaga" which refers to a full time arrangement with her daughter to take care of the children. The grandmother feels it is her responsibility to be of help to her daughter or son when no one else can be called upon to take care of the children.

When the role is full time with the children, the elderly who still has a husband to care becomes overburdened. She has her own physical limitations with regard to the physical activities of care. She lacks the reflexivity, strength and patience of young mothers. Physically and psychologically, she feels "may kakulangan na" (there's something lacking in me already). Advancing years bring in disabilities that often drive them to bed or fail their mobility at a time when the care of children are heightened by absent parent/s. The grandfather will only hold the child, or watch over him but will not do actual physical activity to support the child's needs, nor even help the child feed during mealtimes. That the grandmother herself needs care shows in this scenario. For a widow, life is easier because she no longer has to be caring for a husband so that all her time are allocated for child care.

For the grandmother, nurturing/childrearing is a never-ending work, combined with housework and earning a living. These three are interconnected with each other. While remittances comes, specific allocations for different family expenses are already identified, and the grandmother usually takes charge of holding the money bag before distribution.

The older children never fails to show how appreciative they are of having "Lola " around. When the little girl starts showing her tricks , Lola gets excited and talk about "pampakonswelo" or "pampunas ng pagod." When grandchildren are successful in school, and comes home with a medal or certificate for excellence in academics, " Lola" feels empowered.

Does Lola get a regular allowance from the remittances? With the money bag with her, she gets a sense of empowerment and the responsibility associated with its disbursement. But the constant requests for cash after the regular remittance is sent indicates a certain unplanned expenditure pattern that leads to unnecessary purchases or wasteful consumption which most grandmothers become guilty of. The migrant daughter, however, becomes tolerant of the practice in recognition of the help being extended to her by her mother in taking care of her children. The apparent abuse of remittances is treated as a form of repayment that highlights the concept of the traditional value of "utang na loob." At times, the elderly talks of expenses channeled to medicines for her arthritic knees, cough syrups and pills for body aches and pains. These represent the voices of the elderly in projecting the need for care.

How does the daughter express explicit care for her parent/s? Does reliance in providing the authority to disburse funds and the accompanying right to allocate and channel expenses already correspond to care, the fact that with money, resources can be easily accessed? Parents do not think so. While visits may be scarce, parent/s still expect calls of a daughter that inquires into her/his condition specifically. While calls are regular, the concern is focused on children, and seldom are the conditions of parents a subject of inquiry.

The Concept of Care Deficit, and the Rights of Children and the Elderly

Maintaining the care of transnational family across borders and between generations is mediated by gender, class and age. Daughters more than sons are engaged in constantly monitoring the children exhibiting an unchanging role of nurture on the part of the wife in domestic duties despite distance. Resources are needed to reach out constantly to express care through the facility provided by communication technology, or by sending gifts and commodities and make parental care felt. Older parents with married children are no longer conscious of expressing their concern as frequently as those with younger children. However, the calls may not be coming but remittances to children despite having their own families and independent lives are still being sent, though without regularity, given a sense of obligation of parent migrants to be of help and continue caring for their children. The state of literature may be anecdotal primarily but they represent the voices of children and the elderly left behind and they signal specific conditions and themes of their lives with absent parent/s.

The investigation of care deficit for both children and the elderly leads to how the fulfillment of rights are being realized. While clearly, physical distance translates into impediments for personal care, a new concept of care across borders emerges that becomes more technological and consumeristic. This type of development deprives the child of the value formation that comes with the personal interaction with parents, values that become the basis for the nurture of citizenship and patriotism to become a productive member of the national collective. How this rising concept of care and the fulfillment of Rights respond to the caring needs of both children and elderly are areas that may fill the

specificity of gaps on what happens to the family left behind, in the short or long term cycle of the generational life of the family.

If we explore certain provisions of the Philippine Constitution 1987 Section 3, No.2 specifically provides in general "for the Rights of children to assistance, including proper care and nutrition and special protection from all forms of neglect, abuse, cruelty, exploitation and other conditions prejudicial to their development." A specific document that speaks to Rights of Children of Migrant Parents is the Primer on Republic Act 8042 and the International Convention on Migrant Workers, Philippine Migrants Rights Watch 2003 which mainly specify provisions that are procedural that go with proper documentation of migrant's children when born in the site of employment, the basic right to education and the basis of equality of treatment with nationals of the State concerned

In this document, there are no specific provisions on the part of government with respect to services that can be made available to children who are at risk of being separated from their parents. Such services can come in the form of mentoring, tutoring of children, counseling, value formation seminars to avert situations that can drive the child to vulnerable experiences and high risk behaviors.

Neither does this document provide for the protection of migrants abroad to reduce their vulnerability and increase their ability to send remittances regularly to fulfill their duties toward their children. Children and families of OFWs can be in "better conditions" if their parents are "protected." Such protection would translate to the protection of children the OFWs left behind. In fact, the government in the host country should be able to secure the rights of migrants and their families, particularly children, regarding the enforcement of contractual obligations of employers, provision of medical and dental insurance, and recovery of maintenance for children.

However, a number of NGOs are operating programs for supporting women returnees and their children, abandoned families of migrants, in helping them participate in mainstream society. Atikha, Batis Aware, KAKAMPI are among several NGO organizations that are directly providing individual and family counseling, training on entrepreneurial skills, scholarship for migrant children, rescue programs for trafficked women and girls.

With respect to the Rights of the Elderly our 1987 Philippine Constitution Section 4 provides that "The family has the duty to care for its elderly members but the State may also do so through just programs of social security. The Philippine Plan of Action for Older Persons in 1999 addresses 8 major areas of concern: older persons, health and nutrition, housing, transportation and environment, income security, maintenance and employment, social services and the community, continuing education and livelihood and older persons in the market.

These programs while formally laid out need to be assessed in terms of how the organizations to implement these provisions are performing these identified functions, to examine their strengths and weaknesses, especially their best practices.

Issues in Methodology

Are childrens' and elderly rights upheld in families left behind? How is care and caring conducted in transnational households with the physical distance to hurdle? How do we combine quantitative and qualitative methodology in studying this problem across the years as migration increasingly becomes the option chosen by many for varied reasons, from being pushed by the search for economic security to more caprices for seeking the bright lights and adventure in globalized sites, specially for single women and men. But the focus is the quality of care of family members left behind by the dominant flow of OFW women who are in the lower rungs of the occupational ladder as domestic helpers, 86 percent of them coming from classes D & E, and have left young children behind to the care of elderly parent/s.

The major issue in methodology being raised is specific in making more concrete the trends that can help policy revisions and programs that can support the protection, welfare and care of children and the elderly in transnational families, and highlight the costs of migration. The following research techniques are being suggested:

1. Identifying the indicators of social costs and benefits among OFW children and elderly:

2. The indicators for benefits are relatively covered by the present literature. The indicators for costs are anecdotal and need to be made more concrete. The present conceptualization suggests looking at :
3. Costs indicators for the elderly:
 - Purchase of medicines
 - Frequency of medical consultations
 - Cases of hospitalization/medical costs
 - No. of hours spent in the concrete activities of care of the young
 - Costs of supporting additional extended family members using remittances
 - No. of sleeping hours; rest hours
 - Nutritional Status of the elderly
- 4. Costs indicators for the young:
 - Access to technology: mobile phones, DVD players, VCD, cable TV
 - Shopping costs for commodities made accessible by remittances
 - No. of hours spent on Cable TV viewing
 - No. of hours spent on Internet usage
 - No. of hours spent with friends
 - Frequency of Mailing
 - Costs of cell phone load, monthly
 - Costs of cigarettes
 - Costs of gimmick activities, monthly
 - Nutritional status of children
 - Other entertainment expenses
 - _ Conflict with the law: arrests due to Juvenile acts
 - School Drop outs
 - _Others
5. The general approach for the methodology would be a Cohort Analysis of a group of young and the elderly in transnational families across 3-5 years for a pilot run, and 10 years, backtracking for the immediate past 5 years at the point of study, then moving forward for the next five years. This type of methodology can realize the trends on intergenerational care.
6. The range of data can cover the indicators of economic, cultural, medical, nutritional dimensions of costs and benefits.

It is expected that a certain degree of specificity will be realized in evaluating the costs and benefits of migration to fill the present gap in the literature.