

HEALTH, WELL-BEING, AND RIGHTS:
MAPPING THE BOUNDARIES OF BELONGING
FOR FILIPINO CAREGIVERS IN ISRAEL

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ABSTRACT

Laurel Bradley: Health, Well Being, and Rights:
Mapping the Boundaries of Belonging
for Filipino Caregivers in Israel
(Under the direction of Michele Rivkin-Fish)

This study explores claims made by Filipino migrant caregivers in a northern Israeli city to assert their perceived right to increased forms of social integration, including access to permanent residency and citizenship. Caregivers formulate their claims through their belief that marginalized social status and sociolegal closures prevent them from experiencing good health. They rework the category *health* to denote a broad, nuanced category of physical, mental, and social well-being. In their configuration, contexts of discrimination, unstable visa conditions, and narrow avenues through which to express their social and political personhood limits their actualization of good health. Furthermore, Filipino migrant caregivers negotiate and author vernacular narratives of health rights, democracy, and religious precepts to frame the ethical legitimacy of their health-based claims.

This dissertation shows how Filipino migrant caregivers in my research constructed a series of cross-cultural logics through which to demand formal inclusion and recognition in the Israeli body politic. These logics called upon Israel's status as a democratic nation, its participation in international human rights communities, the Jewish religious ethics that are central to national understandings of moral behavior, caregivers' assertions that they successfully adopted an embodied "Israeli" identity, and notions of reciprocity of care. This research

articulates with global concerns over the rising care crisis in coordination with nation states in the global north steadily enforcing social closures to exclude migrant workers' continued presence in these European and American countries. As nation states rhetorically assert their intended reduction of global migrant labor and implement programs to exclude migrant workers from labor markets and social bodies, a pressing question emerges regarding who will provide care for the elderly in the coming decades.

To the Filipino caregivers who gave their time, friendship, and insights to this research, you have my humble thanks and gratitude.

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CHAPTER 1: ETHNOGRAPHIC INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

I arrived in the early afternoon in West Jerusalem for one of the Caregivers' Union meetings, still thinking about the police officer who stopped the sheruit on the way to Tel Aviv on the pretext of checking the driver's registration. The driver handed over the documents with an annoyed comment, but the officer didn't notice immediately, his eyes performing a headcount and visual assessment of who was in the van. The sheruit driver let me off near the Central Bus Station with a distracted "Shabbat Shalom, habibi," looking for new passengers. I had a lot of time before the meeting started, so I walked along Yaffa Street in the Shabbat-quiet, nearly alone on the streets. I made my way to the bed and breakfast where the manager now knew me from these visits, and then returned to walking around West Jerusalem to see it without its cloak of tourists.

Sometime later near the Old City I noticed another walker, this person staring intently at a map and then anxiously at street signs. It startled me to realize that I have come to know West Jerusalem relatively well, perhaps almost as well as The City where I have lived now for months doing research. I never considered visiting Israel before the spring of 2008, but now I've been here frequently enough to walk through a number of Israeli cities confidently without a map or confirming my route. It gave me pause to realize it, leading me to think about when the feeling of "belonging" to a place kicks in, when it maps itself onto your consciousness, when you start

being aware of it as someone who knows its coordinates and landmarks even if you don't consider yourself to be a part of it.

I spent those hours walking around West Jerusalem really thinking about what it means to know that you are from somewhere else and perhaps will eventually return there, but to feel in the moment an attachment to your current location. I didn't feel that attachment to Israel, but the caregivers participating in my research kept telling me about how Israel felt like home to them. I kept asking about the eventual end of their work visas, and they answered (if they answered) with evidence of how they lived "like Israelis." I couldn't stop wondering what you do if you fall in love with a place that feels like home when it doesn't care about what created this feeling of rooted attachment for you and in you. Caregivers are not new immigrant material in Israel.

Around 7:30pm, I walked back through the suddenly tourist-trodden streets into residential neighborhoods to find the Community Center hosting the Union meeting; I found it on a tiny side street in an Orthodox community as Shabbat ended. Jerusalem woke up, people filling the now-open restaurants and streets as secular time began again. I waited as darkness fell, as Orthodox men in long coats, hats and peyos hurried to shul, and as the neighborhood grew a little bit watchful.

I waited in the near darkness of old narrow streets lit intermittently by yellow lights coming from residential windows, but soon a group of migrant workers (easily recognizable in this neighborhood due to their Southeast Asian and South Asian ethnicity) came down the street led by a young Israeli woman talking a mile a minute in very good English and gesturing wildly with her hands despite carrying a number of things as she walked. I smiled and returned their friendly greetings while the men going to shul glanced over, and then looked away.

[personal fieldnotes, April 30, 2011]

Description of Research and Key Theoretical Perspectives

My research concerns a community of Filipino migrant caregivers tending to elderly Israelis in a northern urban location I call The City. Israel's foreign work program resembles other guest work programs in Western, industrialized countries; the government recruits internationally for foreign workers to provide temporary, low skilled, low status labor for minimum wages with the assumption (backed by laws and the immigration police) that at the end of the visa period that the foreign worker will depart Israel. Israel recruits migrant caregivers to fill the gap between the elderly who require care and the high cost of nursing homes. Israeli families apply to receive state assistance to hire a migrant caregiver who legally resides in Israel on a visa that must be renewed annually. When the elderly employers die or require hospice care, migrant caregivers must find new employment as caregivers or lose their visa. Caregivers' visas can be renewed for up to 51 months (4 years and 3 months); after this time a caregiver can continue working until the end of the existing contract, but cannot accept a new contract. The system seems relatively clear on paper. Yet Israel, like many other labor-receiving countries, has discovered that foreign workers do not always comply with the state's expectations for their timely departure.

This study explores claims made by a group of Filipino caregivers to assert their own *right* to stay indefinitely in Israel with legal status, either citizenship or permanent residency. The claims that these caregivers formulated identified their *health*, defined as a broad, nuanced category of physical, mental, and social well-being, as suffering from their marginal and unstable social positions in Israel. From asserting that Israel did not uphold migrant caregivers' human right to health, these caregivers constructed a series of cross-cultural logics through which to

demand formal inclusion and recognition in the body politic. These logics called upon Israel's status as a democratic nation, its participation in international human rights communities, Jewish religious ethics, caregivers' assertions that they successfully adopted an embodied "Israeli" identity, and notions of reciprocity of care.

Filipino caregivers asserted these claims in formal and informal venues, voicing multiple articulations of their perception that they *belong* in Israel. Many of these caregivers expressed a love of Israel, while others combined that love with practical desires, such as having the opportunity reunite with family members in Israel while continuing to work in The City. Filipino caregivers expressed their desire not to constantly worry about the threat of their employer dying or other events that would invalidate their visas, fearing the immigration police, detention, and deportation, but dreading leaving Israel and the lives they built as well.

Israel recruits caregivers for the elderly from multiple South and Southeast Asian countries; the scope of my research is limited to Filipino caregivers. As a group, Filipinos hold the longest tenure in Israel as migrant caregivers and Israelis associate Filipino ethnicity very closely with caregiving – the vernacular Hebrew term for a caregiver is *Filipini*. Filipino caregivers form strong communities in Israel, and through these community structures a great deal of cultural information about Israel is transferred to new caregivers. Additionally, many Filipino caregivers in The City have particularly long tenures, often over five or six years ranging to over a decade of living and working in Israel. I focused my research specifically on Filipino caregivers in The City in order to explore how a situated group of migrant workers related to Israel and how they used their community's cultural knowledge to make sense of their experiences living in a labor-receiving country for long durations where they are encoded as temporary, foreign labor.

In this research, I take Filipino migrants' claims at face value regarding how their inability to access citizenship status compromised their health. This dissertation does not attempt to judge or test their claims; instead, my goal in the following chapters is to map out *what* these claims entail, and how these claims are culturally constructed. My research is participant driven, in the sense that I began my fieldwork in Israel intending to consider how foreign workers protected and characterized their own health while caring for an elderly person. My focus lay in the gap between providing health to someone with full citizenship and the package of social rights citizenship confers, and managing health in the same social context without access to the same resources. Very quickly, the caregivers I met and interacted with redefined what they saw as the actual questions I ought to be asking about health. Their strong convictions about the important health concerns they faced become the central questions of my research.

At times, the Filipino caregivers who participated in my research employed rights language, directly quoted the Bible, and used somewhat specialized terminology to explain their ideas of health and to explicate why they thought Israel owed them a future in the country. Usually, however, they spoke in casual, imprecise, relational, and every day language to explain their views. For the purposes of analysis, I have framed their multitude of expressions about the claims they made in a theoretical structure that reflects concepts of identity in relation to place and embodied cultural norms; personhood to entail the full possibilities of social, political, and economic participation; and reciprocity to discuss a sense of disjunction between what is offered and what is received in return.

As Massey (1994) argues, connections between place and identity are often explained through reactionary models, where local places are indelibly tied to a single social group asserting long-standing heritage associated with location. These ideas about place conceive of

all newcomers who cannot claim this heritage as “invaders,” threatening the character, meaning, and local specificity of place in the chaotic global movement of people across state boundaries.

In the context of her research on globalization, Massey argues the greater relevance of a “progressive sense of place.” She constructs this extroverted understanding of local place by identifying the global flows that continually shape the particular sense of place and the identities associated with it. In this sense she argues:

what gives a place its specificity is not some long internalized history but the fact that it is constructed out of a particular constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving together at a particular locus... [Place is] ... a *meeting* place. Instead then, of thinking of places as areas with boundaries around, they can be imagined as articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings, but where a large proportion of those relations, experiences and understandings are constructed on a far larger scale than what we happen to define for that moment as the place itself... (Massey 1994: 154).

Massey’s configuration of place provides two models of conceptualizing “place” that resonate with my research. On one hand, we can see Israel’s goal of reserving Israel for the Jewish People based on heritage correlating with Massey’s definition of the reactionary mode. On the other hand, Filipino caregivers’ attempts to forge a place for themselves within Israel that aligns them with Israeli culture and mainstream politics without demanding Jewish genetic inheritance reflects Massey’s progressive model.

Lefebvre (1991) and de Certeau (1984) configure space as defined and transformed by the nature of activity that occurs within it. Lefebvre constitutes space as produced on three axes. *Spatial practice* relates to the physical deciphering of space, where *representations of space* are the conceptualizations of space (such as cartography). Yet, *representational spaces* are those that are “directly *lived* through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of ‘inhabitants’ and ‘users’ ... This is the dominated – and hence passively experienced – space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate. It overlays physical space, making

symbolic use of its objects” (1991: 39). In a similar sense, De Certeau evokes notions of the “migrational city” where the movement of people through planned urban space colonizes the structures of urban planning, altering and reworking the “clear text of the planned and readable city” (1984: 93).

Envisioning the meaning invested in space and the identities that arise from these uses, the activities and movements of Filipino caregivers in Israel reconfigure and invest new meanings into the space of Israel itself. Filipino caregivers are recruited and arrive in Israel based on certain social networks, government programs, and travel routes. They gain knowledge of and traverse The City based on their caregiving tasks that orient caregivers towards certain bus lines, shopping centers, clinics, doctors’ offices, pharmacies, neighborhood parks all oriented around the elderly person’s domicile. These movements invest the public domain with the image of Southeast Asians accompanying elderly Israelis along these routes, symbolically marking these places as “global” in a certain sense. During caregivers’ days off they travel to religious sites, stay in their shared apartments, make remittances, go shopping, buy groceries to make their own food, go with friends to McDonald’s or other places to eat, thus marking these places and routes as open to non-citizens’ interpretations, usage, and associations. This movement through city streets and connecting locations in The City, as well as across Israel and between Israel and the Philippines, re-maps conceptions of space and the meaning associated with these spaces. This re-mapping is literal – how people move and which paths receive heavier use than others – but also symbolic in terms of the visual presence of non-Jewish workers and residents in a space identified strongly as Jewish.

These movements and meanings through space to define particular associations with place are what caregivers draw upon to claim their rootedness and belonging in Israel. However,

as Glick Schiller et al (1995) show, migrants often create attachment across national borders, situating their identity in both places as meaningful to their identity production. Thus “home” often does not correspond to one place that correlates to notions of ethnic or religious identity, but rather occupies multiple locations that do not depend on belonging to an ethnic majority. Yet, as my research participants illuminate, experiencing full personhood in either location depends on the degree of access an individual or group has to the rights and privileges that allow for the social, political, and economic participation that define social life.

Personhood is a complex and contested issue. My use of personhood in the sense of access to privileges and protections to some extent follows Arendt’s (1948) notion that a right to rights constitutes legal personhood. However, my use of personhood extends beyond the political and also considers the realities of social structures as places of inclusion and exclusion. In this sense, Mauss’ (1979) configuration of personhood as arising from social roles and relationships that reflect position and status speaks to the social latitude caregivers in my research sought. In the context of my research, personhood relates to social identities that allow for full participation in social, political, and economic spheres. Stacy (2011) explores caregivers who asserted their own socially valued personhood despite low social status by reclaiming the importance of caring labor. The caregivers in my research also think of their personhood as emerging from the care they provide to elderly Israeli clients, but they continue to chafe against the limitations imposed on them as migrant workers limited to employment as caregivers. Israel considers foreign workers as “economic migrant.” This category restricts foreign workers to participating in Israel’s economy as inexpensive and disposable labor, but not legitimating migrant workers’ social or political identities.

Finally, caregivers assert their claims for expanded legal rights based in part on their notions of reciprocity. These claims rest on the premise that care cannot be remunerated by wages alone, and that within the social relationships forged by caregiving there exists the obligation to return the gift of care. In a Maussian (1990) sense, caregivers imply that within the market value of caregiving there exists a “gift” that wages cannot alone reciprocate. The “gift” lies in the morality produced by care beyond the basic acts of assisting with daily routines, namely by recognizing and valuing a person’s life, assisted independence, and dignity through maintaining the personhood and health of an aging or ailing individual (Ibarra 2010; Buch 2013). Caregivers assert that this gift of care must be recognized and returned on a moral basis. Caregivers conceive of their caring acts as forming social bonds that establish these obligations for reciprocity. This understanding of Israel’s care debt to Filipino caregivers extends to the offers the Philippines made to refugee Jews during World War II to provide sanctuary, and the demands from Filipino migrant workers for Israel to acknowledge the historic debt and extend citizenship to them.

These theories and concepts are used in the following chapters to provide a framework through which to understand the construction of caregivers’ claims. These core concepts formalize the ideas and patterns that emerge from my ethnographic data. Using these theoretical frameworks not only structures the analysis of Filipino caregivers’ claims, but suggests places where these claims might resonate with migrant workers’ struggles on a global scale.

Context of Research

My fieldwork took place from August 2010 to December 2011. I conducted research in a northern city (called The City throughout this dissertation) considered a relatively sedate place to live. The City is slightly unusual as it has only a few religious sites that have limited interest to

tourists yet attracts important international businesses and has a strategically important port. It is considered to be a slightly boring but generally pleasant, place to live. The City has a significant aging population requiring care, creating communities of caregivers in a mixed city, meaning that Jewish Israelis, Palestinians with Israeli citizenship, and Druze communities cohabitate in the urban space and its suburbs. My research interests included questions about how social diversity affects access to health, and The City provided an environment to consider these questions.

The City has not received the kind of attention that social scientists have bestowed on Tel Aviv's or Jerusalem's migrant caregiving communities due to the smaller population of caregivers. An informal break down of Filipino migrant workers in Israel's major cities and towns estimated 18,000 Filipinos in Tel Aviv, 10,000 in Jerusalem, and 6,000 in The City in 2010. Choosing to locate my research in The City allowed me to consider a different kind of urban environment in connection to caregivers' health experiences and community formation. As The City hosts a healthy but smaller foreign worker community than other large cities, the services in The City available to migrant caregivers are limited but present. Many of the NGOs that offer services to foreign workers in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem do not have offices in The City. The NGO where I volunteered offered one of the few local offices to caregivers requiring assistance with labor concerns.

I gathered the bulk of my data through my volunteer work at this Israeli labor rights NGO, and a Filipino Community Organization (the FCO) based in The City. My volunteer work at the NGO exposed me to a wide range of labor-related concerns and practices in Israel. I gained insights into a multitude of experiences that distributed into recognizable patterns over my time volunteering in the NGO office. The short, individual exchanges that I had with

caregivers in the NGO office gave a patchwork sense of the landscape that articulated with the more in-depth exchanges I had with caregivers in the FCO community. The NGO's supervisor, Nurit, and the Israeli volunteers (who I discuss in Chapter 3) provided perspective on Israeli public discourse on migrant workers and general social difference that I tracked through the media.

The FCO existed in a few iterations in The City since the mid-1990s, but when Maria (one of the central participants in my research) introduced me to the members of the organization it had a solid identity and function. The Philippines Embassy endorsed the FCO for its outreach to all Filipinos; most identity-based overseas societies coalesced around linguist groups or fraternities, which made the FCO unique. Nurit introduced me to Maria, the FCO President, and through Maria I became closely acquainted with the FCO's leadership. The FCO focused on the welfare of all Filipinos in Israel who wished to join, their volunteer work ranging from arranging Rest and Relaxation daytrips all over Israel; hosting UN Medical Missions and mandatory overseas worker insurance renewal events; presenting Filipino cultural festivals for Israeli audiences; throwing large holiday events and galas; coordinating skills-based training events for caregivers; and visiting sick Filipinos in the hospital. In many ways the FCO functioned as a community support network and as one of the highly regarded community organizations that Filipinos around Israel knew about. Maria initially "hosted" me within the FCO as her guest, but over time I made connections with the leadership team and also with various members, spending the majority of my research time with members of this community and at the NGO offices.

Caregivers' Legal Rights and Complications

Caregivers' wages are set exactly at the minimum wage, and caregivers receive benefits and rights according to a slightly amended version of Israel's labor law. Every caregiver is

entitled to 36 hours off per week on the day assigned for his or her religious observance (although most caregivers I knew only took 26 hours off on these days). Caregivers also have the right to take their national religious holidays off. During my research caregivers accrued vacation time at the rate of one day per month, and sick time accrued at increasing rates based on tenure. After one year of employment, caregivers became eligible for pension payments and annual benefit payments. When employers fire caregivers or when the elderly person dies, the family is required to pay a severance fee based on the number of years the caregiver was employed.

Israel requires migrant caregivers to carry insurance including health insurance. Employers contributed a portion of the insurance costs for their caregivers (including medical insurance), and caregivers contributed the remaining amount from their pay. Under the terms of migrant caregiving, employers must meet basic obligations for providing reasonable meals and at least semi-private accommodations for sleeping, bathing, and storing personal items. As 24-hour employees, migrant caregivers must live with their employers. Israeli law prohibited any kind of assault, exploitation, or abuse of caregivers. Caregivers I knew agreed that incidences of these forms of abuse seemed relatively low in Israel; nonetheless serious problems still routinely occurred.

Caregivers used to lose their visas if they became pregnant. In 2011 the laws changed, and pregnant caregivers now receive greater legal protections that in many cases preclude their loss of legal status. Similarly, visas can be lost if a caregiver experiences extreme illness. As mentioned above, caregivers accrue sick days to be used in the event of serious illness with documentation from a physician, but long durations of illness over ninety days result in visa expiration (this almost always involves hospitalization and extended medical treatment).

Caregivers who understand Hebrew at a basic level and who can follow cultural cues can manage most aspects of life in Israel – the supermarket, the post office, negotiating bus fares (although the system has now changed), and the pharmacy. Yet, other routine transactions prove more difficult. For example, to open a checking or savings account at a bank, or to secure a plan for mobile phone service or internet require a citizen’s identification number. A series of “work arounds” exist for migrant workers, some of which I also used because of my lack of an identification number, but these are more expensive options than standard plans.

Every caregiver I knew had one cell phone that their employer paid for and another personal cell phone, which resulted in some truly comical moments of phone-juggling as caregivers laughingly tried to figure out which phone was ringing or from which phone they should make certain calls. Personal cell phones had to be operated off of a pay-per-minute account that caregivers renewed monthly. Internet operated off of USB sticks that provided adequate, but slow, service. The Post Office operated a bank where migrant workers could open accounts to deposit their pay and manage other basic financial needs (caregivers sent remittances via other financial institutions).

Additionally, caregivers must learn their way around their employer’s neighborhoods, how to give directions to taxi drivers to doctors’ offices and clinics, how to do the shopping and other household tasks, and how to manage the buses and *sheiruts* (shared taxis). In particular the buses proved complicated at first for many caregivers as bus maps are difficult to come by and the routes are not always clear. However, none of the many caregivers I met in Israel struggled with any of these tasks past their first few months in The City. Additionally, many navigated the process of renting weekend apartments, and negotiated with their landlords over how to register

for utilities (which also required an identification number), how to install faster internet, and how to access cable television. Employers also assisted in these endeavors at times.

Social and Political Climate

Caregivers navigated Israel as visibly distinct “others.” They knew that they held a very marginalized position in Israel and that Israelis viewed them as useful foreigners, up to a point. Israel experienced a number of social and political events during my fieldwork that illustrated the continued debate in public and political discourse about social diversity and the sociopolitical place of the “non-citizen.” Many of these events influenced caregivers, the foreign work program in general, and the character of the social landscape where Israelis and Filipinos interacted on a daily basis. A few pertinent examples of these events include the Israeli government’s accelerated efforts to restrict “illegal” migration into Israel by establishing a detention center in Ben Gurion airport, completing the detention center in the Negev, and building the security wall on the Israeli-Egyptian border. The (now former) Minister of the Interior, Eli Yishai, threatened to drastically restrict foreign work visas by 2012, which succeeded in some occupational categories such as construction. A reduction occurred in the availability of caregiving visas for a period of time, but this sector of the foreign work program experienced fewer restrictions because of the understood necessity of caregiving services.

Additionally, during my fieldwork the Knesset and Supreme Court debated and passed laws regarding tolerance for non-normative public rehearsals of Palestine-Israel’s history. A law passed requiring Palestinian citizens to show loyalty to Israel as a Jewish State. Further amendments to the Citizenship laws gained Supreme Court approval, restricting minority citizens from extending their citizenship rights to foreign spouses and families due to “security”

concerns. Finally, the Knesset voted to further restrict migrant workers' rights by resurrecting a revised version of the binding laws that the Supreme Court deemed unconstitutional in 2006.

These events primarily concern ideas of social difference and how the state advanced its stated ideals assuring Israel's national identity and the Jewish character of the body politic. Three other events textured my research although they posed no direct change to the foreign work program. I include some comments that caregivers made in relation to Gilad Shalit's release from Hamas detention in the following chapters; mostly I briefly summarize these three events to texture the social landscape that informed my research. These events also had a strong impact on my understanding of Israel and affected how I understood the possibilities for inclusive social diversity in Israel.

The Carmel Fire occurred in December 2010 very near where the caregivers in my research lived and worked. A large population of elderly Israelis with caregivers lived in the suburbs near where the fire raged, presenting heightened concerns about smoke inhalation and possible evacuation plans. The responsibility rested with caregivers to ensure their employer's safety, continued health, and evacuation if necessary (for most neighborhoods in the suburbs evacuation proved unnecessary). The events of the fire prompted caregivers in my research to remember the stress of the 2005-2006 Lebanon War, eliciting conversations about how caregivers manage times of emergency and how they can equip themselves to care for the elderly in these often uncertain periods.

Additionally, the fire prompted caregivers to talk to me about the "Arab threat," particularly voicing their beliefs that "Arabs" were intent on burning Jewish cities down. Many caregivers made these accusations long before the police identified a young Druze man as responsible for starting the fire (both the young man and his community denied this accusation).

These events provided me with additional insights into how Filipino caregivers aligned themselves with Israeli politics and worldviews in certain moments as part of their claims of embodied identity.

Juliano Mer Khamis was assassinated in April 2011 in front of The Freedom Theater he founded in Jenin. Juliano, a publicly visible actor, producer, and the son of a prominent social activist, lived in The City at various points during his life. Many of The City's residents knew him or felt a strong connection to him and his Israeli Jewish-Palestinian Christian family. Juliano's death by an unidentified Palestinian gunman sparked an eruption of public debate in The City. His death also enlivened debates about social diversity, many people recalling how years before Juliano's social activist mother, Arna Mer, could not be buried in a Jewish cemetery due to her marriage to Saliba Khamis, a Palestinian Christian (Juliano's father). A great deal of public interest centered around memories of Juliano's mother, Juliano's Finnish wife, and their children as referent points to articulate frustrations and ideals about Israeli society. Interestingly, the caregivers who participated in my research had very little to say about Juliano's death other than to comment on essentialized notions of Palestinian violence.

Finally, on October 18, 2011 Hamas exchanged Gilad Shalit for over 1,000 Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli detention. Hamas captured Shalit in a cross border raid in 2006 during Shalit's obligatory military service. The Shalit family launched a comprehensive and unrelenting international publicity campaign to pressure the Israeli government to secure Gilad's return. Gilad Shalit represented a number of concerns for Israeli families: the safety of their own children in military service; how Hamas would treat a young Israeli soldier in hostile detention; and what the cost of a government deal would be for the future safety of Israeli soldiers. I watched the media coverage of Shalit returning to Israel via the Rafah Crossing at a gym with

forty Jewish Israelis all standing around the tv screen in absolute silence. In a country where everyone always has an opinion that they are ready to voice, this silence produced a staggering effect.

Later, endless talk surrounded Shalit's release and prudence of the government's trade. Caregivers in my research voiced strong opinions that the Israeli government sacrificed the entire country's safety for one soldier, a sentiment that resounded across the Israeli media. Yet, that silence communicated something about Shalit's release that marked the complexity of Israel's relationship to the Occupied Territories, but moreover the mix of internal and external factors that continue to shape the flexibility Israelis have for imagining a diverse society.

Snapshot of Filipino Global Migration

In Chapter Two I approach the question of how Filipinos come to be migrant workers in Israel through the lens of Israel's labor politics and the evolution of the migration system in the Philippines. Here, I briefly sketch the intertwined economic and politic contexts in the Philippines that produce migrant workers on a large scale.

In 2012, official statistics reported 2.2 million Filipinos working abroad. In the same year, the state estimated 27.6 percent of the population as living below the governmental poverty line, a stable statistic since 2006¹. Uneven wealth distribution has shaped Philippines society since Spanish colonialism; currently, the poorest 10% only controls 1.7% of the county's income; conversely, the richest 10% controls 38.4% of the nation's income (Abinales & Amoroso 2005). Within the agricultural sector there are perpetual concerns about political machinations that result in unequal land usage and distribution systems, and due to the

¹ As a comparison, the official US estimates for poverty rates in 2013 was 15%. Republic of the Philippines National Statistical Coordination Board, *Poverty incidence unchanged, as of first semester 2012—NSCB* April 23, 2013: <http://www.nscb.gov.ph/poverty/defaultnew.asp> [Downloaded July 20, 2013]

inefficiency of agricultural practices agriculture generates very little wealth despite holding a large percentage of the labor force. The small industrial sector is export based, producing electronics, machinery, clothes, chemicals, and refined agricultural products (e.g. from coconuts). These goods are exported primarily to the US, but also to Japan, and various East and Southeast Asian trading partners.

In addition to concerns over the distribution and productivity of the work force, the national deficit looms large. It is caused by considerable domestic and foreign debt incurred in the 1970s, destabilizing the economy in repayments and economic reforms since the Aquino presidency. Job creation is an ongoing concern in the Philippines, linked to worries over development, poverty, professionalization of the workforce, and the ability to maintain a middle class. The inability of the government or the economic sector to produce enough jobs that allow for the well-educated middle class to support and reproduce itself is evidenced by the continued reliance on migrant labor to “outsource” qualified workers for higher wages in more valuable currencies.

In the Philippine migration system, education and literacy in English are necessities for obtaining an overseas labor contract. The Philippines is a relatively literate country, with 92% of the population over 15 able to read and write. Additionally, the average school expectancy of Filipinos is through twelve years of formal schooling². Many migrants also hold professional degrees in social work, nursing, or developed careers in completely different sectors before opting for the higher salaries that care work provides abroad (e.g. in my research pool I met Filipinos who worked previously as business owners, local politicians, in agriculture, and as social workers as well as registered nurses and other nursing professions).

² CIA Factbook: Philippines: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/rp.html> [Downloaded July 20, 2013]

Poverty has been a deep concern in the Philippines for decades, with governments routinely promoting anti-poverty programs that fall short of the professed goals. Based on data from Annual Poverty Indicator Survey administered by the National Statistics Office of the Philippines, Orbeta shows that as family size increases, educational expenditures per child on average diminish as does school attendance, as children's labor is needed to support the household. This decision to keep children home from school further stigmatizes poverty and vulnerability to poverty, as in the Philippines there is an extremely high value placed on parents sacrificing for children to graduate from high school at the minimum educational level (Orbeta 2005). Health expenditures based on family size follow the same inverted relationship (Orbeta 2005). Thus, overseas labor provides important employment, offering high enough wages to stave off a household's downward economic progression and help to reproduce the next generation of educated workers.

Methodology

I conducted fieldwork from August 2010 through December 2011 with preliminary research trips of a few weeks each in August 2008 and May 2009. My primary data collection entailed volunteering at an Israeli NGO chartered to provide legal counseling to all workers in Israel regarding labor rights; spending considerable time in migrant caregivers' communities, in particular the FCO; and creating a media archive spanning the months I spent in the field on issues pertaining to migrant labor in Israel, Israeli social diversity, and general political concerns in Israel. I attended a public lecture hosted by Kav LaOved in Tel Aviv protesting the proposed reiteration of the Binding Laws (called the Slavery Laws) that subsequently passed in 2011. I accepted invitations to the Caregivers' Union Health Rights Lectures in Jerusalem, and I attended lectures sponsored by a women's organization about problematic political turns

challenging civil rights in Israel. I attended multiple rallies, marches, and public protest relating to migrant workers and social rights, most of which took place in Tel Aviv. Finally, I observed public exchanges between Israelis and migrant caregivers on a daily basis, seeing the nature of these exchanges and how identity was produced and performed by both parties.

I met many caregivers through my volunteer position at the NGO and gained important insights from these interactions. Due to the brief nature of my exchanges with caregivers at the NGO office, the perspectives offered by these caregivers nuanced, supported, and posed questions to my main body of data but did not constitute the core of my data collection. Similarly, I met a number of caregivers in parks and in grocery stores with whom I formed casual acquaintances. During my semi-regular meetings with some of these caregivers we talked about the small details of daily life (e.g. what a label said in Hebrew, if it was going to be very hot that day, and did I hear that Hillary Clinton planned to visit Israel). However, they did not express interest in more involved participation in my research.

Four months into my research Nurit introduced me to Maria, the president of the FCO. From this contact I became immersed in the FCO community and met people through the social connections the FCO members offered. These connections proved rich and important for my comprehension of migrant-life in Israel, but my intensive participation in this community limited other opportunities to expand my research network. For example, almost all of the FCO members I had regular contact with worked in Israel for over four years by the time we met. These details changed the perspectives they exposed me to, and shaped my research in very particular configurations.

My initial research design involved “recruiting” Israeli participants, particularly caregivers’ elderly employers. In the initial months of my research I did meet a number of older

Israelis with caregivers. However, my concerns with their full comprehension of my research due to dementia and other complications convinced me to restrict my research mainly to caregivers, especially once the FCO community embraced me. The absence of Israeli perspectives does shift my analysis, and in further research I would prioritize adding Israeli participants to a much greater extent assuming that I addressed these ethical concerns.

Recording data in the course of fieldwork presented an unexpected obstacle. My requests to use digital recorders or having a pen and notebook out during conversations made the caregivers in my research extremely uncomfortable and unwilling to continue our conversations. Despite explaining my research in detail and answering all the questions caregivers asked me as openly as I could (and even answering some questions they didn't ask), caregivers viewed me as a young Christian American student interested in helping Filipinos in Israel. Even though I made them fully aware of my research and the purpose of my questions, digital recorders and taking notes didn't fit in with the role they assigned to me.

Very quickly I made the strategic if complicated decision to rely on memory to record important data to avoid making caregivers uncomfortable or unintentionally silencing them. This limited my data collection to writing up notes after the fact. In some cases (particularly during the latter months of my research) I reconstructed entire conversations with specific statements clearly held in my mind. At other times I could only reconstruct the general points from a conversation or exchange. In some settings I found quiet moments to jot down specific phrases or words, but frequently I relied on memory and mental tricks to record data after the fact. Once I resorted to these methods of data collection with Filipino caregivers, I applied these techniques to my Israeli research participants as well (e.g. Nurit and the NGO volunteers). The

shortcoming is that my analysis depends on my representations of what caregivers said rather than extensive use of caregivers' own statements, phrases, or expressions.

Asking questions also proved a complex enterprise in caregiving communities. My ability to navigate silence and conversational diversions determined my success in data collection. In the initial months of research I asked caregivers questions during our conversations, hoping for more information or to delve deeper into a topic. Unless my question obviously requested clarification and nothing more, these questions caused caregivers to shut down. They would fall silent, or act as if I hadn't spoken and continue with their train of thought, or change the topic entirely without warning. After weeks of asking questions meant to encourage further discussion only to be met with sudden questions as to why I wasn't married or with confusing silences, I stopped asking questions in these exchanges. I allowed the caregiver to direct the conversation while I listened and made small, careful comments.

This succeeded as an initial strategy in the sense that caregivers continued talking to me for a longer period of time, although I often felt as if I allowed for important information or details to go undeveloped. After I became much more comfortable with key participants in my research and their conversational rhythms, I started slowly inserting careful questions back into our exchanges. Overall, I limited my questions and comments to indications of active listening, or to slightly encourage their continuation on a certain thread or thought.

This reality of my data collection produced three important outcomes. First, the data I collected followed the rhythm that caregivers set for the most part. There are central areas of my research that I wanted them to flesh out for me and give their own in-depth reflections on, such as longer and more explicit discussions of what they meant by "democracy." Instead, I ended up with a heap of fragments all pointing to these detailed ideas that came from passing comments,

jokes, small conversations, group gripe sessions, bursts of anger, and occasionally longer dialogue on the topic.

Second, caregivers directed me to issues that mattered to them, ignoring my research intent for the most part. As caregivers wouldn't answer certain questions and proved unwilling to be conversationally led, my data reflects what they volunteered to me. In some senses my Filipino research participants pushed back against my research to form questions that mattered to them, which I valued even during fieldwork.

Third, the participants in my research exerted their own agency in relation to my questions, my research, and me. Over the course of my fieldwork, I developed warm, open, and sincere relationships with many of the caregivers who participated in my research. Despite the silences and redirections in our conversation we enjoyed engaged and dynamic discussions of important issues. Yet, I had to learn what not to talk about and figure out how to ethically acknowledge their reluctance to speak to certain issues while simultaneously admitting that some of these silences or moments of redirection marked very important political commentaries that enriched their views on specific topics. The important point is that the Filipino caregivers in my research did not articulate confusion about my role as a researcher, or the kinds of representations that would emerge from my research. They chose what to keep private and what to share, managing my experience in their lives and communities attentively despite their assurances that they enjoyed my presence and participation.

The daily aspects of my fieldwork took place in a constantly shifting mix of English, Tagalog, and Hebrew. Most caregivers spoke better Hebrew than my own functional fluency, but unlike many caregivers I could read Hebrew. I also spoke basic Tagalog, but in general caregivers preferred to communicate with me in English or in Hebrew, usually a mixture of both.

Most Israelis preferred to speak English with me beyond fleeting exchanges as they found my accent annoying, although they did include a great deal of Hebrew vocabulary in their English. My status as a native English speaker with a clear accent (or so they assured me) proved useful to many caregivers who wanted to improve their English in preparation for their training as call center employees once they ended their overseas contract, and in those cases we communicated entirely in English.

In order to address the specific claims that caregiver made without producing an expansive tome, there are relevant discussions not present in this dissertation. Some of these include a closer consideration of the cultural forms of reciprocity in Israel and the Philippines; engaging broadly with elderly Israeli care-receivers and their families about caregivers' claims of belonging; and expanding discussions about these kinds of claims to other migrant caregiving communities in Israel. These areas for further research promise enhancement and additional perspectives on the material I present in the following chapters, yet I assert that these chapters communicate the important elements of Filipino caregivers' claims that my research sought to understand.

Ethnographic Location

My own identity became a negotiating point in my research, and requires a brief note here. My self-perception going into the field focused on my American academic identity and that I am not Jewish, which I saw as relevant in light of visa issues and navigating Israeli culture. However, my very generalized Christian religious identity proved extremely relevant in the Filipino communities I interacted with even though I do not consider myself to be religious in any sense. Filipinos routinely asked me if I identified as Jewish or Christian; when I answered that I have a Christian family these caregivers understood us to share an important connection.

Very quickly the caregivers I spent the majority of my time with reworked by identity, assuring everyone I met of my Catholicism. Initially I would correct this misnomer, but as my corrections never actually shifted the impression of my religious identity I finally let the matter go.

Similarly, Jewish Israelis asked about my Judaism when they first met me. When they learned that I am not Jewish but that my spouse is that often concluded the conversation to their satisfaction.

The caregivers in the FCO became very protective of me relatively quickly. Most of the female caregivers considered me to be young because I did not yet have any children, and thought that I required them to look out for me based on my gender and also because they considered Americans to be naïve. This also prompted endless questions about *why* I didn't have children, especially since I already was in my thirties. Male caregivers also exerted a protective attitude towards me, but in general they mostly showed caution policing their jokes and comments when they thought I might understand. At times, I found these protective actions to be extremely grating, but in general I followed their cues as based on my status as a guest in their communities.

Note on Terminology and Translation

Israel refers to the overseas workers they recruit as foreign workers. This term emphasizes the marginalized and excluded nature of migrant labor in Israel. As this is precisely what the caregivers in my research argued against, in general, I use the terms 'migrant worker' or 'migrant caregiver' to define the Filipino labor Israel recruits to care for the elderly. At times, however, the term foreign worker remains politically descriptive or appropriate.

Similarly, I default to using “Filipino” despite the implicit gender reference. I do this because the caregivers in my research community never endorsed my use of “Filipina” when referencing women in their communities. Often, they corrected my usage back to the masculine. One research participant commented wryly to me that both terms are colonial and that Tagalog doesn’t gender according to Spanish grammar. My research included a 2:1 ratio of female to male caregivers, which is a relatively high percentage of men. This does not abnegate the gendered realities of Philippine migration, but I believe it contributed to the research participants favoring the masculine term. At times I do specifically refer to caregivers as “Filipina” when I am intentionally gendering my analysis.

I (mostly) use standard transliterations of Hebrew words. Additionally, many places in Israel have multiple names and spellings dependent on which community perspective is prioritized. In general, I selected the place names and spellings that my Israeli and Filipino research participants used most frequently.

General Outline of Chapters

Chapter Two provides a summary of key historical and political events that have particular bearing on 1) locating Filipino caregivers in Israel as migrant workers, 2) drawing from Israeli labor history to think about the non-Jewish laborer in relation to the nation, 3) how citizenship is conceived of and managed in Israel, and 4) the development of migrant labor in the Philippines from Spanish colonialism through the present. This chapter situates Israel’s migrant work program in the context of the Israeli/Palestinian Conflict, showing the indelible links between Israel’s recruitment of international labor migrants and the power dynamics structuring relations between Israel and Palestinians, particularly Palestinians living in the West Bank. Chapter Two addresses the surprised question “are there *really* Filipinos in Israel?” and attempts

to explain why Filipino migrants are not only in Israel but have been a part of Israeli society for over twenty years. Despite this long tenure and various claims about migrant workers' integration into Israel's social fabric (e.g. Bartram 2008; Drori 2009), the Israeli labor history exposes one area where Israel's social closures towards Palestinian day laborers provide opportunities to foreign workers in Israel while simultaneously limiting the imagined sociopolitical participation of foreign workers. My dissertation does not provide an engagement with Palestinian claims or perspectives on Israel or on migrant labor. However, in this chapter I outline how migrant workers' claims for citizenship and other forms of formal sociopolitical belonging reference Palestinians' status and claims.

Chapter Three focuses on four members from the communities that participated in my research. The first three, Maria, Mark, and Romeo, were all caregivers with very long tenure in Israel who held leadership positions in the FCO. In Chapter Three I summarize their work experiences in Israel while pointing to specific patterns and themes that the larger group of participants in my research identified and expounded upon. I pair a number of these themes with literatures on global labor migration and in particular Filipino migration, dynamics of care, and the gendered and racialized nature of domestic labor. From these three caregivers I establish the general climate and concerns preoccupying caregivers in The City.

I augment perspectives from these three caregivers with the fourth key research participant, an Israeli activist, Nurit, who supervised the NGO where I regularly volunteered. Nurit and the NGO provide texture and contrast regarding how migrant workers are understood in Israel specifically from the view of an NGO chartered to protect labor rights for all workers in Israel. Chapter Three introduces the people who made significant contributions to my research and provides perspective on the caregiving community in The City along with one glimpse into

an organization (the NGO) these caregivers depended on heavily for assistance with their labor rights.

Chapter Four draws upon the aspects of caregiving developed in Chapter Three to ground “health” as the term is used by caregivers to demand greater sociolegal inclusion. The Filipino caregivers in my research routinely proclaimed that their health suffered in Israel, violating what they understood their human right to health to entail. I trace international precepts established to protect and promote “health” along with the international standards establishing the labor-receiving state’s obligation towards migrant laborers. I also suggest that migrant workers’ use of “health” as a sociolegal measure of their overall condition may be best understood through Social Determinants of Health frameworks (e.g. Marmot 2006) and through Powers and Faden’s (2006) use of “well-being.” Drawing from ethnographic material, I present key social experiences that influence how caregivers’ devise their use of “health” to describe their feelings of instability, vulnerability, and disregard in Israel as migrant workers. Due to the methodological constraints of my data collection and the informal social exchanges in which caregivers talked to me about their perceptions of health and migrant labor experiences, I construct this notion of “health” through a constellation of ethnographic material. Yet, this constellation allows the themes to emerge that illustrate caregivers’ health concerns and how they are conceptualizing “health” in relation to their status as migrant workers in the Israeli context.

Chapter Five expands on Chapter Four, detailing the logics caregivers use to make claims on the state to improve their health. I look particularly at caregivers’ use of “the stranger” from Jewish religious texts, notions of embodied national identity, and returning to the questions of Israel’s care debt and failed reciprocity towards caregivers. These logics are constructed on

frameworks of human rights, democratic ideals, and religious ethics used to situate caregivers' *right* to demand more. It becomes apparent that caregivers making these claims view expired visas, deportation, and other causes of unwilling departure from Israel as the worst threat to their health in their particular construction of health.

Chapter Six confronts the inevitable reality that most caregivers will encounter: leaving Israel. I return to Maria and Mark, tracing how they reacted, and then acted, when their visas expired, and how they dealt with the realities of departure. I use the term "reluctant leaving" to explore how caregivers cope with the multitude of factors that make departing Israel difficult and at times traumatic. This chapter represents the outcomes that caregivers are fighting against in their claims for increased sociolegal rights to protect their health.

I return to questions of the place of non-citizens in Israel in the Conclusion, a debate that has continued to rage in Israeli discourse since I ended my research. I briefly consider the refugee strike and the caregivers' protests that took place during December 2013-January 2014, and Rose Fostanes' surprising win on the popular television show *XFactor Israel*. These three events summarize the closures that are increasingly narrowing the social space for non-citizens in Israel, and further questions about what to do with "temporary" workers who continue to make claims for their own belonging despite their status as migrants. This recent discourse in Israel has bluntly posed the question of competing ethical claims by non-citizens for sympathy and support. Politicians and citizens both raised the question of why Israel continues to recruit for migrant laborers when asylum seekers in Israel want to work. In this case, the sympathy for African migrants fleeing social and political unrest is greater than the public concern for migrant workers viewed as "just" economic migrants. This discourse suggests that there is only room for one category of non-citizen in Israel (if that), and that the legitimacy of membership in this

tolerated classification depends on eliciting society's sympathy. I finally conclude by summarizing where the central participants in my research are now and their resonating voices as reminders of their limited options within Israel's foreign work system but moreover in global labor migration structures.

CHAPTER 2: FRAMING FILIPINO CAREGIVERS IN ISRAEL

The waiter brought the coffee I ordered, and I thanked him in Hebrew, squinting up at him slightly as the morning sunlight glared behind him. My friend just texted me that she was late but still coming; I waited at my table at the sidewalk café, watching as the people moved by the little plaza, running errands at the bakery and the bank on their way to work. It was Sunday, the beginning of Israel's workweek but Filipino caregivers' day off. It was also the monthly payday for caregivers, explaining the morning purposefulness on the Filipino faces that passed on the way to the bank or to refill cell phone minutes.

I noted the faces in the flows of foot traffic that marked this part of The City as I waited. This is where immigrants from the former Soviet Union lived. This neighborhood marked one of the divisions between the Jewish and the Palestinian residential domains. This was where Filipino caregivers rented weekend apartments for their time off of work, and where they liked to walk with friends and shop in their spare time. The NGO office was nearby, and I found myself spending a lot of time in this part of The City to the horror of my middle class Israeli friends who were sure that I would encounter danger or unpleasantness there.

Caregivers who I knew smiled and waved as they passed, calling “Hoy!³ Laura! Boker tov, hamoodi!⁴” as they rushed off to attend to their own daily plans. The older Israeli women sitting at a table near mine gave me a strange look each time a passing Filipino greeted me.

My friend and I decided to meet at this café because it was half way between the Post Office⁵ at the end of Herzl Street where she had business and the McDonalds where she was meeting other migrant caregivers. They were going to the Orange Store⁶ to put more money on their pay-per-minute cell phone plans and then continuing onto the Western Union where they remitted money home to the Philippines. When my friend showed up full of apologies and smiles we agreed to go. I got up, searching my pockets for a tip before following her back onto the sidewalk. The older women murmured to each other that my friend must be my family’s Filipini⁷, my familiarity with Filipino migrant workers slotted into a category that they recognized. I still received a wary look from them as I left, the waiter calling his thanks for the tip as he cleared the table efficiently.

My friend and I continued onto the McDonalds, walking through the heterogeneous rush of people on a street named after Zionism’s founder past buildings constructed in the Ottoman architectural style to remit money to the Philippines. I noticed that she was wearing her “I Stand with Israel” shirt and carrying a plastic shopping bag from a major Israeli clothing store.

³ *Hoy!* is a Filipino greeting, usually called out with emphasis to get attention or to call attention to something.

⁴ *Boker tov, hamoodi* is Hebrew, meaning good morning, sweetie.

⁵ Most migrant workers in Israel manage their money through the Post Office bank, including depositing their monthly paychecks.

⁶ One of the main companies offering cell phone plans and selling small electronics.

⁷ Hebrew for Filipino, but which has become slang for any foreign caregiver.

“We have to go to the shuk, too,” my friend told me as she waved at another Filipino woman who waved to her from across the street. “My ima⁸ wants rimonim⁹ when I go back to her tonight because it is the chag¹⁰ soon ...”

Filipino migrant caregivers attend to the health of elderly Israelis in a multitude of social contexts (e.g. the employer’s apartment, the doctor’s office, the grocery store, the park) requiring them to navigate Israel as part of their daily lives. Yet, these caregivers also are woven into the fabric of Israeli society, filling particular spaces defined by historical and political processes as foreign workers providing caring labor in Israeli homes. The excerpt from my fieldnotes included above testifies to the palimpsest of sociopolitical events that continue to shape Israel from the Yishuv through 1948 and 1967 and 1993, and into the present moment. Despite the generalizing claim that Israel is a “Jewish” state, Israeli society is diverse, marked by multiple hierarchies and exclusions, and struggles with how to envision a future that manages all these identities within the body politic.

Migrant workers embody one moment in this struggle connected to the trajectory of social diversity and nation building in Israel’s national history. Their social spaces are mapped by interlocking legal closures and possibilities that define migrant workers as temporary laborers who are expected to pack up quietly and depart at the end of their labor contracts, leaving Israel without a trace. Yet, as my research shows, Filipino migrant workers refute these expectations, asserting their own desires and visions for their imagined future in Israel.

⁸ *Ima* is Hebrew for mother, but Filipino caregivers often use kinship terms to refer to their employers.

⁹ *Rimonim* is Hebrew for pomegranates.

¹⁰ *Chag* is Hebrew for a Jewish holiday that is named in the Torah. It is traditional in Israel to eat pomegranate seeds around the time of the High Holidays.

This dissertation portrays a community of Filipino migrant workers caring for the elderly in a northern Israeli city. My analysis explores how these caregivers’ construct “health” as encompassing their experiences of instability, disregard, and exclusion produced by Israel’s immigration policies. I present a specific group of Filipino migrant caregivers and their advocacy for improved sociolegal health in the following chapters as part of a larger assemblage of narratives about globalization, labor migration, Israel’s national character and political commitments, identity, and evolving questions about what comprises “health” and how its limits are negotiated. My analysis engages to some extent theoretically with these expansive topics, yet I give primacy to my ethnographic insights into Filipino migrant workers’ lives in Israel and their health concerns. In this chapter I draw on some of these literatures to frame the larger context of my research and foreground how Filipino caregivers came to make claims of belonging based on their configurations of health.

I also summarize the relevant Israeli and Philippine histories that bring Filipino caregivers to Israel as migrant workers. Israel recruits Filipino caregivers to meet its growing care crisis that resonates with shortages of care confronting societies around the globe. Filipino caregivers entered the Israeli labor market as a result of the 1993 Oslo Accords, replacing Palestinian workers from the West Bank who previously supplied low-paid, temporary labor before the Israeli government closed the borders. Israel’s need of cheap, temporary labor found a solution in the Philippines’ strategic use of overseas contracts to address under- and unemployment, and to shore up the Philippine economy with remittances made in foreign currencies.

This chapter addresses critical questions such as why *Filipinos* are providing caregiving labor in Israel by considering these two histories together. Moreover, illustrating the dialogue

between these histories exposes Filipino caregivers' rationales for desiring Israeli citizenship, and the logics underlying the obstacles they face in this pursuit. This larger global context of labor flows and citizenship restrictions form the landscape that structure the particulars of my research, and the daily terrain that my research participants – migrant caregivers and their elderly charges – navigate in their intimate affective interactions.

Filipinos seeking citizenship in Israel confront the state's clear preferences for a Jewish national character, and the measures through which the state seeks to actualize this goal. The State of Israel establishes religious and ethnic priorities that shape immigration policies as evidenced by the Law of Return, the primary route through which Israel accepts new immigrants. The primacy Israel gives to Jewish immigration reinforces the state's intent to provide a democratic homeland for Jewish people worldwide. Yet, non-Jewish claims on citizenship amplify the anxiety surrounding social and political goals to maintain Israel's Jewish character in the context of democratic ideological obligations.

Moreover, non-Jewish aspirations towards Israeli citizenship highlight the contested politics surrounding the absence of a Palestinian Right of Return and Israel's general refusal to consider Palestinian citizenship claims.¹¹ The Israel-Palestinian conflict evolved for decades before Israel recruited Filipinos to replace flows of Palestinian labor from the West Bank; yet, the Philippines plays a role in Israel's political relationships with Palestinians. Namely, the labor history of the foreign work program ties directly to the shifting politics that define the relationship between Israel and Palestinians in the Occupied Territories.

Migrant labor in the Philippines originated with Spanish colonialism, but Marcos expanded overseas labor opportunities in the 1970s and 1980s as a strategy for national

¹¹ Israel does consider immigration applications from Palestinians based on a citizen's right to extend legal status to his or her spouse. However, this right is impeded by Israel's Citizenship Laws, particularly the 2007 stipulations, as discussed in Chapter 5.

development. The Philippine government mandates overseas workers to remit percentages of their monthly earnings (the percent differs by occupational category), stabilizing the economy through currency valued higher than the Philippine peso. This economic reliance on foreign currency exposes Filipino overseas workers to foreign legal systems, changing immigration and visa laws, and the vastly different norms and expectations in host societies that can amplify the vulnerabilities of migrant status. The Philippines also depends on overseas contracts to cement diplomatic relations, walking a tightrope between maintaining strategic relationships and protecting its citizens working abroad.

Thus, the rhetoric produced by successive Philippine political leaders who attempt to reconcile economic and diplomatic needs with the state's responsibility to protect Filipino workers abroad reveals the complications of relying on overseas contracts and remittances. These complications extend to how the government's national priorities affect the daily lives of the Filipino men and women who are globally employed. Filipino migrant workers who want to create a permanent home for themselves abroad, such as in Israel, are influenced by the instability and vulnerabilities that structure overseas contract labor; the Philippine government's priorities for national development at times valued over protecting its citizen-migrants; and the importance of earning wages in valuable foreign currencies for Filipino migrant workers' families who remain in the Philippines.

This chapter outlines the contexts that bring Filipino caregivers to Israel and frame the interactions Filipino migrant workers negotiate in the Israeli sociopolitical landscape. I put relevant aspects of Israeli history into dialogue with the history of labor migration in the Philippines to show how these two nations, their struggles, and their people are connected in increasingly familiar global relationships. Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing (2005) uses the term *friction*

as a metaphor to describe how global trends are actualized and animated in local contexts. She confronts the romantic notion of globalization working “unimpeded” by deconstructed national boundaries and a global free market by arguing that:

how we run depends on what shoes we have to run in. Insufficient funds, late buses, security searches, and informal lines of segregation hold up our travel; railroad tracks and regular airline schedules expedite it but guide its routes... These kinds of ‘friction’ inflect motion, offering it different meanings. Coercion and frustration join freedom as motion is socially informed (5-6).

Friction results in new cultural production, and a local reworking of globalized ideas, rhetoric, and forces (5). In other words, “friction makes global connection powerful and effective. Meanwhile, without even trying, friction gets in the way of the smooth operation of global power” (6). Lowenhaupt Tsing’s concept of *friction* is useful in thinking through the overarching global processes of international labor migration, and economic flows of labor and capital, in order to shift the focus to the individual lives that provide this global labor. This includes not only the stakeholders who benefit from inexpensive migrant labor, but those who depend on their labor: the elderly who require hourly and daily care.

My dissertation is not overtly a study of global connections or processes; it is a narrative about the results of these processes in one particular place in a specific moment in politico-historical time. I use this chapter to establish the context of the history and politics that frame this study to show the interconnected forces that bring Filipino caregivers into elderly Israeli homes. My research is situated between two countries, Israel and the Philippines, where daily realities echo with history that cannot be relegated to the past but instead are lived and relived every day. I select very specific certain historical and political moments in my overview below to highlight the critical issues informing my research, acknowledging that I have elided a great

number of pertinent events due to space constraints that influence the occurrence of Filipino migrant workers in Israel.

I unpack the ideological and political aspects of Israel's national history pertaining to labor, citizenship, and demographics to reveal the tensions around social diversity and non-Jewish immigration in Israeli society. Furthermore, this framework illustrates the array of conditions prompting caregivers to seek a greater compliment of social and legal rights. To understand why some migrant caregivers are making claims on the State of Israel for greater inclusion and even formal recognition as part of the body politic, we need to examine the larger context of Filipino migration. Finally, I foreground how Filipino caregivers' desires to integrate into Israel's body politic are seemingly logical and strategic.

Part One: Israel

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries when the Zionist social project comprised the core of the Jewish settlements in Palestine, Zionist ideology envisioned founding a Jewish Homeland emerging from, and developed through, Jewish labor. Zionism, both an ideology and a social movement, continues to inform the national mythos and authorized history of Israel, provides rationales for expansion of Jewish settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and constitutes a strong political force in Israeli politics. The central tenet of Zionism is the importance of Jewish People laboring to rebirth the Biblical *Eretz Yisrael* as a modern secular Jewish nation state. The focus on Jewish labor also shaped the development of a dual national economy that privileged Jewish labor and continues to inform debates over the contributions non-Jewish labor makes to the nation.

The modern state of Israel emerged as European Jews immigrated to Palestine starting in the 1880s, influenced by Zionist beliefs that their return to Biblical Israel promised a nation of

strong Jewish people freed from diaspora and anti-Semitism. Labor as a nation-building activity assumed particular significance in the second and third *aliyot*¹² that formed the core of the Jewish pioneering movement. Asceticism, labor, self-defense, self-reliance, identity formed through Hebrew language and culture, and future visions of modernization and state building formed the core values enshrined in the pioneering movement that corresponded closely to Labor Zionism (Shafir 1989: 2).

Labor Zionism, which would inform the early politics of the Yishuv¹³ and Israel until the mid-1970s, emphasized the value of Jewish labor creating the modern Jewish nation (Shafir 1989). The goals of the labor-based pioneering movement included reforming the nature of the (European) Jewish individual as impoverished, marginalized, and vulnerable to abuse where assimilation offered only partial protection from discrimination. As one founder of Labor Zionism, Aaron David Gordon, characterized European Jewry: “we are a parasitic people. We have no roots in the soil; there is no ground beneath our feet... Every alien movement sweeps us along, every wind in the world carries us” (quoted in Sternhell 1998: 48).

The founding thinkers of Labor Zionist espoused beliefs that labor would transform Jewish identity from a set of religious practice to the embodied Jewish essence necessary for

¹² *Aliyah* (plural *aliyot*) is the Hebrew term used to describe Jewish immigration to Palestine/Israel, imagined as a “return” of the Jewish People to their Biblically endowed land. The term literally means “ascent.” The first *aliyah* was prompted in the 1880s-1890s as a result of the Russian pogroms, but many of the Russian Jewish immigrants emigrated after a few years, not forming a strong settler society until the second major wave of immigration. The second *aliyah* dated from 1904 to 1914, and was comprised of socialist-inspired pioneers wanting to work the land to create a nation coming primarily from Eastern Europe beyond the Pale. The third *aliyah* dated from 1918 to 1923 after the conclusion of World War I. The fourth and fifth *aliyot* brought Jews in distress from Poland and Germany and according to Sternhell (1998) “laid the true infrastructure of Israeli society.” The role of the Jewish Yishuv in Palestine as a place of refuge for persecuted Jewish peoples in the 1930s and 1940s “gave the Yishuv a moral credibility and political support without which the state of Israel may not have come into being” (Sternhell 1998: 13).

¹³ The Yishuv was the Jewish settlement in Palestine that structured the leadership and institutions that formed the initial core of Israel as a new nation state.

founding their new nation. Moses Hess formulated a core belief of this movement, asserting that Judaism was not limited to a religious identity but that it constituted a nation, and he extended this view to proposing Palestine as a *socialist* nation for the Jewish people (Avineri 1981). The connection between *Eretz Yisrael* as the nation Biblically-promised to the Jewish people, and reconnecting as a strong, independent and rooted people provided the solution to the diasporic condition of European Jewry as Gordon described it. Agriculture, initially, was advanced as the form of Jewish labor able to revitalize Jewish peoplehood and form the backbone of the nation (Sternhell 1998: 36). Thus, the condition of European Jewry found the promise of salvation in the “Zionist revolution” that offered a powerful and meaningful “break with exile” (Sternhell 1998: 48). Yet, this promise could only be fulfilled if Jews immigrating to Palestine to form the emergent nation accepted “de-Yiddishization” of their religious and European character, to become secular, self-reliant, and capable of self-defense.

In effect, prioritizing the link between Jewish labor and the new Jewish Homeland was intended to solidify Jewish people as a political force, cement the idea of Jewish Peoplehood, and form durable connections between the land of the nation and its people (Dieckhoff 2003). The symbolic resonance of land creating a people further prioritized agriculture as a national pursuit. Ben-Gurion summed up this ideal at the 1925 Zionist Congress when he stated that Israel must be a nation of workers (Dieckhoff 2003). However, when Zionist Jews immigrated to Palestine they did not find “a land without people,” a vision of Palestine often attributed to early Zionist proponents who described *Eretz Yisrael* as waiting for the return of the Jewish People, but rather a populated geopolitical territory controlled first by the Ottoman Empire and then by Britain. At the turn of the 20th century Palestinian society was a primarily sedentary agricultural territory with some urban development. When the waves of Jewish immigrants forming the

second *aliyah* arrived in Palestine, they found Palestinians farming the land, including their work as low-paid waged labor in the Jewish settlements established during the first *aliyah* (1880s-1890s).

During the second *aliyah* the idea of “pure Jewish settlement” grew in importance, requiring a “bifurcation of the economy” which in practice required a separate Jewish economy (Shafir 1989: 19). However, this economy had to articulate with the existing Palestinian economy to continued land acquisition. Jewish nationalism developed in the context of the Jewish National Fund managing land acquisition through the assistance of the World Zionist Organization, and the Histadrut¹⁴ overseeing labor markets, creating the space for the dream of a Jewish return to *Eretz Yisrael* to develop into the beginnings of a modern nation state mapped over the geopolitical territory of Palestine. Thus, separation pertaining to a bifurcated labor force became an integral ideology in Jewish nationalism (Shafir 1989).

Jewish settlers during the second and third *aliyot* prioritized replacing Palestinian labor with Jewish labor as they established institutions such as the Histadrut, and continued to advocate for a society built for and by the Jewish people (Laqueur 2003). Yet, the Jewish agricultural settlements depended upon Palestinian seasonal waged labor as Palestinian workers received lower pay than Jewish laborers (Shafir 1989). Waged labor in Jewish agriculture was attractive to Palestinians as their agricultural sectors were damaged by debt and their lack of control over the overall management of the land (e.g. how it was sold off to Jewish settlers) (Bernstein 2000). As Palestinians continued to find agricultural employment in the Yishuv, the

¹⁴ The Histadrut, established in 1920, stands for HaHistadrut HaKlalit shel HaOvdim B'Eretz Yisrael, which translates to the General Federation of Laborers in the Land of Israel. The Histadrut is a powerful social institution that continues to hold social, political, and economic sway. In addition to forming a central trade union, the Histadrut extended into social fields such as clinics, hospitals, housing, sports, education, a military unit (the Hagana), economic societies, an insurance company, and a bank – all based around the socialist notion of labor as an organizing principle of society (Dieckhoff 2003).

population of many villages in close proximity to Jewish-owned land grew during the early 1900s to meet the increased demand for farming labor (Shafir 1989: 53).

The overall labor opportunities controlled by the Jewish sector were structured to privilege Jewish workers and to pay them higher wages, creating a split labor market that intentionally benefited Jewish workers (Shafir 1989). However, there were ethnic distinctions within the Jewish community in Palestine as well that structured the labor market hierarchies. These ethnic stratifications were in part created by the Yishuv's attempt to increase Jewish labor and decrease dependence on Palestinian agricultural workers. The Yishuv leadership enacted labor plans in the 1910s to find inexpensive labor alternatives that would increase the Jewish engagement with agricultural labor. One such example was the Yavnieli *aliyah* that brought Jewish immigrants from Yemen into the Yishuv's agricultural labor markets. As a result, Yemenite laborers gained status as alternatives to Palestinian labor but they were afforded an Arab wage and could not rise to the labor status of Ashkenazi laborers (Shafir 1989: 120). The benefits that European immigrants to Palestine received from the World Zionist Organization to assist in successful integration into the Jewish communities of the Yishuv were not offered to Yemenite or other Middle Eastern Jewish immigrants, shaping what Shafir terms a "split national movement" by producing different relationships to the emerging Israeli nation based on ethnicity and regional origin (Shafir 1989: 121).

The kibbutz and moshav movements emerged during the third *aliyah* to fulfill the socialist ideals of communal labor, and providing yet another way to prioritize Jewish workers. The kibbutz and moshav movements began in 1921 with the idea of solidarity emerging from autonomous labor focused on collective projects. The kibbutzim influenced the developing character of the emerging nation; they were generally European in nature, intended to exclude

Palestinian labor, and were not generally welcoming to Jews of Middle Eastern origins (Shafir 1989: 184). These communities built upon the ideological drive in the second and third *aliyot* to associate personhood with labor, chartered by socialist principles that focused on settling land. These communal settlements often stood on “borders” with Palestinian land holdings in order to push these boundaries back and demark more of the territory for the Jewish state. These kibbutzim and moshavim served as defensive outposts on what was considered the frontiers of Jewish expansion (Dieckhoff 2003).

Realistically, however, only a minority of settlers participated in an extended agricultural lifestyle, and only 6%-8% of the Jewish population of Palestine lived in collective settlements as encouraged by socialist ideals (Sternhell 1998: 36). Yet, the value of Jewish labor, and particularly agricultural labor, held its traction as a crucial ideology within the political views of the Yishuv and for attracting new Jewish immigrants and important international financial investments. The labor movement’s success in producing a self-sustaining agricultural community of Jewish laborers is questioned, but as Sternhell argues this may not have been the crucial goal of the labor movement overall. He asserts that the labor movement was not:

... built on its social achievements but through its ability to bear on its shoulders the construction of the nation. But the egalitarian ideology did not really succeed in the society as a whole; neither did the kibbutz form of settlement succeed in imposing its values on the Histadrut [central labor union] society. Although kibbutz members always remained an insignificant minority from a numerical point of view, the kibbutz served as an alibi for the whole movement, which almost from its inception was contrary to the lifestyle of an egalitarian society (Sternhell 1998: 41-42).

Yet, the persisting belief that Jewish labor contributed integral value to the character of the nation informed the tension Palestinian labor produced within this ideological framework.

Tracing the development of labor markets in Israel during the British Mandate period (1922-1948), Bernstein (2004) points to the role of the British colonial government and private

employers in the shaping of Israel's split labor market. The British encouraged the ideals of free-market capitalism by dismissing direct taxation of income on private capital; according to Sternhell (1998) "75 percent of the capital that entered Jewish Palestine between the two world wars was private" (6). Despite the socialist discourse characterizing the Yishuv in the 1930s, economic development was viewed as essential to establishing the nation, legitimizing the role of private capital during this period (Sternhell 1998: 6). This private capital was used to strengthen Zionist efforts to advance Israeli nationalism, disenfranchising Palestinian workers and communities as a result (Bernstein 2004).

As opposed to historical analyses that isolate the Yishuv's economy from the larger Palestinian markets, Bernstein argues that the Yishuv and Palestinian society in Mandatory Palestine were interconnected and continually interacting. The routine moments of interaction shaped the Jewish policies around labor, markets, and developing nationalism (2000: 7).¹⁵ At the end of World War I, Jewish immigration to Palestine increased and both Arab and Jewish economies expanded parallel to British governmental control of industry, ports, and the railways. Wages for European Jewish labor and Arab labor were set with both Arab skilled and unskilled labor remunerated at a lower wage than comparable Jewish labor in both categories. Wages for Jewish laborers who emigrated from Middle Eastern countries was set comparable to Arab wages furthering the ethnic stratification of wage allocation (Bernstein 2000: 30).

Highlighting the role of emerging nationalism in Zionist efforts towards statehood, Bernstein shows how available, less expensive Palestinian labor was at times strategically overlooked by the Mandate British government and private employers to provide employment

¹⁵ Bernstein shows that Palestinian laborers tended to find employment in their own labor markets, through the colonial market, and to some extent in Jewish labor markets. In contrast, Jewish laborers overwhelmingly worked in their own labor sectors while struggling to control more of the colonial labor opportunities. Yet, these markets influenced each other and formed market competition. Additionally, capital flowed across these different labor sectors (2000: 34-35).

with good pay to Jewish workers.¹⁶ With organizations such as the World Zionist Organization and the Jewish Agency providing economic support and lobbying the British government, it was possible to offset the higher wages that Jewish workers were afforded. Jewish labor rapidly established a monopoly over the labor market that marginalized Palestinian workers. The prominence of the Jewish labor market solidified in 1948 with the declaration of Israeli statehood and the associated dismantling of Palestinian infrastructure and society.

Benny Morris (1988) countered the strongly articulated Zionist narrative that Palestinians fled the newly established state of Israel in 1948 either out of fear or as a political objection to the new Jewish nation (see also Pappé 2006, Yiftchtal 1997, Segev 1998). Rather, he shows that Israel expelled an overwhelming number of Palestinians by force from their land.

Advancing this re-consideration of history farther than Morris commits to, Pappé (2006) argues that the violent removal of Palestinians was a state-planned coordinated action of ethnic cleansing. His claim that the Zionist goal to empty Palestine in order to create a Jewish nation exclusively for a Jewish population was the impetus for strategies of aggressive elimination of Palestinians from the territory.

The state-initiatives in 1949 and into the 1950s that encouraged Jewish immigration into the new state of Israel also reflect a political goal to establish a statistical majority and to increase military strength (Segev 1998). The number of Jewish people who emigrated from Eastern Europe did not provide enough demographic legitimacy to Israel's political need to

¹⁶ Initially the British Mandate colonial government prioritized Palestinian labor as inexpensive and replaceable, thus allocating more of this labor to Palestinian workers. Jewish labor interests attempted to secure a greater percentage of the British governmental sector, which over time occurred as Ashkenazi Jewish workers gained skilled positions and Jewish workers from Middle Eastern countries replaced Palestinian labor. The lower Palestinian wage made these workers more attractive to employers in some industries, but Palestinian workers were economically disadvantaged compared to Jewish laborers in similar occupations, and often were slotted into unskilled, temporary labor that did not offer job security or opportunities for occupational advancement (Bernstein 2000).

populate the state's territory, requiring the state to look to Jewish communities in Middle Eastern countries. As these communities immigrated to Israel, the state's methods of characterizing and incorporating these new immigrants reinforced social hierarchies where Eastern European (Ashkenazi) citizens were prioritized by the state. In contrast, the state relegated new citizens from Middle Eastern nations (Sephardic or Mizrahi) who the Israeli state viewed as "primitive" in their cultural forms and in need of "modernization" to second-class citizenship.¹⁷

Despite the high levels of education and "modernity" that many Mizrahi immigrants to Israel held, the jobs made available to Sephardic and Mizrahi Jews were primarily blue-collar. This placement of Sephardic and Mizrahi Jews in subordinated social positions was constructed in part due to the difference in experience between Jews who emigrated from Central and Eastern Europe, and Jews from the Iberian Peninsula or Middle Eastern countries. Lavie (1996) argues that as Mizrahi immigrants did not have the same history in the Yishuv, the same experience with the Holocaust, and were not eligible for even small financial reparations from Germany, they were placed outside of the main flows of Israeli upward mobility (Lavie 1996: 63). As non-European Jews were coded necessarily as Jewish they had inclusion into the state, unlike Palestinians, but the social discrimination that they continue to experience affects their access to full political, economic, and social privilege.

The role of Palestinian workers in Israel's labor markets shifted after 1948 as newly differentiated categories of "Palestinians" emerged based on Israel's military action dispersing Palestinian communities and absorbing land. In the labor context, two main categories developed to reflect types of Palestinian labor: Palestinians who managed to stay in Israel in 1948 and gained Israeli citizenship, and Palestinian refugees who had occasional opportunity

¹⁷ See Shenhav (2006) for a discussion of the tactics used by Israel to promote Jewish immigration to Israel, as well as the ways in which religious identity was mapped onto Mizrahi Jews in order to make them "legible" as Jews and thus eligible for Israeli citizenship, but which also conferred the durable stigma of "primitive" upon them.

based on political climate to work as casual day laborers in Israel (particularly residents of the West Bank between 1967 and 1993).

For Palestinians with Israeli citizenship, their relationship to the new Israeli economy was as a second-class of laborers with limited occupational or education opportunities. In addition to being dispossessed from the land and suffering from the destruction of houses and communities by the Israeli state, Israel's laws excluded Palestinians from full civic inclusion based on ethno-religious identity. While Kraus and Yonay (2004) show that in some instances the segregation of Palestinian and Israeli educational institutions and some aspects of the labor market within Israel was beneficial for providing opportunities for Palestinian advancement in comparison to marginalized Jewish populations, the exclusion from the state carries severe disadvantages and disempowerments.

In need of manual laborers, Israel created opportunities for Palestinians from the Occupied Territories to cross the border into Israel after the Six Day War¹⁸ that fluctuated based on Israel's assessments of the Palestinian workers' level of security risk (Gordon 2008). The increased permeability of Israel's borders after 1967 allowed for a new pattern of Palestinian labor participation; as day laborers Palestinians crossed into Israel to fulfill needs for low-skilled labor. Thus, after the Six Day War, Palestinians refugees from 1948 who had resettled in the West Bank (occupied by Jordan since 1948) found themselves in a new relationship with Israel. With the Israeli demand for low-paid day labor, particularly in construction, Palestinian workers were (somewhat unofficially) integrated into the Israeli labor force.

As Rosenfeld (2004) shows, a third of working Palestinians from the Occupied Territories became Israeli day-laborers by the mid-1970s. The willingness of Palestinians to

¹⁸ In the 1967 War, Israel annexed East Jerusalem and the West Bank from Jordan, Gaza and the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt, and the Golan Heights from Syria in a show of military aggression that violated the "Green Line," the territorial demarcations established by the UN in 1949 Armistice Agreements.

fulfill these positions came from the inhibition of industrial development in the Occupied Territories and the repression of labor unions, making Israel an important (and available) source of employment. Access to Israeli labor markets stimulated the West Bank's economy and new opportunities arose for Palestinian workers concerning educating children, investing in large consumer items, and helping adult children marry and begin their own households. The West Bank's economic dependency became the larger cost of these opportunities (Gordon 2008, Rosenfeld 2004).

Sara Roy argues that that Palestinian economic dependence on Israel constituted de-development as the labor force responded to the Israeli need for semi- and un-skilled labor at the expense of developing the Palestinian economy. Palestinian trade also went through Israel, creating additional dependence on Israel for access to markets and export trade that depended on open borders (Roy 1999). In the years before the Oslo Agreements the Palestinian economy felt the negative effects of the Gulf War, Israel's declining demand for Palestinian labor (due in part to the first Intifada), and the retraction of Persian Gulf employment opportunities for educated Palestinian workers (Roy 1999). Hence, while the Israeli economy grew with industrial and technological advances, the dependent on work within Israel repressed the Palestinian economy. Concurrently, when Israel tightened security on the borders, such as during the first Intifada¹⁹ the West Bank economy sustained severe damage (Rosenfeld 2004). Additionally, Israel imposed restrictions on economic and infrastructural development in the West Bank that made any kind of economic sovereignty implausible (Gordon 2008, Rosenfeld 2004).

¹⁹ The first Intifada began in 1987, prompted by outrage over a number of Palestinians killed by Israeli soldiers. While some say that this intifada ended in 1991, others claim that it only came to a halt in 1993 with the greater security measures enacted by the Israeli government in coordination with the Oslo Process.

Palestinian day laborers lost their routine access to Israel labor markets as a result of the 1993 Oslo Accords. The Oslo Accords are popularly characterized as a peace process that inspired hope in Israel and the Occupied Territories alike that a possible end to the conflict existed. Oslo consisted as a set of “Interim Arrangements” meant to last five years and assumed to eventually structure two ethnically defined states: Jewish Israel and Arab Palestine. During this five-year period the international community expected Israel and the PLO to build mutual trust in order to move forward with a lasting peace agreement. The timing of the Oslo Accords came when the West Bank was economically weakened²⁰ and game-changing international political shifts occurred in quick succession. These included the fall of the Soviet Union that brought global political alliances into question, Israel’s aggressive military action in the 1982 Lebanon war that challenged the Palestinian resistance’s ability to counter Israel’s “war machine”, and the 1987 Intifada where civilian acts of resistance put grinding pressure on Israel to end the Occupation (Hassan 2011).

The first Intifada proved a breaking point for shifting Israeli opinions on the Occupied Territories from an issue of state security to an issue of personal risk and concern (Hassan 2011). The PLO and Israel both held vested interests in changing the situation in Israel in the context of these geopolitical shifts and ruptures. The Palestinian National Council acted on these interests in 1988 by first recognizing Israel as a legitimate state via the contested UN Security Council Resolution 242, and denouncing all forms of terrorism. Yasser Arafat’s speech to the UN General Assembly shortly thereafter reinforced these concessions to Israel and asserted the PLO’s willingness to negotiate. In effect, the PLO’s recognition of Israel made it possible for other Middle Eastern countries to consider a similar concession, recognizing Israel as a

²⁰ Roy (1999) argues that Oslo occurred at the weakest moment of the Palestinian economy up until that point, affecting the PLO’s ability to negotiate aggressively with Israel.

legitimate state within the Green Line. Oslo solidified this shift, and changed the debate from the international community's stance on recognizing Israel as a *state* to the international community's recognition that Israel is a *Jewish state*²¹ (Jabareen 2013).

The Oslo Accords consist of a series of agreements including Letters of Mutual Recognition between Israel and the PLO in September 1993, the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements (known also as Oslo I) in 1993, the Cairo Agreement in 1994 on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho, and the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1995 (known as Oslo II). Rather than providing a specific set of actions that would lead to two distinct states, Oslo I set forth the principles that would frame negotiations.

Oslo II consisted of Interim Agreements on the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1995, demarcating these two territories as one unit with the exclusion of Jerusalem. Oslo II also set out the Security Areas in the West Bank (demarcated as Areas A, B, and C) that indicated the degree of autonomy the PA or Israeli security forces would have in each area, where A theoretically noted full PA control (which was never actualized), and Areas labeled as "C" were under full Israeli control (Hass 2002). Under Oslo II the Israeli military withdrew from the West Bank to a degree, but the Jewish settlers were not evicted from the West Bank, and Israel retained free use of roads for Israeli military and civilians. Israel also maintained authority over all external security (Hassan 2011). In this context, Israel closed its borders and greatly restricted Palestinian's laborers' prior access to waged work as well as the West Bank's access to export markets.

²¹ Jabareen traces this shift, showing that in 1992 the Knesset passed two additions to the Basic Law that specifically, and for the first time, formally recognized Israel as "a Jewish and democratic state" (2013: 42).

The Oslo Process was never a specific, solidified agreement between the PLO and Israel, however, and politically sensitive issues were left unaddressed. Critical issues such as the Palestinian right of return, the clear timeline for actualizing the two state solution and the full withdrawal of the Israeli military and citizens from the Occupied Territories, addressing Israel's settlements, defining borders, addressing refugees, or proposing how to politically manage Jerusalem were left vague and unrecognized in the Oslo Accords. The various agreements that make up the Oslo Accords also failed to acknowledge Palestinians living inside the Green Line as having a vested interest in peace settlements between Israel and the PLO. Peace agreements from 1967 through Oslo allocated 78% of pre-1948 Palestine to Israel, which effectively excludes upwards of 50% of the Palestinian people from peacemaking processes (Roy 2012: 72). This continued a fraught trend of peace negotiations not adequately addressing issues that threaten all peace negotiations between Israel and the PA: the Palestinian refugees from 1948; the exclusion of Palestinians with Israeli citizenship from any peace settlements; and the restriction of negotiations over Palestinian territories to the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem (Roy 2012).

The actual political intent and possibilities made possible by the Oslo Accords was questioned, particularly considering the degree of unreciprocated concessions Israel and the US pressured the PLO into accepting. Even during the Oslo years there was doubt about the actual "peace" under negotiation (Roy 1999). From 1993 to 2000, Jewish settler populations rose by 77 percent, and Israel has continued to claim land formerly owned by Palestinians (which according to international law should remain in trust for Palestinians based on the prohibitions on confiscating land belonging to civilians after war concludes). Palestinians in the Occupied Territories have experienced drastic economic impoverishment and stunning escalations of

securitization by the Israeli military (Hassan 2011; Roy 1999). Edward Said argued that Oslo was not “an instrument of decolonization nor a mechanism to implement UN resolutions relevant to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.” Rather, he characterized Oslo as a mechanism for Israel to take greater control over the Occupied Territories (paraphrased in Hassan 2011).

The hope of Oslo died in 2000 with the symbolic decision by Ariel Sharon to walk with a military escort into the Haram al-Sharif during the Camp David negotiations. Palestinians protested Sharon’s aggressive action including in the form of a strike, resulting in Palestinian deaths and injuries at the hands of Israeli security forces.²² This sparked the second Intifada and the close of the Oslo Years. The period of the Oslo Peace Process continued from 1993 until the beginning of the second Intifada in 2000. The years following the Accords signed in 1993 were meant to be a time of negotiation over the key points of conflict between Israel and Palestine, although these negotiations never resulted in the outlined goals. While Israelis were able to conceptualize Palestinians with Israeli citizenship as part of the national body in a depoliticized, dehistoricized, consumable tourist valence, Palestinians living in the Occupied Territories experienced a greater degree of surveillance, restricted movement, and hostile social, economic, and political control by Israeli politics and militarized security measures (Stein 2008: 8-9). The tangible results of Oslo were a strong separation and heightened Israeli security along the border to the West Bank, the stifling of the Palestinian economy, and further restrictions put on the Palestinian residents of the Occupied Territories as the illegal settlements by Israelis continued to expand.

²² Despite the Israeli government calling for an official commission to investigate police action causing these deaths, no police officer or commanding officer was held accountable. The attorney general counteracted the commission’s findings that the police exceeded the limits of power, claiming that “the protests resembled a battlefields” and that the police were “justified opening fire” (Jabareen 2013: 45).

Oslo also changed the tactics of Palestinians inside the Green Line arguing for their full rights as citizens. Israel was chartered as a Jewish state in 1948, but with the Supreme Court approval of the 1992 additions to the Basic Law Israel termed itself an explicitly *Jewish* democracy for the first time. These new laws allowed for new, explicit, ethnically-based laws that limited the citizenship rights of Palestinians in Israel. Jabareen argues that liberal Israelis attribute to Oslo the rescue of Israeli democracy by proposing a two state solution. Two distinct states allowed for the creation of two ethnically-defined and separate nations, saving Israel from a formal one-state solution that would continue down the road of apartheid politics (Jabareen 2013).²³ As a response to Israel's new assertions of its Jewish *and* democratic status Palestinians with Israeli citizenship challenged the state regarding "who is a citizen," pressuring the state to become a "state for all citizens" and to recognize Palestinians as a national minority (Jabareen 2013). These logics entered into Israel's NGO discourse regarding how the state manages its minority populations. Migrant caregivers advocating for citizenship also seized upon the democratic promise of non-ethnically biased citizenship as legitimizing their claims on the state.

The closure of borders had a measurably devastating effect on the Occupied Territories' economies. While Hass (2002) attributes the Israeli Peace Camp as viewing border closures as a return to the Green Line and the first steps to Israel relinquishing the Occupied Territories, in fact the closure of these borders only impeded Palestinian movement and increased the Israeli militarization of Palestinians' daily lives. Israelis continue to move with impunity across these borders and to accumulate economic gain from business opportunities in the Occupied Territories (Hass 2002: 17).

²³ Azoulay and Ophir (2012) argue that the Occupied Territories are not a separate entity sovereign from Israel, thus there is *only* one state that Israeli militarily controls and internally colonizes. Similarly, Hass (2002) argues that Oslo removed the obligation for Israel to recognize its actions as occupying the Palestinian population even though the occupying acts continue in intensified configurations.

As stated above, the foreign work program became entrenched after 1993 in Israel in order to meet the still-critical need for unskilled labor after restricting Palestinian movement across Israel's borders (Bartram 1998, Raijman & Kemp 2007, Gordon 2008). Low skilled labor was needed to meet the increased demand for new construction in light of increased immigration flows from the newly-fallen Soviet Union, and to take advantage of the economic upswing that occurred along with the on-going shift of Israel's economy from a social welfare state towards a free market capitalist system that connected Israel to new global capital flows.

Migrant labor is both a solution and a problem for the Israeli economy and the socio-political system in place. On the one hand, migrant labor provides a stream of available low skilled workers who can be paid at a minimum level with reduced benefits, and by nature of being migrants these laborers can (theoretically) be removed from the country at will. However, migrant workers often don't subscribe to this theory of economy, and insert their personal wishes and preferences into the system, using vocabularies such as human rights to argue their claims for citizenship and other forms of social and legal inclusion. Additionally, migrant workers are frequently viewed as competing with citizens in domestic job markets, creating higher rates of unemployment as well as threatening social decline. In the case of Israel, Bartram shows that foreign workers not only replaced the labor vacancies created by the Oslo Accords but that these migrants exceeded the size of the former Palestinian workforce and expanded into new employment niches, particularly caring for the elderly. He adds that as borders go through periods of relaxation, Palestinians workers re-enter the Israeli workforce (if only for temporary periods) causing "foreign workers" to be not just replacement labor, but additional labor for the Israeli economy (Bartram 2008: 310).

To belabor the point, migrant labor is valued by Israel as essentially temporary labor, a status reinscribed by Israel's priority to granting citizenship to Jewish applicants under the Law of Return. This is complicated by the communities of migrant workers who have lived and worked in Israel for over a decade, leading Drori (2009) to argue that these workers are no longer temporary migrants, but rather that they are "embedded" in Israeli society. Legally, however, these long-term workers cannot utilize their longevity to apply for citizenship as non-Jewish residents: the laws that define permanent residency status explicitly exclude migrant laborers (Mundlak and Shamir 2008). The frustrated desires for long-term residency by migrants in Israel, particularly within Filipino communities, is pressuring Israel into considerations of how to manage migrant laborers who are becoming increasingly integrated into the nation's social fabric.

As stated earlier, the arguments migrant workers make for formal inclusion in the nation are made even more complex in how they evoke the longstanding claims made by Palestinians for options to work and reside in Israel. Migrant workers' desire to integrate into the Israeli body politic also raises questions about what constitute legitimate new immigrants in the eyes of the state. As Bartram (2008) emphasizes, "immigration" and "migration" must be culturally defined for the Israeli context. Israel self-identifies as a pioneering society founded by settlers, and maintained through Jewish immigration. Yet, what "immigration" means to the State of Israel is very different than for other settler societies based on the notion of Israel as the divinely assured homeland for all Jewish Peoples. The Israeli government does not consider Jewish immigration to Israel as "immigration" per se, but instead ideologically as a "return" to the homeland (Bartram 2008: 302). This theoretically negates the constitution of Jews as "foreigners" in

relation to Israel independent of their country of residence, causing them to be considered always already included within the nation (although in practice this is not always the case).

Smootha (2002) characterized Israel as an “ethnic democracy” to theorize the competing claims of Israel’s ethnic groups²⁴ (both within Jewish and Palestinian communities as well as between them) in a system where preferential citizenship is determined based on identity factors. Drori comments that this poses a contradiction between Israel’s representative democracy and the structural systems in place to subordinate minority groups (2009: 6). Reflecting this structural situation of subordination, Oren Yiftachel describes Israel’s political and social system as an “ethnocracy” meaning a “system of ethno-class segregation and inequality” (Yiftachel 1997: 506). In this sense, ethnicity trumps citizenship for organizing the distribution of social resources, and the dominant (not the largest) ethnic group determines the majority of public policy (Yiftachel 1997: 507). Such a system creates segregation within society where the maintenance of one ethnic culture becomes the central goal of the state. In this context, Yiftachel explicates that “The dominant stratum in the Israeli ethnocracy is comprised of the Ashkenazi-secular as well as the Ashkenazi-religious middle- and upper-classes that enjoy full democratic rights. Other groups, especially the Palestinians, but also some Mizrahim and Haredim and other religious groups, have only limited access to Israel’s formally democratic institutions” (Yiftachel 1997: 507).

Lavie (1996) makes similar arguments regarding the secondary status that is a result of Israel’s identity hierarchy, while recognizing that categories such as “Mizrahi” and “Ashkenazi” are deeply heterogeneous. Yet, these categories are placed within hierarchical divisions that are tightly linked to forms of privilege and power that transfer to those people who are associated

²⁴ There is political valence in the use of ethnic groups in Israel, but as Avruch (1987) states, the affinity with former national and cultural identity before emigration to Israel also has an important role in situating identity for immigrants in Israel (e.g. Russian, Moroccan or Yemenite communities).

with these classifications, giving them political valence beyond their lack to adequately represent those included in the term (Lavie 1996: 66).

From the Zionist perspective, Israel (in terms of its Jewish population) is not a country of immigrants, but a country where people from the diaspora are returning home, influencing the legal and ideological aspects of citizenship. Yet, Bartram argues that even if we accept this understanding of *aliyah*, Israel engaged in immigration practices when the influx of Russians at the fall of Sovietism was permitted and encouraged by the state, and also with the recruitment of migrant labor into the nation. He argues that the ideology of the Jewish homeland obscures these realities of immigration and also poses challenges for the state to effectively meet the social realities that migration and immigration of Jews and non-Jews creates for the nation (Bartram 2008: 303).

As I discuss in Chapter Five, the measure of an authentic Jewish identity has shifted with the sociopolitical goals of the state. At the root of the politics informing immigration are the state's demographic concerns about who holds an authenticated Jewish identity, and who does not. Yet, the state proved itself capable of shifting the boundaries of inclusion for Jewish identities, such as when the state recruited Eastern European immigrants in the 1990s and 2000s in order to increase the European Jewish population in Israel. However, in the case of Jews making *aliyah* from countries such as Ethiopia where their Jewish and ethnic identities are less legible as "Jewish" based on the Ashkenazi ideal, other rhetorics, narratives, and ritual practices are invoked to legitimize their presence in Israel. The flexibility of this system (at times employed with reservations) is based entirely on the question of who can be considered not only a person of Jewish decent, but someone who can be authenticated as recognizably Jewish in alignment with national laws *and* sociopolitical priorities.

While these groups were viewed as acceptable immigrants based on a Jewishness that could be reconfigured to fit in with the priorities of the state, they present vulnerability within the ideology of the immigration system prioritizing Jewish peoples to return to the Jewish Homeland by widening the notion of who is “Jewish.” This opens the door to the claims of individuals who convert to Judaism for citizenship through avenues not recognized by the State, or for long term residents of Israel such as migrant workers who assert a desire to live as Israelis either through conversion or despite a Christian identity. Furthermore, these renegotiations of a “Jewish” identity for the purposes of asserting a majority “Jewish” demographic points to the looming issue of blocked Palestinian claims to return to their former country or to secure citizenship rights to a spouse from the Occupied Territories or other Arab countries.

Into the already stratified Israeli labor market, refugees, new immigrants of lower status, and migrant workers shore up middle class families and the economy by doing undesirable but often necessary work for very low pay and often in vulnerable work conditions made more insecure by their lack of citizenship status and by the relegation of these jobs to the lowest sectors of society. These jobs, particularly those in domestic space, were often not filled by Palestinian workers prior to Oslo; yet it is this space in the stratified labor market that refugees, migrant workers, and new immigrants occupy that was once the domain of Palestinian workers. Visa categories stipulate the kinds of work that migrant workers are permitted to legally provide – Thai migrants are routed to the agricultural sector; Filipina, Indian, Nepali, and Sri Lankan workers to the care taking sector, etc. – but there are illegal crossovers that bring migrant workers into other forms of domestic work such as cleaning and child care.

Thus, when considering international migration in the context of Israel, it must first be understood that immigration was a key strategy for “populating” the modern Israeli state,

integrating Israel into certain international flows of people. Secondly, the presence of migrant workers has positioned Israel into different political alignments and global trends in regards to new categories of residents and workers in Israel who introduce forms of diversity that do not fit easily within the existing categories for national assimilation. This introduction of diversity into a national body has particular implications for the management of citizenship and the extension of civil rights.

Conclusion

The foreign work program in Israel developed within the context of the Oslo Accords that created the conditions restricting Palestinian casual laborers from leaving the West Bank, prompting a search for new streams of inexpensive, temporary labor to fill the shortage in Israel. This labor was needed to meet the new demands for low-skilled labor created by the increased immigration flows from the former Soviet Bloc; however, the desire for new labor rapidly expanded into new niche professions such as caretaking, especially as women responded to the economic shifts towards a capitalist system by entering the workforce to support their families and to meet their own desires for work and professional occupations. In these social and economic contexts, non-Jewish migrant workers were heralded as *temporary* labor that could be hired at low cost and then sent home once the work was complete.

As migrant work programs expanded in Israel and as migrant workers began to conceptualize Israel as a possible new “home,” the stagnating economy under an ever-increasing Israeli security presence furthered the entrapment of Palestinians in the West Bank. The presence of migrant workers in Israel reveals another perspective on Israel’s attempts to define the balance between the ideals of democracy and the theocratic principles that define Israel as a Jewish State that intervene into democratic structures. Migrant workers reveal contradictions within Israel’s

politics and social rhetoric, showing the struggles that have defined Israel as a modern nation-state despite (and as a result of) the forces working to neutralize and defuse these complicating realities.

Against the back drop of Palestinian casual labor and Israeli's hierarchical social diversity, I have situated migrant labor as one of many interruptions of the Zionist labor ideology, importing foreigners to provide labor for a Jewish society, and for shedding additional light onto the ethno-religious structures that form Israel's systems of privilege. In short, migrant labor reveals the friction embedded in Israel's diverse body politic, exposing what is at stake for Israeli politics when the social balance is disrupted particularly regarding citizenship strictures. In this sense, the composition of the body politic (i.e. the categories of *who* comprises Israeli society) and how these groups fit into ideals about citizenship are at the core of Israel's concerns about social diversity and the formal integration of international labor migrants. When analytically contextualizing migrant labor in Israel, we not only have to consider the use of foreign workers as replacing the labor of Palestinian workers from the Occupied Territories, but it is also necessary to comprehend the Israeli employment sector and social hierarchies in the context of Jewish-Israeli minorities.

Part Two: The Philippines

At the beginning of this chapter I asked questions about the logics that frame Filipino workers in an Israeli context. The histories and politics that bring Filipino workers into Israeli society frame Filipino caregivers' claims for increased sociolegal rights in Israel. In the second part of Chapter Two, I continue to address this question with an overview of the Philippines' migrant labor history emphasizing the emergence of national debt as a durable social problem from colonialism to the present, configurations of citizenship in relationship to national

economic strategies, and (briefly) the role of the clergy. James Tyner argues that to understand the international flows of labor into global cities (per Sassen 1999, 2006), we must also understand the processes in the countries that *produce* this labor (2009: 93). Cities in Israel are not ranked as “global cities” as Sassen defines the term, although Bartram (2008) argues that Tel Aviv has become a global city since the 1990s/2000s. My interest in the criticism Tyner raises is less in relation to the production and dynamics of global cities, thinking instead about both ends of the migration process. I follow Tyner by considering migration as a process that is inherently tied to emigration. The Philippine systems that produce overseas workers and the domestic conditions that prompt Filipinos to work and live abroad make Filipino overseas workers aware of themselves as international actors through their economic activity that their families depend on. However, these workers also understand themselves as operating from a heavily negotiated relationship with both the Philippine State and the labor-receiving nation.

Tyner situates migrant workers as produced through their “spatial mobility,” but argues that migrant workers’ lives are “filled with the everyday trials and tribulations of simply *being people*” (Tyner 2009: 148). It is precisely these daily acts of normalcy that inform how the participants in my research formulate claims, seeing these acts of routine living as evidence of their social integration and (for some) their successful embodiment of “Israeli-ness.” Yet, the daily life that the migrant workers in my research lived was conditioned by the Philippines’ dependence on migrant labor that sends workers around the globe. This dependence emerges out of colonial systems and decades of managing national debt after independence. The process of becoming a migrant, and the daily practices of being a migrant worker, underpin the logic structuring claims of belonging; overseas workers become migrants and lead their daily lives in

labor-receiving nations based on mediated configurations of citizenship both at home and abroad.

The national population of the Philippines is estimated at more than one hundred million people²⁵ with an estimated 2.2 million Filipinos currently working globally.²⁶ Outsourcing human labor remains a specialty of the Philippines. Most families in the Philippines depend on remittances to meet their routine expenses and to achieve social goals such as providing education to the next generation (Nadeau 2008). Migrant workers mainly come from urban areas within the Philippines, but internal rural-to-urban migration brings potential migrants to the cities, and feeds the domestic need for replacement domestic labor after other women migrate abroad. Filipino daily life is structured by international labor trends whether an individual migrates abroad or remains in the Philippines, fully integrating migration as essential to the state, families, and individuals.

Migrant workers are central to labor politics in the Philippines and part of a long history of debt that originated in the Spanish colonial period. This debt is closely tied to land politics as well as to the Philippines' exposure to international markets and neoliberal economic policies. The geopolitical territory of the Philippines consists of 7,107 islands of which roughly 1,000 are populated: before Spanish colonialism the islands did not have a centralized political territory. The Philippines were "discovered" by Magellan in 1520; his aggressive Christian proselytizing resulted in the local population killing him on the island of Mactan in 1521. However, Magellan's contact with the peoples living on the Visayan Islands and on Cebu opened the

²⁵ From the CIA Factbook based on a July 2013 estimate. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/rp.html> [Downloaded July 20, 2013]

²⁶ Based on a 2012 survey from the Survey on Overseas Filipinos. Republic of the Philippines National Statistics Office: <http://www.census.gov.ph/tags/overseas-filipinos>. [Downloaded July 20, 2013]

Philippines to further contact and conquest from the Spanish Crown (Abinales & Amoroso 2005).

The Philippines remains strongly marked by the successive colonial periods that shaped the islands' internal development and relationship to international wealth procurement. Spain colonized the Philippines from the mid-1600s until the Spanish-American War in 1898 when the US bought the Philippines in the Treaty of Paris (1898). The British occupied Manila from 1762 to 1764, opening the Philippines to international markets and dismantling the galleon trade. The Philippine American War (1899-1902) sparked over the Philippine people demanding that the international community acknowledge their declared national independence, refuting the US' authority to impose another colonial regime on the islands. However, the war concluded with the US declaring victory; the Philippines remained under US control until independence in 1946.

Two patterns emerged during the Spanish colonial era that continued to affect present day national political and economic policies: debt and land politics that directly influenced trends in migrant labor, and the role of the Christian clergy. I highlight the historic roles of the clergy here briefly to foreground the Filipino clergy's role mediating migrant workers' experiences and playing a central role in formulating community health resources in Israel (see Chapter Four). During the Spanish colonial era the clergy protected the local people from extortion and abuse, while also taking advantage of their power as local agents of colonial authority. Spanish clergy in the outlying rural areas spoke the local dialects and oversaw taxation and land distribution that established the roots of the ongoing debt problems. They also monitored the local peoples and their labor, attended to the spiritual health and life cycle events of the converted locals (including collecting fees for these services), and ensured the mandatory forty days per year of conscripted labor all adult men were subject to, which was often brutal and involved a myriad of abuses (Tan

2008). Clergy often accrued personal wealth by maintaining the status quo and enacting the policies of colonial regime, but these church figures at times provided essential moral leadership during the colonial era denouncing practices of violent repression, and more recently in advocating against the Marcos dictatorship and continuing forms of political and military violence. At critical moments in recent decades, the clergy provide a strong voice lobbying for human rights and for greater democratization of the nation (Nadeau 2008).

The Spanish and British wanted to control the Philippines in order to profit from the trade routes that the Philippines already participated in. The Spanish incorporated the Philippines as an important port in the galleons trade, hoping to challenge Muslim control of the trade routes into China. The Spanish used conscripted Filipino labor in the ports and as crewmen on ships; these workers took opportunities to abandon their ships at various points of call including California and Mexico in search of life better than what they had in the colonial Philippines. This started a new kind of migration for the Philippine Islands that continued to shift, transform, and hold importance for the development of the current Philippine economy (Tyner 2009). The Spanish also shaped cultural transitions in the Philippines by introducing their long-standing prejudice against Muslim traders, encouraging religious divisions among the converted Christian Filipinos and the “Moros” – the Spanish term for the Islamic Filipinos who resisted Christian conversion and so named by the Spanish colonizers after the Moors in Spain (Abinales & Amoroso 2005).

During the British occupation of Manila (1762 to 1764), Britain sought to open the region to free trade in part by subverting the colonial control Spain exerted over aspects of the trade networks. These efforts weakened the galleon trade, and created a massive change for the Philippines by opening the islands to direct trade. When the British forced a shift away from the

failing galleon trade (which ended in 1811) to substitute cash crops that prioritized land resources over sea routes, these changes exposed the Philippines to new international markets. By the 1840s the Philippine economy dramatically shifted to the point where sugar, tobacco, hemp fiber and cordage, indigo, coffee, and cotton comprised 90% of the Philippine exports (Abinales & Amoroso 2005).

This also completed the shift to an (almost) entirely cash economy with very few exceptions. As a result the agricultural sector shifted to meet the demand for these cash crops, often dispossessing farmers. Food shortages and labor scarcity emerged in response to the demands of cash crop agriculture. The existing debt in the rural areas multiplied, as commercial interests replaced traditional cooperative kin-based agricultural practices, and as absentee landlords failed to manage the land or invest in infrastructural needs (Tyner 2009). Rural-to-urban migration accelerated during this period as agricultural labor faltered for many families and individuals, setting the stage for the patterns of domestic migration that would continue as international labor migration drew workers out of the cities (requiring new labor for domestic work and low skilled jobs) and as the rural areas continued to struggle with debt and extreme poverty.

These problems continued into the US colonial period (1899-1946). The US colonial regime engaged in a series of projects to bring about a Westernized model of society in the Philippines, such as investing in education and encouraging Filipino participation in political governance, but always on the terms set by the US. English was introduced as the language of education with a focus on literacy (in English), with American teachers imported to teach in Filipino schools until Filipinos could be trained in the American model. Philippine society already had high literacy rates for a colonized nation with higher than average ratios of Filipino

teachers per population when compared with other colonies at the time, yet the US overrode these educational structures to impose English education as a modernizing technique (Abinales & Amoroso 2005).

The US invested in the necessary infrastructure to support its own financial investments, building roads, railways, and ports, but largely this development was uneven outside of American economic interests (Tyner 2009). Through the Payne-Aldrich Tariff Act (1909), the US created a free trade system in the Philippines for American goods while products from the Philippines continued to face high tariffs (Tan 2008). During this period, the Philippines struggled under the economic system that created dependency on the US without resources for encouraging a diversified economy or to further invest in infrastructure, business, or other important features of national development (Tyner 2009; Tan 2008). The US used violent measures to repress the still-active independence movement, engaging in practices of torture, mass detention in camps, massacres, burning towns, and other techniques of colonial control against the guerrilla forces and their social networks, continuing after the conclusion of the Philippine-American war ended in 1902 (Nadeau 2008: 52-54).

US businesses sought Filipino workers as inexpensive, docile labor, specifically for agriculture, such as harvesting pineapple in Hawaii. As the use of Filipino labor grew, expanding to California and other areas on the US mainland, Filipino agricultural workers looked to the US as a site for immigration based on availability of work and the promise of a better life. The American colonial system opened up previously inaccessible opportunities for women to access education and professional training, specifically in nursing professions; not coincidentally, the US needed nursing labor. During the American colonial period Filipina

women were recruited to work in the American training hospital to acquire not only nursing skills but in particular the nursing skills that could be exported to the US (Choy 2003).

The development of labor migration, the establishment of Philippine national debt, and economic dependence all form the web of factors that centralized overseas labor opportunities as the golden child of development schemes championed by the Philippine government. Strategies for sending workers abroad to benefit from their remittances and the diplomatic relationships that formed around these labor exchanges emerged from the colonial patterns classifying Filipinos as inexpensive labor. From the 1946 declaration of independence until Ferdinand Marcos came to the presidency in 1965 there were five presidents of the Philippines who struggled with the failing economy, rising unemployment, the neo-imperial relations with the US, and the advantages given to foreign investment in order to maintain some degree of economic growth.

The high US demand for sugar in the 1960s prompted a reduction in Philippine rice production corresponding with the devaluation of the peso. As a result, urban wages declined and food prices increased as the Philippines began importing rice while small farmers lost their land due to their inability to economically survive farming rice or corn. The Philippines depended on import substitution industrialization as a means for development; insufficient capital for investment and limited markets for Philippine products slowed manufacturing, furthering the growing unemployment rates. The migrants coming to the cities from the rural areas found little employment, creating “a new urban proletarian underclass” (Abinales & Amoroso 2005: 194).

Ferdinand Marcos’ presidency began in 1965; shortly thereafter he gained control of Congress via his presidential powers to refuse the release of funds for governmental projects he did not endorse. Due to the staggering national deficit, Marcos de-coupled the currency from the

US dollar causing high inflation and subsequent social unrest and growing social activism (Abinales & Amoroso 2005). After three years of political unrest, riots, and protests, Marcos declared martial law in 1972 with the support of the military, and had his opponents including Benigno (“Ninoy”) Aquino,²⁷ arrested. In the years that followed, it became more frequent that Filipinos who spoke out against the Marcos regime were “harassed ... exiled, forced into hiding, detained, tortured, or salvaged ... the colloquial term for abducted, murdered, and disappeared” (Nadeau 2008: 93).

Marcos consolidated and developed the modern migration system as an economic stimulus and development strategy. With rising unemployment and falling wages, overseas contracts became increasingly important for supporting families and fueling the economy. Marcos solidified diplomatic ties between the Philippines and wealthy nations through labor exchanges (aka “development diplomacy”) (Tyner 2009). Through these strategies, Marcos hoped to balance the national debt via the mandatory remittances of overseas workers’ wages in foreign currencies through Philippine banks. The monthly amount of mandatory remittances varied by occupation and salary: nurses remitted 70% of their salaries and domestic workers remitted 50%. New international opportunities, such as the modernization projects in the Middle East made possible by oil profits, gave Filipinos employment options during a time of rising unemployment, political violence, and low wages under Marcos’ regime. Government-sponsored

²⁷ After his arrest, Benigno Aquino was sentenced to death in a military court. The government hesitated to execute him for fear of the public turning him into a martyr. During his imprisonment, Aquino became a symbol of popular protest. However, when he suffered a heart attack in prison the government transferred him to the US for medical treatment and to remove him from the Philippines to reduce the public from rallying around him (Nadeau 2008: xxii-xxiii). Aquino lived in the US from 1979 until 1983, during which time Marcos ended martial law while retaining his role as president (in 1981). Upon stepping off the plane in the Philippines on his return, the Philippine military surrounded Aquino and assassinated him. This caused mass public protests with the participation of the clergy including Cardinal Jamie Sin (Nadeau 2008). This started the People’s Power Movement of 1983 as a response to Marcos’ blatant act of violence against a popularly supported former Senator (Abinales & Amoroso 2005).

migration encouraged overseas workers to develop specialized skills to employ in the Philippines at the end of the labor contract (Tyner 2009).

During the Marcos years, migration was not just presented as an *option* that some workers had, but rather a patriotic duty that qualified Filipino workers ought to meet as a necessary sacrifice for the good of the nation's economic development. Thus, "good" citizens used their education and professional skills to work abroad and remit foreign currency to create positive ties with international businesses and governments, even if that meant living apart from family, friends, and home while performing unskilled labor despite educational and professional status. Initially overseas contracts tapped Filipino men for contract laborers or jobs in the oil industry. Soon, Filipina women began migrating to Middle Eastern countries as domestic workers and to Asian markets as low-paid domestics and entertainers, particularly in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore.

After the People's Power Revolution that deposed Marcos, Corazon (Cory) Aquino assumed the presidential office with popular support along with the support of the military and the Catholic Church. Aquino inherited \$27.2 billion in debt from Marcos' presidency, and she agreed to full repayment (rather than deferring payments or defaulting). Acknowledging the debt entailed accepting the World Bank and International Monetary Fund's structural adjustment "recovery programs." This decision brought the return of foreign investment and revalued exports, but the high debt repayments emphasized remittances as an economic strategy.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s migration in the Philippines underwent a gendered shift as global demand for domestic labor increased. During Aquino's presidency gender became increasingly prominent as women organized to protest military abuses; voiced protests about prostitution and trafficking, particularly as associated with illegal migration schemes; and

advocated around the conditions of labor in factories that preferred women's (docile) labor (Abinales & Amoroso 2005). The gendered balance of overseas workers shifted in the 1980s as women's domestic labor eclipsed the overseas contracts for men's labor in construction or the oil industry. Internationally, as populations aged and as women's participation in the formal labor market continued to expand, Western industrialized nations noted more closely the growing care crisis for children and for the dependent elderly (Ehrenreich & Russell Hochschild 2002). These changes coincided with the demise of social welfare programs in many of these industrialized countries, leaving individuals and families on their own to make necessary care arrangements. For those in industrialized, wealthy countries who could afford it, employing international migrants offered inexpensive household labor to manage care. Additionally, there was an increase in demand for live-in domestics in oil rich Middle Eastern countries and in Asian countries with a rising middle class, the reproductive labor of the household reassigned to a migrant worker who also symbolized the family's socioeconomic status.

Thus, women from the global south provided inexpensive care labor to ease the individual household strain for middle class families in more wealthy countries that found the care options provided by domestic agencies or professionals to be inadequate, unaffordable, or not worth the cost. Additionally, these domestic laborers were hired as temporary or casual labor, making it relatively easy to fire the nanny or caregiver at will (Chang 2000). As Parrenas (2002) shows, the Philippines became a major source for domestic caregiving labor, making care one of the Philippines primary exports. This focus on care shifted the gendered emphasis of migration from men entering into contract labor as construction workers or seafarers to women providing low skilled domestic labor. The result of this shift and the growing demands for care-labor has been a care crisis for the young and elderly in the Philippines itself, and a set of moral

attacks on women who work abroad accusing them of “abandoning” their children, ignoring these women’s role providing much-needed financial support to both their households and to the national economy (Parrenas 2002).

Migration remained a crucial component of the Philippines’ international relationships. In order to meet new and emerging global labor niches and to avoid pigeon-holing Filipino overseas workers as construction laborers or domestics, the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) publicized a flexible image of Filipino migrants (Tyner 2009). As part of this effort, in 1987 POEA confronted the image of the overseas Filipino workers as victimized by asserting that overseas workers were the nation’s “heroes and heroines.” In addition to positioning migrant workers in a positive light, this shift marked two important realities: that the government did not back away from its reliance on migration despite initial claims that the migration programs were to be phased out (Tyner 2009), and the invocation of migrant “heroes and heroines” spoke to a larger set of gendered and accusatory discussions in the Philippines about parents, particularly women, “abandoning” their children to work abroad (Parrenas 2002).

Fidel Ramos, Aquino’s presidential successor from 1992 to 1998, brought the Philippine economy into a period of liberalization that lasted until 2003. This economic liberalization involved low tariffs, ending import restrictions on the majority of goods, ending capital controls, and opening formerly restricted sectors of the economy to foreign owners (Abinales & Amoroso 2005). It paired neoliberal trends in the political system with redefinitions of the relationship between the citizen and the state. The Ramos administration configured migration as a necessary national employment fixture, but the administration’s rhetoric shifted to declare migration as *one* employment option rather than the result of a desperate national need that presented no other options. The rhetorical move also pointed to a change in how the state acknowledged benefits of

migration: moving from an understanding that the economy required the remittances overseas workers provided, to discussions of personal opportunities and growth, social mobility, and largely a process of “self-fulfillment” rather than a patriotic obligation (Tyner 2009: 68). Echoing neoliberal philosophies on the individual as rational, sovereign, and only marginally controlled by welfare governments, migration transformed into a “choice” Filipinos made rather than a patriotic duty.

The changes to the migrant labor system and the relationship these changes reflect between the migrating citizen and the state have two primary points of importance for my research: 1) how citizenship and work are defined in labor migration systems, and 2) the reasons that Filipinos decide to migrate that continue to resonate in decisions they make about community formation, personal identity, and social integration when working abroad. The rhetorical shift by the Ramos Administration aligning migrant labor as a route to personal fulfillment rather than an obligation to the nation redefined the relationship between citizenship and overseas labor.

In particular, migrant workers no longer worked abroad as part of a national strategy that the Philippine government recognized and endorsed, thus de-obligating the Philippine government to extend certain protections to its citizens overseas. When migration is embarked upon as a personal choice, the government’s responsibility for that worker’s welfare abroad exists in an amended set of expectations. This relationship continued to develop in the context of how the government during the Ramos Administration and the succeeding Macapagal-Arroyo Administration related to its citizen-workers overseas. The priorities the state set on diplomatic relationships in relation to individual migrant workers came to crisis during the trials of Flor Contemplacion and Sarah Balabagan in 1995, two domestic workers tried in foreign courts for

separate murders, and two media figures continually referenced in migrant workers' comments during my fieldwork in 2010-2011.

The importance of these trials lay in the inability of the Philippine government to protect its citizens working abroad, and the way the government responded to the heightened public concerns sparked by the trials' outcomes. Contemplacion worked as a domestic employee in Singapore when she was charged with the murder of another Filipina domestic worker and a Singaporean child. She confessed to the crimes and the Singaporean government executed her despite concerns that the police coerced her confession. The Philippine government positioned her as a martyr, but could not stay her execution despite many attempts. In the Philippines, the public upheaval and unrest focused in accusations that the government sold out Contemplacion in order to salvage the market in Singapore for continued migrant labor contracts. As a result, the government investigated the exploitative conditions that overseas workers routinely experience (Tyner 2009).

Similarly, the United Arab Emirates put Sara Balabagan, a fifteen-year-old domestic, on trial for murdering her eighty-five year old employer who allegedly attacked and raped her. Balabagan argued that her actions constituted self-defense, but she was sentenced to seven years in prison. The government awarded her \$27,000 USD as compensation for her employer's assault on her, which led to Balabagan's lawyer to challenge the verdict based on the discrepancies of a manslaughter sentence in light of the state's recognition of Balabagan's victim status. In turn, the deceased employer's family countered with a demand for a death sentence for Balabagan. In the end, Balabagan paid a bribe to her employer's family of \$41,000 USD, received one hundred cane lashes, and served eight months of a twelve-month jail sentence (Tyner 2009).

Balabagan and Contemplacion are examples of the risks Filipino workers take when accepting overseas contracts. Foreign governments tried these women for crimes they may have committed under circumstances that are unclear and the Philippine government showed limited ability to intervene. Moreover, these trials show the vulnerability that is routinely mapped onto Filipina migrant women in relation to sexual and gendered violence (Balabagan) and to coercion from foreign states or citizens (Contemplacion). Balabagan and Contemplacion may or may not have been guilty, but their examples are more important for showing the gaps in rights, protections, citizenship, and recourse for migrant workers when they work abroad. The question of “how will my country or Embassy protect me” is transmuted into “how can I protect myself in a foreign context as a migrant worker with limited rights?”

In response to the continued public unrest over these trials and the resulting evidence that the government was unable to protect its citizens abroad or have influence over the course of legal outcomes concerning Philippine citizens, the government passed RA 8042. This law marks an important change in how the government viewed the migrant work program and overseas workers, severing the state’s former responsibilities to its citizens working abroad. The government considered Philippine citizens working abroad as dispersed members of the nation (Glick-Schiller et al 1995), but it repudiated specific responsibility towards migrant workers. This change occurred through disassociating the migrant work program from national development and economic strategies, and by situating labor migration as a civil and human right that all Filipinos hold as part of their citizenship (Tyner 2009). In part, RA 8042 states:

While recognizing the significant contribution of Filipino migrant workers to the national economy through their foreign exchange remittances, the State does not promote overseas employment as a means to sustain economic growth and achieve national development. The existence of the overseas employment program rests solely on the assurance that the dignity and fundamental human rights and freedoms of the Filipino citizen shall not, at any time, be compromised or violated. The State, therefore, shall continuously create

local employment opportunities and promote the equitable distribution of wealth and the benefits of development (quoted from Tyner 2009:72).

With this law the government moved from recognizing migrant workers as the “heroes and heroines” of the country, to asserting a rights-based rationale for the formerly government-sponsored migration program. Further, RA 8042 served as part of the larger argument that migration is an example of the right to work and the right to free movement, thus part of the human response to wanting a better life and increased socio-economic status. By this logic, the government had no grounds on which to intervene into the welfare of citizens working abroad, as the *choice* to work abroad existed entirely within the prerogative of the individual, and furthermore the individual held sole responsible for his or her experiences while working overseas. This limited the responsibility of the government when migrant workers encountered serious problems in labor-receiving nations and focused the Philippine Embassies on maintaining diplomatic ties. Migrant workers thus went (and continue to go) to labor receiving countries with very limited protection from their own government, leaving them in situations where they could not access the civil rights associated with their own citizenship or with the rights of citizens in the labor receiving country as temporary foreign workers.

Despite the government’s move to reduce its political responsibility to overseas workers, the POEA as a government agency maintained control over “regulating” the approval process for new migrant workers while controlling contracts, visas, and other bureaucratic aspects of the migration process of interest to the government. Tyner characterizes this relationship between the State and the migrant worker as creating a logic where the abused and exploited migrant worker transforms into a “willing participant” in his or her experiences of abuse established by his or her decision to work overseas in the first place. Thus, the Filipino overseas worker

becomes an independent agent in a globalized free market system, where the state, by *not* intervening, protects the rights of the worker to travel and to work (Tyner 2009).

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (2001- 2010) maintained the rhetoric of individual responsibility for his or her migration decisions and experiences, but she returned to a focus on development and economic growth through remittances. Her “job creation” program emphasized overseas jobs, enabled by streamlining the bureaucratic process to approve Filipinos for overseas contracts and visas. This program makes inexpensive Filipino workers available on short notice for global deployment. Under Macapagal-Arroyo, the state supported and controlled migration, but it did not to assume responsibility for migrant workers’ welfare. The POEA expanded its interest in creating a flexible workforce that can respond very quickly to changing social, political, and economic conditions, taking advantage of new opportunities while at the same time changing course to avoid possible public relations problems (e.g. temporarily pausing contracts to the Middle East after September 11, 2001). Philippine governmental organizations began monitoring migrant workers abroad, such as the Overseas Workers Welfare Association (OWWA), Philippine Overseas Labor and Office (POLO), and the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), to make quick decisions to protect the *image* of the Filipino overseas worker and the markets that the Philippine economy depends on.

However, the government’s shifts in how overseas labor corresponded with citizenship, and moves to valorize the economic contributions of overseas workers, continue to leave the very real concerns that migrant workers face while working abroad unaddressed, specifically the increased vulnerability to physical, psychological, and sexual abuse as well as ethnic, religious, and racial discrimination. This is not only a personal concern for the migrant worker, but one that affects the larger concept of the nation – a state that, as Abinales and Amoroso argue, first

must export its citizens to work as the economy cannot create or support sufficient jobs, and then leaves citizens exposed in foreign countries without recourse due to the weakness of the state in international politics (2005).

The government occasionally makes strategic diplomatic and political choices in favor of the safety of OFWs working abroad (e.g. the 2004 kidnapping of a Filipino truck driver in Iraq²⁸), but more often than not the OFW is viewed as an individual outside of the protection of the state (Abinales & Amoroso 2005). Again, the examples in which the Philippine government acts to protect their workers abroad can also be interrogated for the larger purpose of maintaining a positive image of the Filipino OFW that elides the categorization of “victim” and promotes instead valuable, flexible, inexpensive workers. Yet, the question remains of where this leaves overseas workers facing vulnerabilities and risks in terms of his or her rights and the available options for his or her protection.

Yet, what practical ability do remittances exhibit to resolve the strains on household economies, to maintain or to improve class status, or to solve the crippling national debt? As early as the 1980s various social organizations challenged the rationale of migrant workers’ remittances as capable of addressing these economic concerns. As the Catholic Institute for International Relations stated in the late 1980s:

In the Philippines, it is a myth that income from remittances leads to domestic capital formation. It is also false that labour export has solved the problem of unemployment. In fact, the labour export programme harms the domestic economy by siphoning off skilled workers who cannot be replaced and who have a crucial contribution to make to the country’s economic development... To make matters worse, many of those working

²⁸ The kidnapping was part of Iraqi militant demands that the US military withdraw, including the Filipino troops that were part of the US-led military presence. The Philippine government chose to withdraw their troops to prevent the execution of the hostage, facing international condemnation for their action. In defense of their decision, the Philippine government stated that their decision wasn’t based on just one Filipino working abroad, but to protect all the Filipinos working in the Middle East who could easily become targets for violent acts of retribution (Abinales & Amoroso 2005: 299).

abroad are not even acquiring new skills, contrary to the wishes of the government, but becoming 'de-skilled' (CIIR 1987:128).

Successive Philippine governments heralded overseas labor contracts as a form of salvation from severe national debt, yet in reality the money earned overseas could never reverse the effects of the trade policies that disempowered Filipino farmers and producers, and debt caused by foreign loans that can't be repaid (CIIR 1987). In the 1980s, individuals eligible for overseas work were immersed in the acclaimed benefits of overseas labor for alleviating his or her family from poverty and investing in the future of the family, such as through education. Additionally, overseas employment purportedly offered opportunities for personal savings as well as investments such as building a middle-class home. However, at this time it was also evident that even with educational opportunities, the instability of the economy and the high rates of unemployment ensured that only low paying, unskilled jobs located abroad posed feasible options for educated young adults with professional qualifications who wished to maintain middle class status and educate their own children (CIIR 1987).

In practice, remittances sent home by migrant workers fulfilled necessary household expenditures without leaving funds for savings or investments (CIIR 1987). This reality of financial need remains a present and deeply concerning issue for the Philippines. Neoliberal critique focused on methods migrant workers and their families use to manage resources, priorities for spending money in patterns to help maintain status and social networks rather than in investments, and how families engaged in consumer citizenship as opposed to investment. The key goals of the overseas contract system, creating opportunities for investment and savings, faltered as early as the 1980s because of the instability of economic survival in the Philippines. Furthermore, working overseas provided no real avenues for increased socioeconomic status once the migrant worker returned home to his or her family and no longer earned wages in

foreign currency, creating further economic uncertainty and a pressing need to work abroad for as long as possible (CIIR 1987).

Migrant workers provide the remittances that support their families and communities and which shore up the national economy. They fulfill a very important role as economic agents, yet they also are produced through stereotyped images of “docile” Asian workers. Recruitment agencies depend on gender and ethnic stereotypes in order to attract employers and to “sell” the workers they select, especially for lower skilled domestic work, in-home care providing (rather than nursing in a hospital or clinic), and entertainment work. Domestic workers are portrayed as workers willing to do a wide variety of tasks, as docile but competent, friendly, passive but hard working, and generally easily managed. Each receiving country has a set of preferences based on specific ideas of domestic employees communicating the household’s higher status and social values, and the recruitment agencies attempt to meet those criteria (Tyner 2009).

Migrant workers are restricted from living as complete sociopolitical people while working overseas, such as through visa limitations that determine the maximum number of months that contract workers are permitted to stay in the country and policies that exclude migrant workers from seeking long term legal residency status. When migrant workers make claims to challenge these restrictions they are working within economic contexts that classify them as gendered financial support for their families, and historical contexts that situate migrant labor as a necessary economic tool for the Philippine government. They are also aware that they are classified as international workers mapped by stereotypes that define them as vulnerable, docile, and disposable. Furthermore, their life abroad is contextualized by the limits of protections offered by their own citizenship and the intentional withholding of citizenship-based rights offered by the labor-receiving country.

Conclusion

Migrant workers decide to seek overseas contracts for a host of reasons ranging from economic need to family responsibility to personal desires to leave the Philippines to find greater independence or new opportunities. Each individual comes to migration with their own assemblage of experiences and reasons, but these decisions are formed within historical and political contexts structured by the Philippines' problems of debt and a limited global reach to simultaneously protect citizens and diplomatic relationships. Migrant workers have a complex relationship with their government, struggling to sustain and improve their quality of life and to meet important social goals (such as financing education). They make remittances that the national economic depends upon, yet these remittances are not enough to solve the debt crisis or to meet the extent of household expenses. Furthermore, as the government renegotiates its responsibility to its citizens working abroad migrant workers find themselves in increasingly vulnerable positions. These positions may not be as dire as the examples of Sarah Balabagan and Flor Contemplacion, but migrant workers live in a context where their rights and protections are limited both by their own government and the labor-receiving nation.

Considering immigration desires in this light opens up questions not about Filipino workers rejecting their national identity, but instead thinking about citizenship as a set of tools to further protect and benefit the migrant worker and her/his family. In this context, my research participants suggest that it is specifically possible to be a "proud Pinoy" and still express desires to "become Israeli." Caregivers construct their claims in response to gendered, racialized expectations for how Filipino migrant workers as economic actors ought to remain exterior to Israeli society. They struggle to construct a space of self-determination and protection for

themselves while working abroad. Caregivers in my research identify their marginalization in Israel a product of their identity as migrant workers, an identity that Israeli and Philippine history jointly produces. They further claim that this marginalization is detrimental to their health -- in effect, caregivers in my research name their vulnerability as a serious health concern.

Finally, but not incidentally, the two labor histories that I review in this chapter suggest an embedded relationship between work as producing nations and defining the essence of the body politic. Work in both contexts requires reciprocal recognition by the state and society beyond wages. Work creates symbolic relationships with society and territory that resonate into formations of personhood, measures of legitimacy, and relationships with the state. This relationship charts the ground upon which social benefits are conferred, how identity is communicated, and furthermore how the boundaries of society are created and policed. By situating Filipinos as expressly temporary foreign workers, Israel abnegates any claims Filipinos might make between their labor and belonging in the nation. If Filipinos' work is only equal to money then they cannot claim the relationship that Labor Zionism drew between the Jewish People and the Israeli nation -- namely, Filipinos have no claim to the land and the identity that is associated with those claims. However, as the following chapters show, Filipino migrant laborers do not agree with that assessment.

CHAPTER 3: INTIMATE LABOR, RECIPROCITIES OF CARE,
AND ESTABLISHING PERSONHOOD

...there are also groups who are also doing a lot of physical moving, but who are not 'in charge' of the process in the same way at all (Massey 1994: 149)

I encountered migration as a set of personal stories that took place within larger, institutional, relational, political, economic, and historical frameworks. In Chapter Two I use key historical and political moments in Israel and the Philippines to provide perspectives on how Filipino migrant laborers fit into Israel's labor history. I also show how the historical production of migrant workers corresponded to the Philippines' economic strategies, resulting in overseas workers' exposure to vulnerability and abuse in labor-receiving nations for the purpose of remitting foreign currency to the Philippines and cement diplomatic relations. Filipino overseas workers navigate political contexts where their own citizenship rights do not completely extend, but where the civil rights of the labor-receiving nation are not offered.

In this chapter, I focus on three specific migration stories that emerge from these historical and political frameworks in conjunction with one Israeli NGO that sought to mediate between migrant workers' labor rights and the larger social discourse on the appropriate "place" as defined by Massey (1994) of foreign workers in Israel. The migration stories that the participants in my research shared with me reflected very different reasons and outcomes for choosing to work abroad, but within these stories patterns emerged. I bring these patterns into dialogue with the current theory on migration, placing my data into the larger framework of

migration literature. These theories provide the initial framework to the following discussions pertaining to belonging, health, and concepts of embodied identities in Chapters Four, Five, and Six.

This chapter begins to explore the restricted “place” Israel affords foreign workers, and the material migrant workers use to imagine different possibilities. I juxtapose moments of affection between caregivers and elderly Israelis with public discourse on elder abuse and arguments about domestic unemployment. I show that migrant workers are a profitable venture for manpower agencies and provide a quick care fix for the government as social services are reduced, but that foreign workers illuminate ideological dissonance between Israel’s national ideals and its economic practices. I introduce this juxtaposition by relating a conversation I had with Nurit, the NGO’s supervisor, about the role of migrant caregivers in Israel. Her analytical views structure varied perspectives on migrant workers’ proper social location in Israel.

Furthermore, the tension between affectionate relations in the caregiving dyad and public discourse on elder abuse foregrounds cultural expectations of reciprocity and a care-debt Israelis owe to Filipinos that I address in subsequent chapters. In the background of the case studies presented below are the implicit questions that I address throughout the dissertation, such as: is a labor migrant an individual who moves globally in order to find profitable work and then returns home? Or is a labor migrant someone who can also become an immigrant, or in other ways blur the clean, defined, neoliberal boundaries of what “migrants” are permitted to desire?

I quote Tsing’s metaphor of friction to understand how global politics are actualized in local contexts, and how differentiated access to resource determines how people are affected. As Doreen Massey succinctly states in the epigram, not every migrant is privileged with the same freedoms within the global flows of people. The category “migrant” inherently prompts

questions about how much agency a person has over decisions about movement, and what kinds of control a migrant exerts over when, how, and to where this movement progresses or terminates. The contrast between the rhetoric of love where I show caregivers exerting their own efforts to define the caregiving relationship and the social anxiety over elder abuse where migrant workers are cast into categories of danger illustrates the shifting politics and power of choice, agency, and the control a migrant has over their own movement in the Israeli context.

The migrant workers in my study enter Israel as caregivers for the elderly. The World Health Organization warns that the current global care crisis is growing beyond easily implemented solutions, exacerbated by nation states disassembling their social welfare programs, including care for the elderly. This has caused many nations to recruit migrant labor to provide this care, creating a catch-22 where these migrants are desperately needed within low paid human services jobs, and yet are assigned the role of scapegoat when looking to explain why nations are experiencing tremendous social struggle.

Yet, Glick Schiller et al (1995) frame migrant labor as part of ongoing nation-building processes in labor receiving countries. As certain people move internationally via differentiated global flows, and as different expectations, ideologies, claims, and futures are mapped onto nation states as part of these flows, the question of the nation and how it will weather this period of increased globalization has a particular weight. While migrants increasingly engage in formulating transnational identities, communities, and practices, nation states resist migrants' strategies for opening borders and integrating into social structures. As Glick Schiller et al state:

As the national economy is restructured to facilitate higher levels of profit for transnational capital, politicians and the media have projected a bunker mentality, convincing the majority of the population, including people who are themselves immigrants that the national borders have to be defended against the undocumented. Undocumented workers are said to be the cause of the deterioration of the infrastructure and the lack of public services" (59).

Glick Schiller et al argue that “[t]here is a dialectic between inclusion and exclusion that disciplines transnational migrants by focusing public attention on the degree to which they belong” (1995: 59). Recruitment agencies and elderly employers implicitly (and at times explicitly) pressure migrant caregivers to learn Hebrew, to adopt Jewish customs, to understand the running of an Israeli household on the Jewish/Israeli calendar, to display cultural understandings and behaviors, to navigate the healthcare system for their employer, and to in short learn how *to be* Israeli in order to care for an elderly Israeli. Yet, they are routinely reminded that they are explicitly barred from long term residence thus pointing to this very question of the ‘dialectic between inclusion and exclusion’ and how it serves to ‘discipline’ migrant caretakers in terms of their prescriptive (temporary) place in society.

Caregivers and Israelis negotiated the question of assigned social place on many fronts, including areas of legal obligations between caregivers and employers. The NGO where I volunteered offers one glimpse into these negotiations in the context of labor law; it also framed the conversation with Nurit that I use to frame the contrasting role of affection in care-dyads and accusations of elder abuse.

Terms of Affection and the Fear of Abuse

“It didn’t used to be like this here. We didn’t used to have maids and caretakers...” (Nurit)

Unlike Tel Aviv or Jerusalem, The City hosted only a few non-profit organizations that addressed issues of social diversity, minorities’ access to social services, and civil rights. The NGO where I volunteered weekly for fourteen months operated out of a two-room office in a typical concrete 1950s Bauhaus building in the city center. The NGO enforced labor laws and advocated for the rights of individual workers and for workers as a social class, its charter charging it with protecting the rights of all workers in Israel, independent of legal status or

ethnicity. The caregivers I met through my research trusted the NGO and its staff to be fair and able to act on migrant workers' behalf; migrant workers visited the office so regularly that dedicated English-speaking office hours had to be established to meet their demand.

Nurit – known in my research community as “Mama Nurit” – worked at the NGO as the only paid employee with the support of two dedicated full time volunteers who functioned like staff despite not receiving pay. The functioning of the office depended on an additional revolving cast of volunteers. These included do-gooder university students, Israeli young adults enrolled in National Service rather than mandatory military service, law students fulfilling the required requisite number of internship hours, and the occasional international student or researcher. Nurit supervised the volunteer staff and advised on the complex concerns that required attentive knowledge of labor law. Workers came into the office to request a range of services from simple needs such as a copy of the list of that year's holidays, to specialized concerns such as filing lawsuits against employers.

Nurit's education included a Master's degree in the social sciences, and she expressed considerable interest in my research. When the office quieted in a routine lull near the end of my shifts, Nurit made instant coffee and came to sit at the volunteer desk with me. She asked about my research, often providing her own insights and analyses. One day we had the following conversation.

Nurit started with her usual, “And how is your research?”

I answered, telling her that things were okay. When she pressed for more detail, I mentioned my recent attendance at a geriatric health lecture open to The City's older Jewish residents to educate them on the various services available to the elderly.

Nurit nodded and put her coffee cup down on the desk before taking the chair opposite me.

“I don’t think that migrant workers are a good thing in Israel.” She told me bluntly.

“Really? Why?” I asked.

“Because of this problem with language.”

Nurit told me in earlier conversations that, in her opinion, problems inevitably occur when a language barrier exists between a foreign worker and the employer. Nurit didn’t consider English to be a sufficient *lingua franca* between a caregiver and an elderly Israeli. She found the acquired Hebrew of foreign workers to be grating and at times unintelligible while applauding their efforts to learn. However, their imperfect Hebrew still failed to meet Nurit’s mark.²⁹ For Nurit, only Hebrew provided an effective mode of communication between an elderly person and their caregiver.

“Many of these old people have caretakers who can’t talk to them. So, they don’t talk to anyone all day long, because their caretaker ignores them because they can’t talk. This is not good.” Nurit continued as we sat across the desk from each other in the quiet NGO office.

“It’s isolating.” I provided the term in English.

“Yes, very isolating. It’s not good for them.” She shook her head, maintaining very strong eye contact with me, as if challenging me to disagree.

I mentioned the expense of Israeli old age homes, and that many Israeli families simply can’t afford that care option for their elderly relatives. Nurit grew agitated, shaking her head.

“Yes, but in these *beit horim* (parents’ homes) people speak the language of the old people or they are more likely to. Old people’s homes [their apartments] are not big, and they

²⁹ My Hebrew accent appalled Nurit to the extent that she would only speak English with me, using me as a walking English-language dictionary to improve her own vocabulary.

are not big enough for a worker and for the old person [to cohabitate comfortably]. The apartments are not designed for live-in care. Also, the workers in parents' homes get paid good salaries and only work for eight hours a day."

"They can sleep." I commented, referencing the contrast between 24-hour care where many caretakers only sleep in one- or two- hour spurts because they are constantly waking up to attend to their employer's needs, and the nursing rotations in care facilities.

"Exactly, the employees get sleep and there are shifts. There is always someone to take care of the old person and talk to him." Nurit insisted.

"But, families can't afford these homes." I repeated. "Caretakers let them [the older person] stay in their apartments. It seems like caretakers are really important when an old person doesn't have family nearby."

Nurit reluctantly (and only momentarily) agreed, saying that she will face these challenges with her own parents in the next few years. She sighed out slowly, turning her comments to families that don't personally provide care for their elderly relatives. She characterized the families' behavior as "outsourcing" family responsibilities to foreign workers. Nurit characterized how families think that they are "done" when they hire a caregiver. She described events she witnessed and heard about in the 2005-2006 Lebanon War when many families relocated to other parts of Israel where they felt safer. However, they left their older relatives behind in the care of a foreign worker, some of whom never experienced a war before. In Nurit's view, these families abandoned their elderly.

In their own defense, many families claimed that their older relative refused to leave and that it would be too upsetting to forcibly remove the elderly person. Yet, the needs of elderly employers overwhelmed caretakers when combined with the added necessity of moving the old

person from the apartment into the shelters during air raid warnings and monitoring the news of the war. The government did not issue gas masks to all foreign workers during this conflict (as is the routine practice for citizens), adding anxiety for many migrants who felt unprotected and vulnerable. Nurit told me that during the Lebanon War migrant workers lined the hall in front of the NGO with their fears, needing help with the complications of caring for their employer in the emergency situation, and complaints about how the absent families hadn't paid the caregiver's wages or health insurance contributions for months.

These caregivers not only struggled with a conflict situation that required specific cultural knowledge and resources to manage, but they confronted the government's unwillingness to offer them safety precautions such as gas masks and the unwillingness of departed Israeli families to consider the caregiver's financial and health needs. These conditions exceeded the routine stipulations of labor laws and bled into measures of migrant workers' human worth, and moreover the limit to how far the government would extend itself for a marginalized, temporary population.

During other conversations in my fieldwork, Maria, one of the central participants in my research, described her views on the second Intifada and Israel's military engagements with Lebanon and Gaza during her eleven years working as a caregiver in Israel. She explained that many Filipino caregivers never experienced inter-state conflict before coming to Israel, and emphasized the anxiety caregivers felt during periods of conflict. Caretakers found it increasingly difficult to manage the demands of the situation and their own anxiety while trying to provide good care. In response to these factors and days with multiple air raid warnings, many caregivers stayed all day with their employer in the shelters even after the all clear sounded.

This was not the ideal situation for the elderly person but caregivers felt unable to routinely move the awkward elderly person multiple times a day along with walkers and wheelchairs and sometimes medical equipment, in and out of the shelters every time a siren blared. Occasionally, the caregiver left the elderly person in the shelter to get food or other supplies, creating a great deal of anxiety for the older person left alone. Nurit expressed sympathy for the migrant workers, faulting the families who left a foreign worker to tough out the war with the “abandoned” elderly relatives.

Nurit shifted gears, refocusing on her initial belief that caregivers are not good for her country. “And there is abuse, you know. I’ve heard about it and I see it. Caretakers abusing the old people, hitting them, feeding them bad things on purpose, abusing them.” Nurit’s eyes communicated more than her words, showing her deep anger over these instances. “It’s not a good system.” She reinforced to me. “It didn’t used to be like this here. We didn’t used to have maids and caretakers...”

Nurit’s comments connect two discourses that inform public opinion about foreign workers. On one hand, she saw migrant workers as a problematic fix for Israel’s care deficit, constituting a population of workers that the government and employees exploit and misuse. On the other hand, she gives credence to anxieties about abusive migrant workers who take advantage of elderly Israelis while profiting from Israel’s increasingly capitalist system. She articulates a perspective that categorizes caregivers as economic migrants whose entry into foreign countries is predicated on economic motivations alone. Her views do not personalize caregivers or recognize their varied life histories that led them to overseas work, nor does she speak to the nature of caring labor itself.

A key complication of caring labor is that it occurs in intimate settings, and produces knowledge of another person's body. In contrast, nursing labor engages with bodies but usually in distinct segments of time and in professional settings. Caregivers are with an employer day in and day out, providing care in domestic settings, often in small apartments. Thus, the *work* of caring labor and the associated power relations in the employment relationship run the risk of becoming invisible when ideas of gendered affective labor are applied to caregiver's waged work. This is reviewed in the literature on gendered migration and gendered domestic labor as devaluing and misrecognizing the work of care labor, which I discuss in relation to Maria (below). However, caregivers in Israel also engage with these acts of blurring the lines between affection and professional job duties for specific tactical reasons.

Caregivers in Israel comfortably referred to their employer in Hebrew as their *ima* (mother), *abba* (father), *sabba* (grandfather) or *savta* (grandmother). Mark (see the following section) proudly told me that his employer considered him a son, but I generally didn't hear elderly Israelis referring to the migrant caregivers in kinship terms. Rather, employers used terms of endearment for female caregivers, such as *metuka* (sweetie) or *hamoodi* (beloved, but more informal than in the English). Israelis affectionately called male caregivers *haver sheli* (my friend). Elderly Israelis marked affection and emotional closeness during introductions; often in a simple introduction elderly Israelis described their caregiver as a "dear friend" who "takes good care of me" and the employers assured me that he or she "couldn't live without" their caregiver. These statements put the emphasis on the nature of the relationship between the caregiver and employer rather than metaphorically resorting to fictive kinship. The obvious discrepancy hearing the Filipino caregiver introduce their *ima* or *abba*, and shortly afterwards to hear the older Israel say, "This is my *havara* [friend], my *metapelet* [caregiver]" created a jarring

effect. Both sets of terms communicate affection but in different valences and with distinct implications.

Qayum and Ray (2010) coin the term *rhetoric of love* to describe how kinship terms and other indicators of personal relationships (such as ‘friend’ or ‘partner’) blur the lines between employment and non-waged relationships. They consider employers’ strategic use of these terms to formulate a relationship with a domestic worker that elides the labor contract by striving to build more personal connections. By using words such as “friend” or “my partner in the household work,” employers express sentiments that their employee is “like a part of the family.” By using these terms and asserting strong affective ties with a domestic employee, employers intentionally blur the boundaries of what it means to hire domestic labor. The emotions employers express are often genuine feelings of closeness that supersede the labor relationship, and domestic workers at times reciprocate these endearing terms. Yet, when the nature of employment reasserts itself – such as when domestic employees require raises or a change in work conditions – the employer may feel betrayed and angry at the demotion of their perceptions of “friendship” to a power-laden employment relationship. Conversely, employees who view friendship and affection as structuring their work relationships view changes in their employment or termination as a personal betrayal. In essence, these interactions create a façade of an equal relationship between the employer and employee that:

creates a world where structural inequalities and domination are perceived on an entirely different register such that relationships of servitude are defined – essentially by the employing classes – in terms of mutuality based on affection, dependency and loyalty. The rhetoric of love encompasses employer claims of affection and familial relationships that bind servants and employers to each other. It is a complex discourse that both hides exploitation and makes it more bearable for some employers and, indeed, for some servants (Qayum and Ray 2010: 105).

I suggest that there is another implication in caregivers' use of affectionate terms. The caregivers in my research utilized kinship terms and indications of affection to broaden the nature of the employment relationship. Waged work evokes the obligation of monetary compensation and (prescriptively) adhering to labor law. However, when care occurs in relationships that hold valued social meaning, such as family relationships or relationships where concern is mutual, the ethical obligations expand. This is the space where expectations of reciprocity grow, where caregivers articulate how elderly Israelis and their families owe more than wages for the love, consideration, and sacrifice caregivers offer their employers beyond the checklist of providing technical care.

Caregivers in my research expressed very strong attachment to an employer (occasionally a former employer). Describing feelings of loss when an employer died provided caregivers a vocabulary through which to express these emotions. Every week at the NGO I sat across from a caregiver in tears whose elderly employer recently died. He or she showed me pictures, the caregiver posed with their elderly employee to show affection. I heard about how the elderly person died, and often how the caregiver wouldn't leave the older person's side until the end. Some of the caregivers assured me that they could still get another contract and continue to work in Israel, while others told me numbly that they had to leave Israel now as they could no longer renew their visa. In both cases, the stories flowed from the caregiver, telling me about the caregiver's relationship with the deceased employer, weeping as they spoke. Frequently, caregivers told me stories to make sense of their strong emotions, such as, "My mother died years ago, but my *ima* was like my mother to me, and I took care of her...I wasn't in the Philippines when my mother died..."

Hence, through the use of these terms I suggest that caregivers denote the relationships obligating employers, Israeli society, and the state to show them reciprocal concern. Using kinship terms to obligate employers into reciprocal relationships of care appears very calculated and emotionally manipulative; I do not believe that caregivers I worked with intentionally crafted these strategies. These expectations grew from cultural notions of kinship and obligation in the caregivers' worldviews, and indicated their belief that good care cannot be remunerated in cash alone.

However, the rhetoric of love also works in Israel to erode migrant caregivers' labor rights. Kinship terms are not necessarily the only ways in which the rhetoric of love can be expressed; I argue that the emphasis many elderly Israelis placed on describing the loving care they received from their migrant caregiver also blurred the lines of waged employment to some extent. Two common examples are employers and their families expecting caregiver to forego their days off to avoid inconveniencing the family, or employers asking caregivers to "understand" the financial situation of the family and not to expect their full pay or to be paid on time. More than linguistic terminology, the rhetoric of love points to employers' expectations that abnegate the nature of caregiving work, mainly that it is waged labor. On the other hand, caregivers use these terms to expand the employment relationship to include social forms of obligation and reciprocity. The intent of such blurring is not always abusive or emerging from a place of recognized power inequalities. These expectations also arise from real feelings of closeness and need that complicate what a contractual labor relationship entails.

The state seeks to limit the rhetoric of love by continually substantiating the distinctions between citizens and migrant workers, by restricting migrant workers' access to citizenship, and enacting binding laws that limit caregivers' labor rights among other strategies. These laws seek

to structure the reach of the “rhetoric of love” by marking caregiving as foreign, low-skilled, and limited in their rights – not friends or fictive kin or other relationship that prescriptively implies an expectation of equality in the relationship. In a different turn, the NGO worked to legally protect migrant workers from exploitation, abuse, or overwork through labor laws irrespective of the employer’s intent: whether the employer knowingly flouted the law, or presuming that “friendship” trumped employment regulations. In this sense, the NGO attempted to define the boundaries distinguishing fictive members of the family from market-based employees. Yet, this was not always an exact science.

Occasionally, the NGO volunteers felt empathy for Israeli families that influenced their understanding of labor law. Rather than assuming that a migrant caregiver ought to feel like “part of the family” or be a “friend” to their employer and waive their legal rights, these NGO volunteers felt that migrant caregivers were obligated to be flexible with *how* employers honored migrant caregivers’ rights. The NGO volunteers agreed on the basic rights of migrant caregivers, such as their right to days off and to their benefit payments at the end of every year. However, I frequently heard the volunteers snap at the caregivers, “Give them [the employers] a break!” when caregivers came to complain of employers pressuring them to swap days off or to receive their benefit pay at a later date.

When I asked the volunteers why they found it frustrating when caregivers insisted that they had a right to their package of benefits delivered in a timely manner and exhibited an unwillingness to bend, the volunteers frequently told me that caregivers had no “understanding” of the realities of the Israeli employer. One long-tenured volunteer (the definite alpha male of the office with whom Nurit routinely butted heads) angrily shouted at me when I asked this question, “They have to understand, too. Israelis are not rich Americans. Sometimes it can’t be

right now. Sometimes the family can't take days off [to cover for the caregiver's vacation time].
Metaplot (caregivers) should care about the *si'udi* (infirm or old person) – more than money!”

This frustration with perceptions of caregivers' inflexibility speaks to the tension between a mutually reciprocal and flexible working relationship between the caregiver and employers, and the realities that labor rights exist to prevent abuses and to make explicit the responsibilities of the employers and the employees. The NGO volunteers pointed to the opportunities for caregivers to display compassion and to trust the good faith of the family, and yet they did not recognize the caregiver's vulnerability or their own obligations such as to submit mandatory remittance to the Philippines on a regular basis. Importantly, the ability to be flexible and understand employers' delays required caregivers to trust the intentions and follow through of the families they worked for.

These reactions by the NGO volunteers highlight social perceptions of caregivers and public concerns about trust in the caregiving relationship. The NGO volunteers did not like it when Filipino caregivers refused to back down off their rights, not acknowledging the authority of the NGO volunteers to judge the appropriate flexibility of rights. In moments like these, caregivers refused the characterization of vulnerable, docile, economically desperate migrants and instead advocated for their entitlement. These shifts created upsetting ruptures in NGO workers' expectations, calling into question the character of migrant caregivers often based on their ethnicity. After Filipino caregivers came to the NGO to advocated for their rights in a manner deemed “too strong” for migrant workers to legitimately appropriate, the NGO volunteers complained about how much they disliked Filipinos, preferring more docile migrants such as the Sri Lankans.

Similar concerns about the misrecognition of migrant caregivers' authentic nature informed anxiety about elder abuse. In the discussion at the beginning of this section, Nurit raised the problem of elder abuse, pointing out the extremes that some cases of abuse can take. Elder abuse is a global problem occurring in nursing homes, with caregivers of all legal statuses (e.g. citizen, immigrant, migrant), and within the context of family-based care.³⁰ Statistics on elder maltreatment are hard to find as these occurrences are grossly underreported; one available statistic from the World Health Organization (WHO) states that between 4% and 6% of elderly people globally experienced maltreatment in family settings.³¹ WHO goes on to state:

In many parts of the world elder abuse occurs with little recognition or response. Until recently, this serious social problem was hidden from the public view and considered mostly a private matter. Even today, elder abuse continues to be a taboo, mostly underestimated and ignored by societies across the world. Evidence is accumulating, however, to indicate that elder abuse is an important public health and societal problem.³²

This quotation points to the growing severity of the neglect and abuse that the elderly are encountering. Additionally, the WHO points to the rapidly aging global populations paired with dwindling social services, leading to grave questions about how the elderly will find necessary care, especially those without generous financial or familial resources. The research on elder abuse generally focuses on care facilities and families as places of exploitation and victimization, yet it is well documented that some caregivers also perpetuate neglect and violence towards their elderly patient. However, it is not a category of violence uniquely perpetrated by migrant caregivers. The public discourse on elder abuse in Israel, however, focused heavily on migrant

³⁰ World Health Organization, "Elder Maltreatment" August 2011.
<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs357/en/index.html>

³¹ World Health Organization, "Elder Maltreatment" August 2011.
<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs357/en/index.html>

³² World Health Organization. Fact Sheet: "Ageing and Life Course: Elder abuse"
www.who.int/ageing/projects/elder_abuse/en

caregivers during my research.³³ In juxtaposition to the overwhelming rhetoric of the abuse that migrants are exposed to while working abroad, the public concern with elder abuse questioned if cross-cultural care poses a greater threat of neglect and maltreatment of the elderly than when elderly Israelis are cared for by other Israeli citizens.

Elder abuse is a serious problem and caregivers who work around the clock are particularly susceptible to exhaustion and stress that can lead to abusive behavior. Nurit favored nursing homes over in-home care arrangements as nursing facilities offer trained staff to fulfill the older person's needs. Advocates for migrant workers raised similar concerns with 24-hour care at the Kav LaOved Public Conference in October 2010, where they critiqued the system that produces exhausted, overworked, and socially isolated caregivers. The law only addresses overtime pay, not the human costs of this system. The advocates speaking at this public lecture strongly encouraged the government to allow high-needs elderly Israelis to employ two caregivers in order to interrupt the system of stress and overwork that lead to caregivers' psychological problems and result in abusive behaviors.³⁴

This (valid) concern with elder abuse magnified in increased public interest and attention, including public fascination with exposé videos posted on the internet showing migrant caregivers horrifically abusing older Israelis. The media runs news stories on cases of elder abuse by migrant caregivers with some degree of regularity (with their nationality always used explicitly as part of their identity). The horror of this abuse is often heightened when the media is able to reveal that the elderly person is a Holocaust survivor.

³³ For academic discussions on elder abuse as a growing phenomena in Israeli society perpetrated by families see particularly Lowenstein, Eisikovits, Band-Winterstein, and Enosh 2009; and Iecovich 2005.

³⁴ "Round-the-Clock Cargiving: An Inevitability or Modern Day Slavery?" Organized by Kav LaOved, hosted by Ruti Sinai. October 28, 2010. At the Karov Theater, New Central Bus Station, Tel Aviv)

Some caregivers do abuse their elderly employers. Current statistics³⁵ show that family members or friends are the most common perpetrators of abusing the elderly (Dong 2012: 1); this may be explained by the relatively low global rates of employing caregivers who are unrelated or external to the community. As rates of elder abuse in nursing homes, care facilities, and medical institutions are also significantly worrisome (WHO Fact Sheet)³⁶, the question may become about the conditions that make caring for an elderly person difficult and stressful (e.g. medical conditions such a dementia; the lack of financial resources to give adequate care; and the need for constant care over 24-hour cycles). Emphasizing the conditions in which care occurs nuances the discussion of how and why elderly people are abused. In some situations, caregivers are actually the confidants for elderly employer experiencing abuse from family members or medical practitioners (Eisikovits, Winterstein, Lowenstein 2004: 2-3).

However, it is the popular characterization of migrant caregivers that concerns my research, portraying caregivers as inherently prone towards abuse and as a lurking threat to Israel beneath the docile façade of the caregiver’s public face. This practice of seeing migrant workers as a possible social threat, and caregivers positioned and waiting to abuse the elderly is hardly new, nor is it unique to Israel. Yet, as can be seen in frequently commentary by the former Minister of the Interior Eli Yishai, the rhetoric that characterizes migrant workers in Israel ties into larger demographic concerns about Zionism and the maintenance of a “Jewish” democracy. Yishai stated in 2012 in response to the government’s plans to deport undocumented migrants

³⁵ As the WHO and many other organizations concerned with global aging assert, the attention given to elder abuse and neglect is relatively recent. As elder abuse is a particularly hidden phenomenon, occurring in domestic space and often by family members, it is very hard to gather accurate or representative statistics on this global occurrence. Add to this the varied cultural norms and practices that inform the expectations for the treatment of the elderly, and the question of how to measure and characterize elder abuse and neglect becomes even more fraught.

³⁶ WHO Fact Sheet *Abuse of the Elderly* (2002).
http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/world_report/factsheets/en/elderabusefacts.pdf

including children, "Those who won't leave voluntarily will be paid to be deported either to his country or to another – I want everyone to be able to walk the streets without fear or trepidation ... The migrants are giving birth to hundreds of thousands, and the Zionist dream is dying."³⁷

The specter of the abusive foreign caregiver in Israeli society points to the presumed latent threat migrant caregivers pose to the body politic. Migrant workers embody ideas of the external and the unknown. Israel has created a system of Jewish immigration that makes it difficult for a non-Jewish applicant (or applicants whose Judaism is viewed as inauthentic) to succeed in acquiring citizenship (see Chapter 5). The “inside” of the nation state is often viewed as reserved for Jewish people, putting the presence of migrant workers – especially long term caregivers who have worked in Israel for over a decade – into sharp relief. I heard scores of opinions from Israelis about migrant workers, ranging from disinterest, to glowing praise of an elderly relative’s caregiver, to outright outrage over Israel’s participation in global labor flows. I had one particularly unsettling conversation about migrant caregivers with an American couple who made *aliyah* to Israel a year before. This conversation poses a slightly extreme example, and yet I found the core beliefs reiterated in the media and in more sedate forms voiced by other Israelis.

A mutual American-Israeli acquaintance introduced me to Etta and David, insistently arranging a coffee meeting for us in a café. When I mentioned the topic of my research, Etta grew very upset. In a loud, angry tone that attracted the attention of the other patrons, she told me that hiring a migrant caregiver equated to condemning the older person to a situation of neglect and abuse. Her first claim was that “almost all” migrant workers are illegal, taking

³⁷ Kubovich, Yaniv & Neshet, Talila. Interior Minister: UN should take care of migrant workers, not Israel. *Haaretz*. <http://www.haaretz.com/news/national/interior-minister-un-should-take-care-of-migrant-workers-not-israel-1.431487>. May 20, 2012 [Accessed May 20, 2012].

resources they are not entitled to while she paid taxes. Here, we are given an image of the migrant worker as opportunistic lawbreakers who threaten the health of society at the expense of hard working, diligent citizens.

She regaled me with stories of seeing old people on the streets “dragged, every day, up the street by the arm by a heartless foreigner,” who in her view “clearly doesn’t care about this older person’s humanity!” She felt very strongly that the elderly deserved respect, compassion, and care that foreign workers do not have the human capacity to provide. “It’s just a job to them – and there aren’t enough jobs for Israelis here – and they don’t care about how this old person suffers.”

Her husband, David, interjected mildly that perhaps not *every* migrant caregiver is like this. Etta disagreed vehemently, making her position explicit that she abhorred how caregivers “pull and push and bully old people, yelling at them and ignoring them.” She told multiple eye-witness stories of personally seeing caregivers spitting on older people, pulling their hair, making them weep in public, and other offenses. Etta offered her own alternate vision of a caregiver to sit with an older person and talk compassionately, holding the older person’s hand and stroking his or her face “lovingly.” She contrasted this with the migrant caregivers she described who “had vacant eyes” and who she claimed couldn’t “see or honor” the humanity of an older Israeli.

I heard caregivers similarly characterized by another Israeli who recently made *aliyah* from Australia. He voiced his disgust with the migrant work program during a lecture series aimed at older “Anglo” [native English speaking] Israelis living in The City. A social worker explained the geriatric services offered in Israel and methods for individuals to effectively engage with long term planning, including the process for hiring a migrant caregiver. The middle aged man stood, accompanying his mother who sat next to him, and he lodged his

complaint against foreign workers. He claimed that they were all “vacant eyed” and “lifeless” acting like “automatons” as they went through mechanical recitations of caregiving. He referenced abstract situations of elder abuse and neglect, asserting that with the unemployment rate in Israel so high there was no logical rationale for a migrant caregiver program in Israel. He asserted that there were “more than enough Jews to care for our own people” and that substandard care was all that the elderly received from “these foreign robots.”

At this point, the social worker interrupted, insisting that while there are recognized problems with migrant caregivers that she has routinely seen “exceptional” care provided to her elderly clients by caregivers. Many of the older women surrounding me nodded in agreement with the social worker, giving the man looks that expressed their disagreement. With that, the social worker wrapped up the lecture and ended the debate.

On top of the oddly generic expressions of racism in both examples, these commentaries reflect ideas about 1) who is properly internal and external to the nation, 2) the responsibilities of the state to citizen workers, and 3) what we are culturally primed to see. While many Hebrew-speaking Israelis I spoke with didn’t like the role of migrant labor in their country, they expressed their views without suggesting a lack of human empathy inherent to migrant workers. Many expressed beliefs that migrant workers have positive personal characteristics but these Israelis focused on the economic rationales that brought caregivers to Israel. Nurit fit into this category, willing to see some value in the labor caregivers provide, but arguing against the *system* as flawed and exploitative of both the migrant worker and the elderly person requiring care.

Etta and the man at the lecture, two of the most irate responses I personally encountered to migrant workers, yet expressing existing views in Israel about caregivers in general. These

strongly voiced renditions rested on the practice of viewing the “outsider” or “other” as inhuman. Etta in particular aggressively stated her view of foreign workers’ incapacity for expressing caring feelings and emotions. In her view, only Jewish people are capable of caring for the Jewish elderly in Israel, which seemed also to be a view held by the man at the lecture. Both of these examples indicate the state’s responsibility to full employment of its citizens, and an obligation to maintain a prioritized demographic majority. In both of these views, the ethnicity, religion, and *foreignness* of the migrant worker contributed to very strong notions of a substandard quality of care, and a failure within the economy. It is an easy jump to view migrant workers as a problem within Israeli society rather than a population recruited by Israel to inexpensively serve a specific need within a system that provides huge economic gains to particular sectors of the economy as the government continues to retreat from social services and safety nets.

These criticisms also resonate with questions of what symbolic value work represents. Caregiving is stigmatized work and the government recognizes the shortage of caregiving labor in Israel through its continued recruitment of foreign caregivers. By recruiting foreign workers to provide care, non-Jewish labor manages Israeli homes and bodies. These elderly people belong to the first generation of Israelis in which work, personhood, and the success of the nation still held central political importance. Yet their care comes from external sources, not from family or from other citizens. Thus, the aging bodies that contributed their labor to the nation are outsourced to foreign laborers.

Symbolically, as Etta and the man at the lecture reveal, there is discordance between Israel’s ideology about Jewish personhood and the economy, and the foreign work program. As new immigrants, both Etta and the Australian man are actively buying into these ideals as they

make a new life in Israel. By viewing migrant workers as dangerous and unknown entities waiting to abuse helpless elderly Jews, the media portrayals and public discourse emphasizes Israel as only properly accessible to Jews, the continuing threat that gentiles pose to Jewish people, and the threat gentiles present to the nation and the body politic through their labor that steals jobs from unemployed Israelis. In a sense, Etta and the Australian man suggest a veiled form of social terrorism lurking within the foreign, gentile essence of migrant caregivers that the state complicity exposes the elderly to.

A persuasive argument against a migrant labor system, and one that has considerable traction, is the cost to the domestic economy's ability to employ its own citizen workers. This argument asserts that external laborers take jobs that belong to citizens. This raises questions 1) about the shortage of caregiving labor in Israel, and 2) the expense of domestic sources of care that encourage the elderly (and the government) to seek alternative options. I discussed the role Oslo played in replacing Palestinian casual labor with migrant labor in Chapter Two, and the development of the dual labor system that predated the chartering of the State of Israel. In this history, we can see the development of stigma associated with certain kinds of labor assigned to non-Jewish workers and the correlated low wages.

Yet, as new Jewish immigrants filtered into Israel post-Oslo and as the economic boom began to slow in the 2000s, the question still remains as to why the shortage in caregiving labor wasn't effectively met by new citizens as a method of lowering unemployment rates. Why *aren't* these workers trained and deployed to care for the rapidly expanding population of aging adults who require (or who will soon require) care? As the social worker at the lecture on geriatric services pointed out, the generation in Israel that currently requires care holds good pensions and benefited from many of the social services are not dismantled by the government. This implies

that the aging generations to come will be even less able to afford care homes, and will rely on alternate measures for obtaining care. As the Israeli government dismantles its social networks in coordination with producing rhetoric about the necessity of removing gentile foreign workers from the Jewish nation, the question of who will provide care becomes increasingly pressing.

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and Finance Minister Yuval Shteinitz announced in 2009 that the Israeli economy required a drastic reduction in the number of foreign workers in Israel by 2012.³⁸ This statement reiterated previous attempts to reduce the numbers of migrant workers in Israel. For example, in 2003 deportations of migrant workers were already underway in efforts to reduce the numbers of migrant workers in Israel by 2010. According to an article published in 2003 in *Globes* citing the Ministry of Finance, in 2002-2003 the government deported over 60,000 “illegal” foreign workers with the goal of deporting a total of 124,100 “illegal” migrant workers by 2006.³⁹ The article states further that “By 2010, the number of foreign workers will be reduced by 115,900, 53.6% of their numbers in 2003.”⁴⁰

Yet, in 2003-2004 economic forecasts predicted rising unemployment rates despite the governmental actions to reduce migrant workers in the Israeli economy. The answer that the Ministry of Finance offered for this rise in unemployment, despite removing the migrants blamed for disenfranchising Israeli workers, pointed to another source of the “foreign” in the Israeli

³⁸ Friedman, Ron. Court halts eviction of workers. *Jerusalem Post*. <http://www.jpost.com/Israel/Article.aspx?id=179453>. June 24, 2010. [Accessed January 2014]

³⁹ Klein, Zeev. Finance Ministry sees unemployment rise despite fewer foreign workers Ministry of Finance: A massive influx of Palestinian workers will cause a surge in unemployment. *Globes*. <http://www.globes.co.il/serveen/globes/docview.asp?did=719136> August 28, 2003. [Accessed January 2014]

⁴⁰ Klein, Zeev. Finance Ministry sees unemployment rise despite fewer foreign workers Ministry of Finance: A massive influx of Palestinian workers will cause a surge in unemployment. *Globes*. <http://www.globes.co.il/serveen/globes/docview.asp?did=719136> August 28, 2003. [Accessed January 2014]

workforce: Palestinian workers. The *Globes* article reflects a moment of slight relaxing that occurred at the borders between Israel and the West Bank that allowed Palestinian workers temporary access to casual Israeli employment. As quoted in *Globes*, this re-introduction of Palestinian workers created competition for employment within the Israeli economy: “The continuing rise in unemployment is due to the renewed entry of Palestinian workers. The Ministry of Finance warns that if the government approves a massive influx of Palestinian workers to Israel, or if the number of foreign workers is not reduced, Israeli unemployment could surge to new heights. The Ministry of Finance estimates are biased downward, since unemployment already reached 10.8% in the first quarter of 2003.”⁴¹

The announcement by Netanyahu and Shteinitz in 2009 resulted in a number of different approaches to the existing migrant workers in Israel, such as deporting Chinese construction workers in 2009,⁴² and Yishai’s program that began in 2011 to deport the children of undocumented migrant workers. While many of the NGOs that advocate on behalf of migrant workers agreed that reducing the number of migrants brought to Israel by manpower agencies is a positive move as the manpower agencies profit from flooding the market with more migrant workers than the economic sectors can absorb, these organizations also raise the obvious point that the migrant workers become the scapegoats every time the economy flags. *JPost* quoted Shevy Korzen, the executive director of the Hotline for Migrant Workers in 2009 on the government’s announcement to reduce migrant visas, commenting that:

⁴¹ Klein, Zeev. Finance Ministry sees unemployment rise despite fewer foreign workers Ministry of Finance: A massive influx of Palestinian workers will cause a surge in unemployment. *Globes*. <http://www.globes.co.il/serveen/globes/docview.asp?did=719136> August 28, 2003. [Accessed January 2014]

⁴² Friedman, Ron. Court halts eviction of workers. *Jerusalem Post*. <http://www.jpost.com/Israel/Article.aspx?id=179453>. June 24, 2010. [Accessed January 2014]

...whenever there is an economic recession or crisis, there is always talk about cutting the number of foreign workers, but in our experience this is just rhetoric ... they [the government] always like to use the foreign workers as scapegoats, but political interests keep the flow of foreign workers coming in, and the manpower agencies make a lot of money from it.⁴³

The discourse on the economy and migrant workers pre-dates 2009, but this was a period of particularly rich public discussion of the migrant work system. In many ways, 2009 marks the initiation of many political moves to close Israel to migrants and refugees, culminating in the recent decision by the Knesset to hold undocumented migrant workers in detention for up to a year without a trial to deter “illegals” from crossing Israel’s borders.⁴⁴ This discourse marked a particularly strong turn towards removing migrant workers from the economy, yet a distinction continued to be made between construction and agricultural workers, and caregivers.

Shmuel Armon, who in 2009 represented the National Association of International Manpower Companies in Israel (Achioz), stated in the same *JPost* article from 2009: "However, I'm sure there are not many Israelis who would be willing to work as a caregiver for 24 hours a day. Most [Israeli] workers are only willing to work for eight hours, and they would never want to live away from their families." As was stated in a Public Conference hosted by Kav LaOved in October 2010, most Israelis, even the most marginalized and impoverished, would not work under the conditions that migrant caregivers are expected to accept without complaint (KLO

⁴³ Friedman, Ron. Court halts eviction of workers. *Jerusalem Post*. <http://www.jpost.com/Israel/Article.aspx?id=179453>. June 24, 2010. [Accessed January 2014]

⁴⁴ Lis, Jonathan. Knesset okays detention of migrants without trial. *Haaretz*. <http://www.haaretz.com/news/national/.premium-1.562666>. December 10, 2013. [Accessed December 20, 2014]

Public Conference, October 28, 2010⁴⁵). Meir Shpigler, director of the Foreign Workers Department at the Immigration Authority in 2009, also backed this opinion by stating that while visas were restricted in the agricultural and construction industries “that it was unlikely that the number of those working in caregiving would change, because the need in Israel was too great.”⁴⁶

Renewed attention is currently focused on foreign workers and refugees in Israel, the agenda pushed forward by politically conservative concerns about an overwhelming influx of non-Jewish migrants seeking to live permanently in Israel, legally or not. While Nurit’s comments highlight her concerns for the elderly and migrant caregivers’ potential exploitation, the conservative factions of Israeli politics and society are focused on the economic concerns, the security risks that floods of non-Jews are thought to represent,⁴⁷ and the preservation of the founding ideology of Israel. The intersections of imaginations of the nation, constructions of personhood in the body politic, and political stances on the sovereignty of the state all reflect on how migrant workers – cheap, foreign, and expendable – are characterized in relation to the Israeli “self” in ways that have larger effects on how migrant caregivers conceptualize their place

⁴⁵ Hanny Ben-Israel Untitled Presentation. *Round-the-Clock Caregiving: An Inevitability or Modern Day Slavery?* Organized by Kav LaOved, hosted by Ruti Sinai. October 28, 2010. At the Karov Theater, New Central Bus Station, Tel Aviv.

⁴⁶ Eglash, Ruth. Gov't looks to cut back on foreign workers to help unemployment. *Jerusalem Post*. <http://www.jpost.com/Israel/Govt-looks-to-cut-back-on-foreign-workers-to-help-unemployment>. March 12, 2009. [Accessed January 2014]

⁴⁷ For example, as Interior Minister Gideon Sa'ar stated in a *Haaretz* article titled “Knesset okays detention of migrants without trial”: “Israel is the only country in the West that is exposed to this danger because it shares a land border with Africa,” he said, referring to the influx of migrants. “The sea separates between the other countries and Africa. We cannot burden ourselves with all the ills and problems of the African continent. This isn't a passing danger, but a lurking danger.” (Lis, Jonathan. Knesset okays detention of migrants without trial. *Haaretz*. <http://www.haaretz.com/news/national/.premium-1.562666>. December 10, 2013. [Accessed December 20, 2014])

in Israel. This social place that caregivers work to identify is influenced by ideas suggesting that care engenders reciprocity beyond wages, and the role of affective labor as integrating caregivers into Israel's social fabric, as subsequent sections discuss. However, caregivers' imaginings of a codified space they can inhabit within Israel is challenged by persistent discourses that make caregivers only legible as problematic foreign labor.

Employers, Economics, and Asserting Personhood

Do you know the word haval⁴⁸? It is haval that I can't spend more time with my daughter.

(Maria)

Maria worked as a caregiver for eleven years, caring for the same older woman, Sveta. She also served as the president of the Filipino Community Organization (FCO), placing her in the center of an important social network of caregivers in The City and across Israel. I entered the FCO community through Maria's sponsorship and introduction, gaining essential connections for my research. Maria also provided rich insights, interpretations, and explanations about migrant labor and Israel that nuanced my data. In particular, Maria demonstrated how economic realities provide an expected narrative about overseas labor, but that there are multiple factors that influence migrant caregiving; these factors often inform Filipino caregivers' claims for inclusion and their efforts to recognize their full personhood as migrant workers. Like other caregivers trying to establish a "place" for themselves in Israel, Maria asserted her identity as she negotiated the power dynamics of domestic employment and her marginalized ethnic and occupational status in Israel's social landscape.

Maria's multiple roles in the Filipino community and as a caregiver herself provide multifaceted views into the work migrant caregivers do to protect their sense of self in Israel. Maria represented herself to me as a mother and a daughter who chose overseas labor to support

⁴⁸ *Haval* is Hebrew for pitiable or sad.

her family, fulfilling her gendered social role that Barber (1997) refers to as *dutiful daughters*. Maria's gendered responsibility to economically provide for her family structured her evolving interactions with her elderly employer, Sveta, just as other migrant women represented their lives in Israel to me. However, as Maria showed through describing her struggles to find a good equilibrium with Sveta, these women engaged with their work and Israel beyond economic duty.

As the president of the FCO and a lay leader in her church, Maria organized and hosted many community events. Her understanding of what these events contributed to The City's Filipino community opens spaces to think about the cultural contexts in which identity is formed and shifts, and furthermore what it means to exert *personhood* through social relationships and dynamics (Mauss 1979) in a social location where labor is the sole value. I position Maria as one example of how Filipino caregivers, especially those with long tenure in Israel, are developing communities and identities that evidence their integration into Israeli social landscapes and establishes the groundwork for making claims that they *belong* in Israel.

Maria shared aspects of her work with me when we spent time together, providing me with glimpses into her caregiving work and her employer each time. On good days, Maria talked about their closeness, respect, and the affable companionship she enjoyed with Sveta. On days when Maria felt upset or frustrated from her exchanges with Sveta she told me the harder details and talked more about why caregiving could still be difficult for her even after eleven years of experience with the same older woman. Below, I've pieced together a general picture of Maria's work and experiences as a caregiver, creating a fluid narrative of the good and the difficult from our various conversations.

Maria migrated to Israel in her early thirties after a decade working in the Philippines as a highly qualified government social worker. Despite the professional salary she received, Maria

realized that she couldn't earn enough to adequately support her family and educate her daughter. Maria reiterated often that her daughter and mother mattered most to her, and she left her job as a social worker to become a migrant caregiver for them. Eva, Maria's daughter, was eleven years old when Maria left for Israel; Eva graduated university right before I met Maria and announced her first pregnancy. Maria hoped that her investment in Eva's education would translate into Eva's ability to find high paying work in the Philippines and not have to migrate, but the pregnancy made that seem an unlikely outcome.

Working abroad allowed Maria to meet those goals, but life outside of the Philippines also afforded her with different kinds of independence along with new opportunities, such as her leadership in the FCO. Maria exuded a professional demeanor and she projected a constant calm, authoritative presence even in casual interactions, punctuated by frequent moments of humor and relaxed laughter.

Maria worked as Sveta's caregiver for over a decade (from 2000 until 2011). Sveta emigrated from Eastern Europe in the 1980s before the collapse of the Soviet Union prompted waves of immigrants to enter Israel in the 1990s and 2000s. Maria characterized Sveta as "almost Israeli," meaning that the older woman desired full assimilation but her Eastern European mannerisms and accent marked her as different. As a migrant caregiver, Maria lived in Sveta's apartment with one day off per week, providing 24-hour care on the other six days. At the beginning of her contract, Maria performed relatively light caregiving tasks, but by the time I met Maria, Sveta required considerably more assistance. Sveta avoided the serious medical and physical concerns that frequently mark old age for most of Maria's employment. Sveta's family hired Maria as a caregiver even though Sveta lived independently; Sveta's family judged at the time that she needed a companion and eventually would require a full time caregiver.

One night when Maria and I sat talking in her shared weekend apartment⁴⁹ she couldn't shake her frustration over an exchange she had with Sveta's family about the latest visit to the doctor. Speaking from this frustration Maria told me bluntly that her employer didn't have a serious illness. Sveta didn't suffer from dementia or other diseases associated with old age. In fact, Sveta could still care for herself in most regards. Sveta's family hired Maria to manage Sveta's addiction to pain medication.⁵⁰

Maria's daily tasks fell within the general work of caregivers. She attended to Sveta's needs, helping Sveta dress and prepare meals, and she attended to the routine domestic tasks such as laundry and cleaning. Maria assisted Sveta's holiday preparations until she could do these tasks for Sveta without guidance. She accompanied Sveta to the doctor, managing the health insurance and medical bills. She made sure that Sveta had social interactions, taking her to the grocery store or out to the park to sit with other older people and their caregivers.

Her caregiving work deviated from other Filipinos in her community in her tasks managing Sveta's pills, instructed by the family to strictly enforce the prescribed dosage. The family's orders that Maria restrict Sveta's medication did not sit well with Sveta who did not want Maria "interfering" with her access to her pills. Maria described Sveta as growing "very angry, very difficult, and agitated" whenever Maria tried to limit Sveta's intake of medication. Maria felt caught between Sveta, who Maria lived with and cared for, and Sveta's family who

⁴⁹ Migrant workers routinely rent apartments that they stay at during their days off. There can be up to twenty people sleeping in these apartments on some weekends, and these apartments are often the site of socializing and communal cooking/eating.

⁵⁰ Maria didn't share with me how Sveta came to be addicted to this medication, or why it continued to be prescribed. Maria talked very little of Sveta except in terms of her own work. When I asked more about Sveta's background, Maria pretended not to hear the question, which I interpreted as Maria protecting Sveta's privacy. Maria did not perform her affection for Sveta in demonstrative displays, yet Maria clearly cared for her deeply despite finding her difficult at times.

called or visited infrequently but gave Maria harsh ultimatums about the prescriptions when they spoke with Maria on the phone.

Sveta and her family engaged in separate projects to define “good health” and an acceptable quality of life for Sveta. Yet, they applied different criteria for what a good quality of life with good health meant on a daily basis, coming into conflict over what a daily routine would look like to maintain Sveta’s health. Sveta’s family and her doctors saw her addiction as compromising her health, whereas Sveta saw the obliteration of pain through medication as necessary for her well-being. Sveta, her doctors, and her family viewed Maria as directly responsible for carrying out these conflicting visions of health. Sveta grew extremely agitated without her preferred dosage of medication and demanded that Maria give her more on threat of deportation or terminated employment. On many occasions, Sveta called her family to complain about Maria even though she knew they instructed Maria to control her access. In turn, the family implored Maria to keep Sveta happy and calm – just without more pills. In effect, Sveta and her family tasked Maria with keeping them all happy or to risk termination of her contract.

Maria did not see their passive threats as idle. She felt particularly vulnerable during her initial years in Israel, grappling with Hebrew, familiarizing herself with Jewish household customs, and figuring out how to navigate the Israeli political and cultural contexts especially as the second Intifada began right when she arrived in Israel. Like most migrant caregivers, Maria began her work with debt from mediation fees, which in the year 2000 amounted to \$4,500 USD. She prioritized sending remittances home to her family and she needed a stable work environment to master the necessary skills to succeed in Israel as a migrant worker.⁵¹ Managing a new cultural context presented challenges, some of which she perceived as influencing her

⁵¹ Maria had never worked as a caregiver before her employment with Sveta; nursing tasks were also a new set of skills that she had to refine and master.

general safety. In one conversation about her early years in Israel she related, “At first I didn’t know what people were saying, on the street or on the bus, when they looked at me. I didn’t know if they were saying something insulting or rude. I worried about it.”

To maintain her job, Maria took care to meet Sveta’s expectations and those of Sveta’s family, even if that meant letting them encroach on her allowed time off or to expect work beyond the tasks outlined in her contract. This contributed Maria’s stress from the disagreements over the medication. Maria did not approve of Sveta’s drug addiction, but she witnessed the distress and lingering discomfort Sveta experienced without the drugs. Moreover, Maria didn’t approve of how Sveta’s absent family expected Maria to deal with Sveta’s problem without understanding Sveta’s daily realities, or the discomfort Sveta experienced during withdrawal. The lack of assistance from that Sveta’s doctors and family convinced Maria that Sveta’s comfort took priority. Maria decided to increase Sveta’s comfort and to protect her own job and support for her family.

Maria’s relaxed her hold on the prescriptions, letting Sveta take more than the prescribed amount behind her back. Maria told the doctors and Sveta’s family that she followed the prescription regime as they directed without lying to them. Maria and Sveta formed what Ibarra (2010) calls a *deep alliance*. This term defines the project that caregivers and their elderly employers enter into expressly to provide an end of life experience that preserves the elderly person’s dignity and independence. In this alliance, caregivers personally commit to defending their employer’s autonomy from family and doctors, and often sacrifice their personal time to their employer’s care. Sveta’s health did not require Maria to go to these lengths, but Maria did negotiate a common ground with Sveta around the medications. Their implicit agreement put them on the same team, so to speak, keeping Sveta living without her family’s direct oversight.

Once Maria loosened her hold on the medications, Sveta advocated for Maria with her family, wanting to keep her agreeable caregiver. Thus, the caregiver and the elderly person are situated in a network of opinions, concerns, cultural influences and situated notions of what constitutes the best care that they reference in their daily rhythm of life together.

Maria also negotiated her time off with Sveta after her first two years of employment. Neither Sveta nor her family wanted Maria to take days off or to observe her legally permitted religious holidays. Maria grew frustrated with their expectations that she remain in Sveta's apartment when she wanted to go to church and join a Filipino organization. As Maria gained confidence, cultural skills, and no longer "felt so small," she found the courage to stand up to Sveta. "So one day I took my courage and said, 'I'm going to church. I need my time out [of the apartment]. I'm taking my time. It's my right.'" Maria continued, "She didn't like it and told me not to go, but I said, it's my right. You have to do that. It's hard because they can fire you or yell at you, but you have to say 'I need my time and you can't tell me no.'" Eventually, Sveta accepted Maria's right to take her days off, especially as Maria arranged for replacement caregivers to stay with Sveta while she was out, and if Sveta felt ill Maria cancelled her plans and stayed to provide companionship and care.

Maria enjoyed living and working in Israel although she missed her daughter. She visited the Philippines six times over her eleven years in Israel, going home more frequently than most other caregivers. Still, Maria told me, "Do you know the word *haval*? It is *haval* that I can't spend more time with my daughter." When I asked Maria what she would do if her contract ended and she had to leave Israel, she shrugged and said absently that she could work somewhere else in the world, adding, "I support her [Eva], and the baby, and my mother. I will keep working to support Eva and the baby, I won't go home when I am done in Israel. They

need me, so I will keep working.” Eva’s finance and Maria’s husband (Eva’s father) didn’t factor into her calculations of financial support for Eva and the baby (Angelina); Maria understood herself to be their source of stability and financial support.

Maria led a busy, nuanced, and full life outside of her caregiving work. Notably, she held important leadership roles in the FCO, serving as President when I met her. Maria’s importance in this community organization that received accolades from the Philippine Embassy and the mayor of The City impressed Sveta. Maria acted out how Sveta told anyone who would listen, “My *Filipini*⁵² isn’t just a *metapelet*. She *is* somebody.” Maria laughed while rehearsing Sveta’s approval, but the deeper commentary in Sveta’s pride clearly bothered Maria. Her leadership in the FCO supported the idea that Filipino caregivers are *all* “somebody.”

The FCO depended on a core group of active members who assumed leadership of the organization, and then an expansive network of members who participated in events. The FCO operated on an identity-basis, supporting Filipinos in Israel and creating informal resources to help new Filipino caregivers adjust to Israel. The organization hosted celebrations, church festivals, cultural programs for the Israeli public, and they arranged for rest and relaxation trips, insurance renewal drives, Medical Missions, and practical skills trainings. The FCO held fundraisers to support charitable causes in the Philippines as well. Because the FCO’s membership attracted Filipinos from multiple linguistic and regional affiliations, Maria carefully selected charities that didn’t show favoritism. She found projects that benefited multiple areas in the Philippines or responded to natural disasters.

The FCO promoted transnational attachments within its membership, encouraging caregivers to integrate into Israel with language and cultural skills, but simultaneously to

⁵² The Hebrew vernacular *Filipini* stands in for the formal word *metapelet* to mean a caregiver.

maintain strong connections to events in the Philippines beyond regular communication with family. Glick Schiller et al (1995) theorize these modes of engagement across national borders (and considerable geographic space) as producing a new configuration of migrant identities. This transnational view challenges notions that migrants sever connections to their home country to assume new assimilated identities in the receiving nation, and instead situates migrants living “... daily lives [that] depend on multiple and constant interconnections across international borders and whose public identities are configured in relationship to more than one nation-state” (1995: 48).

The FCO Valentine’s Day Pageant illustrated how migrant workers built rooted relationships in multiple nation states and societies. Maria invited me to attend the Mr. and Ms. Valentine’s Day Pageant, the first FCO invitation she personally extended to me. The pageant took place shortly after the FCO New Year’s Party that ended in a police raid, and Maria expressed her determination to make the pageant a fun and relaxing evening for The City’s Filipino caregivers.

Beauty pageants are popular in the Philippines as a venue for women (and sometimes men) to display socially valued attributes including beauty, public speaking, poise, and elegance. Media stories about the Philippines often pertain to natural disasters, civil unrest, political corruption, economic instability, rapid population growth, and (increasingly) stories about the plight of Filipina migrants. Conversely, internationally ranked athletes (e.g. Manny Pacquiao in boxing, Marestella Torres in the long jump), performers (e.g. Charice Pempengco, Darren Criss, Arnel Pineda), and participants in international beauty pageants (e.g. Megan Young as Miss World 2013; Ariella Arida as Miss Universe - Philippines 2013) embody representations of the Philippines that instill a sense of pride and importance in their country for many Filipinos. These

are individuals who command positive notice on the world stage and counter stereotypes characterizing the Philippines as impoverished, chaotic, and producing only corruption, sex workers, and labor migrants.

Maria anticipated the questions she thought I would ask when she invited me to attend: why host an event so soon after the interrupted New Year's Party, and why a beauty pageant? "Why wait?" she posed to me, agitated by the concept. "The old woman [Sveta] could die tomorrow, and then I can't leave my house [because of loss of visa]; if I want to do something I do it now." Maria told me. "Why wait? If you want to do something and you can do it tomorrow, do it tomorrow. If it has to be next month, then do it next month. Don't wait. Things can happen. Do it now."

"Do you want to know why a beauty pageant?" she asked me. "Competitions are important for people [migrant workers] to stand up and show what they can do. They feel like they can do something and that people will see that. They [Filipino migrant workers] say, 'we are just *metaplot*. We're nothing in Israel, just workers.' But they aren't 'just.' They [migrant workers] are regular, just like everyone else."

Maria faced reality head on even before her visa expired: migrant workers generally can't stay in Israel indefinitely. She told me during quiet moments that she wished she could bring her daughter to live with her in The City, and that she wanted to stay in the community she created for herself there. She built a strong, stable, and, in many ways durable, community for herself in Israel. Her investment in the continuation and the health of this community evidences her level of commitment. In the context of defending the beauty pageant, Maria told me her contingency plan for the FCO. Beauty pageants allow people to gain social recognition: contestants receive titles and honors; members of the community are honored; caregivers play roles during the

pageant, such as judging, that shows their importance in the community. The FCO depended on this feeling of importance. Maria emphasized the critical nature of making people feel involved in the organization, saying “maybe someone doesn’t know about the FCO until they come to one of these parties, and then maybe they get involved. We have to [develop] people to do this [community] work.”

The event took place in a large performance space in business district of The City. I arrived during the chaos of decorating the stage, setting up the buffet table, and making sure that the male and female contestants (an equal number of both) prepared their costumes and music backstage. As all this activity swirled around me, I talked to various members of the FCO, who told me that representatives from the Embassy would attend and about the excitement The City’s caregivers expressed about this night. They explained the judging to me, based on “all around” personality traits to pick Mr. and Ms. Valentine as representatives for the FCO community.

The event stretched past midnight into the early morning, providing enough ethnographic details for its own study. The evening began with the usual mingling period around the buffet table before Maria called the audience to their seats. Maria performed introductions and then a local religious lay leader gave the group prayer and sang the Philippine National Anthem. Different members of the FCO acknowledged donors who supported the event (e.g. Western Union and various labor recruiting agencies). Maria reiterated the sentiment that she communicated to me about having a Valentine’s Day event so soon after the New Year’s Party, and the audience clapped in approval. She emphasized that the night should be a celebration of Valentine’s Day and a showcase of how Filipinos in The City are more than “just” caretakers. Maria introduced Sveta in the audience accompanied by a family member. Maria spoke lovingly about how much her Israeli *Ima* supported her work in the FCO and how her *Ima* believed in the

Filipino community in Israel. Maria spoke in Tagalog, and I looked over at the very sweet-looking older woman, realizing that she had no idea what Maria said. Nonetheless, she smiled broadly, appreciating Maria's recognition.

Constant references to the Philippines textured the various phases of the competition, balanced against statements concerning how long contestants worked overseas, when he or she came to Israel, and information about marital and parental status. Throughout the night, I gained a sense of how many people each contestant supported in the Philippines, and the feelings of attachment (or lack thereof) the contestants had for Israel through their comments and speeches.

When the judges narrowed the competitors to the "top five" for the men and women, the question and answer period began. Contestant couples picked their question at random, each providing their own answer to the same query. The questions aimed for a certain kind of answer, such as "What qualities do you possess that would make you the best choice for Ms. Valentine," or "What is your biggest success?" The women all answered in English while the men all answered in Tagalog, but their answers showed consistency in the content of their replies across the board. Their responses focused on their strong work ethic, their work in Israel to support family in the Philippines, how many children they had, the number of years they lived in Israel, and something about their friendly disposition.

One question unexpectedly opened a dialogic moment between the contestants and the audience. Maria asked the couple to individually discuss their "biggest personal success." Both coincidentally gave answers about coming to Israel and finding that their visa was incorrect, creating a tenuous legal situation. They both attributed the eventual resolution of the situation to the kindness of their Israeli employers who treated them "just like family" during the uncertainty of legal limbo. However, the audience grumbled loudly and even argued back from the theater-

style terraced seating as the contestants gave these answers on the stage, clearly struggling with the sentiment that Israeli employers actually meant that a Filipino could ever be “just like family.” In both cases, the audience reacted to these sentiments with doubt, both grumbled and shouted.

Both contestants faltered when confronted with the audience’s reaction, causing Maria to step in as the MC to support the candidates’ feelings that they owed gratitude to their employers for the assistance and kindness they received. Maria quieted the crowd both times harshly, speaking in rapid Tagalog about how all the Filipinos in the theater held jobs in The City *directly because of* Israeli hospitality, receiving quieter critical comments in response. Maria made an annoyed face, and glanced at the Philippine Embassy representative at the judges’ table before forcibly moving the proceedings along.

Importantly, the audience didn’t respond with critiques suggesting that caregivers shouldn’t prize inclusion into Israel families, if only symbolically, because of strong beliefs that caregivers ought to retain their separate identities and focus on their eventual return to the Philippines. Rather, these responses refuted the sincerity of Israeli families offering this kind of support due to the audience’s recognition that caregivers held value in Israel as workers. Moreover, an undertone occurred in the audience’s rejection of the contestants’ statements indicating that these caregivers *wanted* opportunities for inclusion and felt bitter that Israel didn’t sincerely offer these chances.

The week after the pageant, Nurit asked me if I attended the event, and what I thought of it. I described a little bit of it to her, but she shook her head impatiently and with disapproval. “They invite me to [be a] judge, but I don’t go. It’s anti-feminist.” Nurit began arguing with me. She proceeded to lecture me about the Israeli feminist movement that she was a part of, and how

Filipina women “wanted to go backwards” with their participation in beauty pageants. She spoke for a number of minutes about the detrimental aspects of beauty pageants for women and feminism, concluding by asking me if I thought there was no feminism in the Philippines. I told her that I knew for a fact that there was a feminist movement and organizations in the Philippines working hard on important social issues, but Nurit shook her head and reiterated that she would never go to a beauty pageant. Her look made it quite clear what she thought of me for attending.

Yet, the beauty pageant did important work for the Filipino community that participated either as contestants or in the audience. Maria articulated the importance of public recognition and creating feelings of social importance. Furthermore, the beauty pageant put the Filipino community on display in a positive light for the Israeli employers, friends, and recruiters invited to attend as guests. The dialogue between the audience and the contestants expressing gratitude towards Israeli employers also demonstrated the negotiations of the Filipino migrant community in Israeli society, seeking to accurately characterize the importance, value, and expectations of Filipino caregivers in the eyes of Israeli employers.

I suggest that events like the Beauty Pageant also show the transnational ties that Filipino caregivers forge in Israel. Attendees and contestants participated in a FCO event that highlighted the Filipino overseas community in The City, but also that these Filipino caregivers felt strong ties to Israel as more than a workplace. Participants invited their employers, the employer’s family, and Israeli friends, integrating the migrant caregiving community into social connections that extended beyond the overseas network. The contestants identified themselves not only as Filipinos working abroad to support family, but they spoke of their experiences in Israel and how they valued social connections in The City. Many referenced trips to religious sites and their love for Israel as their “home.” None of this appeared to contradict their preexisting relationship

to the Philippines, but rather operated alongside their Filipino identity. The doubt expressed by the audience regarding the integration of caregivers into family contexts further illustrates the processes of integration that many Filipinos undergo and the difficulties of finding their place in Israel.

Nurit pointed to one place of friction between cultural goals that value beauty pageants and external readings that question not only the participants' feminist consciousness, but that also particularly doubts the presence of any kind of organic Filipino feminist awareness. As Abu-Lughod (2002) argues about Western feminist approaches to Muslim women in the Middle East, this presumed absence of (Western) feminist awareness by Muslim women articulates with Western notions of backwards, patriarchal Arab cultures oppressing Muslim women. Mahler and Pessar (2006) situate gender in migration contexts not as a fixed system, but a dynamic where the gendered performances of migrants and local women are mutually engaged within a hierarchical system. The dialog between different gender ideologies emphasizes "tensions and contradictions in the ideologies, practices, and distributions of power within the lives of immigrants *and* native-born populations" (Mahler and Pessar 2006: 38 italics in original).

Nurit's "readings" of the gender and gendered performances of Filipina caregivers in this example asserts certain concepts of cultural superiority in Nurit's view, but also reaffirms the power dynamics between Israeli women and Filipina women, as shown by Maria's immediate defense of the beauty pageant. Israeli women's comments that that Filipina women are "just baby makers"⁵³ defined another site where national hierarchies of gender propagated stereotypes

⁵³ This comment always took me off guard, making evident my own cultural presumptions about gendered behavior, particular pertaining to reproduction. When I raised the issue with the Jewish Israeli (often self-identified feminist) women making these statements of the high birth rates among the religious Jewish populations in Israel, not to mention the norm of three children in even secular families, the conversation routinely and deftly turned to the Holocaust and the need for repopulating Jewish communities, or to statements about Palestinian over-reproduction. Thus, my attempt to question the

of Filipina women. These statements reinforced assumptions of power and superiority as well as reinscribing ethnic and religious stereotypes. Such stereotypes in Mahler and Pessar's view are essential to the "perpetuation of patriarchal and class domination" (2006: 38) and protect the presumed normative status of Israel's prescriptive gendered roles in contrast to the stereotyped descriptions of Filipina women's gendered, and particularly sexual, character.

Social values of mothering and gendered obligation to natal families inscribe Filipino women's participation in overseas labor. The women competing in the beauty pageant discussed their children during multiple parts of the event, tying their work in Israel to their children and their hopes of providing their children with an economically secure life. Maria echoed these migration tropes in her comments about leaving a profession she loved in the Philippines, taking a status demotion to support her mother and Eva with foreign wages. These women participate in the global *care drain*, a process by which women from poor, developing countries work abroad in wealthy countries to provide care while delegating their own older relatives, children, households, and other gendered domestic work to relatives or poorer women from their own nations (Hochschild 2002: 17). This sets off a chain of women passing gendered domestic work to other, less privileged women. The Philippines acknowledges that women constitute the majority of overseas workers, and yet the gender ideology continues to blame women migrants for "abandoning" their children and families.

Simultaneously, Filipino kinship systems grant daughters responsibility for family needs, expecting certain sacrifices of daughters including working abroad in a dynamic that Barber names *dutiful daughters* (1997). Barber argues that with the feminizing trend in Philippine labor migration there is a distinct "...taken-for-grantedness that women – young and old, poor and

normativity of Jewish Israeli reproductive practices became insistently elided while women who fit into the category of "other" continued to be negatively inscribed with the label of being excessively fertile.

middle class – might, could and even should seek work overseas” (Barber 1997: 39). Parrenas (2001) and Constable (1999) acknowledge the familial and economic obligations assigned to Filipino women as mothers and daughters, but challenge the overarching repression of women’s duty, emphasizing the opportunities for women to escape the demands and expectations of their families within migration systems. In my research, women caregivers expressed shifting integrations of these perspectives, prioritizing economic obligations to family while also speaking to personal goals and aspirations made possible by their overseas life.

The photographic tours caregivers eagerly provided of their families acquainted me with the people they supported at home. Caregivers produced printed photographs from their passport holders or bibles, or showed me digital pictures on their phones. They described their children to me in staggering detail, although they volunteered very little information about other family members. Economic need and family obligation initially structured their migration narratives. However, more resonated in these women’s narratives beyond their opening comments about why they chose to work in Israel. Jessie, a relatively new caregiver in Israel, illustrated the nuance caregivers injected into their personal migration narratives that initially focused on supporting children and family, but which they infused with other, personal relationships to migration.

I met Jessie on a privately-hired *sheirut* (shared taxi) going to Tel Aviv for a large Filipino community celebration. Maria asked Jessie, a new member of the FCO, to represent the organization in the large parade and pageant that would provide entertainment during the celebration. The judges would assess how well each couple from the various Filipino organizations represented the culture of the Philippines. Jessie agreed to represent the FCO despite looking slightly nervous at the prospect.

Jessie and I sat together in one of the back seats talking in a mix of Tagalog and English; she didn't like speaking Hebrew because she worried that making the guttural sounds would cause her to spit, which she viewed as deeply impolite. Jessie arrived in Israel seven months before I met her. She worked for a family she liked very much before the older woman grew sick enough to require hospice care. Jessie spent a month searching for work (e.g. over the grace period of her visa) without success before finding legal temporary work through her agency relieving other caregivers. Jessie told me about her family during the ride, which I excerpt below from my fieldnotes:

On the way [to Tel Aviv], Jessie told me about her four children. The oldest two have completed college, the third is currently in college, and her daughter just finished high school. She showed me their pictures along with pictures of her dogs in the Philippines. She told me about how she has been separated from her husband for nine years, and raised the children on her own. She said that she will feel fulfilled when all of her children have graduated from college, and that she will be blessed at that point. She also told me that she decided to leave the Philippines only recently. She got a visa to work in Japan [and worked there for a number of months], where her sister is married to a Japanese man. In Japan visas have to be renewed every three months, which was too much bureaucracy for Jessie. She then came to Israel, looking for life experiences and to live her own life while she continues to support her children. At home in the Philippines, she runs a shop with the latest Japanese fashions; her sister sends her boxes of clothes from Japan and she sells the clothes in the Philippines. She has one employee and her son runs the store for her while she is away.

“I want experiences,” she told me. “Being in Israel is an experience. Doing the parade at the fiesta tonight is an experience – I don't care if I win, I want the experience.”

Jessie, like Maria, identified supporting her children as the main reason that she works abroad. Her remittances increased their household earnings from her clothing business, and strengthened her position as the primary earner in her household. Yet, she pointed to her own opportunities to “experience” new things made possible via migration. Despite having a reserved and almost cautious presentation, Jessie's narrative indicated a strong will, perseverance, and resourcefulness not only in her clothing business and her decisions about which migrant

contracts to accept, but in finding flexible legal work options in Israel when her first contract ended. These are not unusual qualities in the Filipino women I met in The City, but Jessie's narrative provides a clear example of how these qualities, skills, and ambitions work in tandem while maintaining the focus on supporting her children.

The rationalizing migration narrative that pairs economic need with creating opportunities for children is pervasive in Israel. Even Maria, in a moment of frustration and anger characterized the Filipino community in Israel as: "Just for the salaries. We come [overseas] for the salaries." However, when migrant caregivers described their migration experiences to me in narrative life story accounts, the inherently social nature of their choices and reasons to work overseas received priority. When caregivers didn't worry about visas or job security, they emphasized a larger host of factors to explain their migration decisions. In the bad times of lost visas or threatening employers, I heard about the economic motivations for the work. In part, this reflected the shifting status of migrant workers, namely that they did not hold *immigrant* status. Caregivers are vulnerable to deportation and various kinds of maltreatment based on their migrant status. Their perceptions of vulnerability brought the issue of remittances and economic support back to the foreground of caregiver's narratives, reflecting their concerns about fulfilling their obligations.

I believe this reductive turn also reflects a feeling of loss of dignity and worth in the receiving nation, reducing the migrant worker to cheap labor, reinforcing the message that their reason for being in Israel had no importance beyond the economic. These differences in representations of migrant labor are not accidental, and reflect the larger goals and intents that inform how migration is discussed and valued. It is a very different thing to see someone leaving their home to work in an unfamiliar place "just for the money," rather than to include their need

to support a family, their own desires to travel, and their feelings of belonging that evolve through the process of working and living abroad.

As Israel Drori's (2009) research on foreign workers in Israel shows, migrant workers have become "embedded" in Israeli society even without permanent residency status or the full complement of social rights available to citizens. Yet, as we see with Maria, the Philippines does not just fade away as Filipino caregivers find a place for themselves in Israel. Migrant caregivers invest in multiple national contexts, asserting their right to belong in more than one country (Glick Schiller *et al* 1995). Maria illustrates this point, staying deeply connected to her daughter, mother, and granddaughter on a personal level, investing in the Philippines through her FCO activities, and creating a deeply rooted and enriched life for herself in Israel.

Transmigration, however, challenges the geopolitical nature of nation states and the citizenship regimes that migrant workers often encounter. Countries like the US, Canada, and Italy offer migrants varied opportunities to assume citizenship, but migrant workers remain in tenuous, marginalized statuses in most labor-receiving nations. Even when new citizenship options are available, the social conditions of a migrant worker's new country may not offer improved social status. A high-ranking Embassy staffer, Bryan, told me that he takes the desires of Filipino migrant workers seeking new citizenship with a grain of salt. He described how migrant workers seek better situations than what they have in the Philippines, and they do everything they can to make their host country home. When integrating into the new society proves difficult, or when their children struggle with social marginalization, these transplanted Filipinos yearn for the Philippines as a nostalgic homeland and place of belonging. He asserted that in his experience Filipinos eventually return home, either through failed integration into the new country or in the next generation. Bryan's point of view raises questions embedded in ideas

of belonging, such as how far the integration proffered by citizenship truly reaches, and if the new country offers the kind of life that is entirely aligned with what the migrant worker wants now, in the near future, and for his or her children.

Glick Schiller *et al* (1995) argue that “when we study migration rather than abstract cultural flows or representations, we see that transnational processes are located within the life experience of individuals and families, making up the warp and woof of daily activities, concerns, fears, and achievements” (1995: 50). Migration involves a more intricate process than an individual deciding to work abroad to support their family. Rather, migration involves people *able* to migrate because of their positioning in social and kinship networks. Their migration experiences situate them within a context in their home country but also within a series of social connections and roles in the labor-receiving nation. We can see this theory in practice in Maria’s migration narrative. She qualified for a visa because of her high degree of formal education, professional skills, excellent English, and a social network capable of loaning her the necessary money to pay the mediation fees associated with her employment contract. While Maria talks about her decision to migrate as resulting from her adoration of her daughter and responsibilities to her mother, Maria implies her own interest in travel, developing leadership skills, and having independence away from her husband and family.

However, this comes at the cost of living apart from her daughter and knowing her granddaughter only through online video chat. Despite eleven years of a positive migration experience, Maria voices a point of dissatisfaction common in my research community: due to her status as a migrant worker she never knows when her visa will expire, and she can’t bring her daughter to Israel to live with her. These two factors play a central role in caregivers’ claims to have the opportunity for formal inclusion in Israel.

Intimacy, Power, and Personhood

Why do they always treat the Filipinos like they are small? Everyone thinks we don't know, that we are small. (Alona)

Caregiving entails continual acts of intimacy that produce knowledge of bodies and the management of vulnerability on behalf of both the caregiver and the care receiver. As Maria experienced, these relationships hold the possibility for affable companionship while also creating complicated moments of tension that expose the hierarchical differences within the care dyad. “Care” references a multitude of practices, emotions, relationships, and expectations. Adding employment into the caring relationship – e.g. taking care out of kinship or community structures – adds levels of complexity to the care-based dynamic.

This section explores these complexities through Mark’s migration story, touching on issues of intimate labor, degraded social status, the power structures within caregiving relationships, and how visa status interferes with the affective bonds that caregiving can engender. Conceptualizing where the private space of the home meets the public space of the market shows overlapping notions of the affective obligations of the private realms versus the structured economic exchanges of the public domain that both mutually configure caregiving as a waged occupation.

These issues are all influenced by the combined marginal status of caregivers and the diminished status of intimate labor. Social identities are negotiated, mediated, and reinforced in these dynamics of care, further informing how caregivers come to reconcile their own attachment to Israel and their continued experiences of closures and exclusions. This section closes with an example of an immigration raid to show the multiple scales on which the foreign work program operates, and how the reciprocal care that migrant workers desire must come from the state as well as from individual employers.

Mark and Maria formed a close friendship, both arriving in Israel in the year 2000 and joining the FCO together. Coincidentally, they lived in the same province in the Philippines and spoke the same dialect as their first language. They came separately to Israel as neophyte migrant caregivers, and their experiences in The City emerged from the stability each of them enjoyed by having only one work contract over their decade of legal employment. Mark took over Maria's presidency of the FCO after her employer died thus invalidating her visa and he assumed Maria's project of integrating me into the FCO community.

Mark's migration story held unusual elements but articulates how caregivers come to feel integrated into Israeli society despite their temporary status. Mark came to Israel after serving twenty years in political office in the Philippines. His political experience pertained to agriculture, a particularly important social and economic sector in the Philippines. He represented himself as an unusual politician: he personified honesty while others fell into corruption; he refused bribes and other unearned benefits while his peers accrued dishonest wealth; he came to work every day to fight for the common man in the company of other politicians looking out for their own interests. Mark's stories of his political life resurrected his former self, the modest, humble hero fighting against the odds. However, another politician who held a grudge against Mark and his family came to political office, causing both Mark and his brother to flee the Philippines for their own safety. Mark found sanctuary in Israel through an overseas contract, working for a wealthy American's elderly Israeli father. Mark told me once that members of his family live in Hawai'i and California. I asked why they didn't arrange for him to immigrate to the US, but he refused to answer this kind of question.

Mark didn't refer to his past often, and never in public. Instead, he framed his migration choices in terms of economically supporting his adored wife and their granddaughter who turned

three years old right before I met Mark in 2011. I almost never heard him mention his children, but he always could display a new picture of his granddaughter and stories of her recently acquired accomplishments – learning to read in Filipino and English, playing the piano, winning her first beauty contest. I believed Mark when he told me that he wanted to go home to meet this granddaughter he referred to as “my inspiration”. Yet, he continually pushed back his return to the Philippines, never solidifying his plans to leave Israel. He often waxed eloquent about the Philippines, but in our quieter conversations he told me about Israel’s inner beauty and that he knew it formed a part of him and vice versa. Mark sometimes mentioned things about Israel that he thought his granddaughter would like (often religious sites) and after talking about his relatives’ trip to visit him years ago, Mark told me with frustration that he wished they could come to live with him while he worked in Israel.

I heard about Mark’s employer, who died late in the year in 2010, one night at a touristy Chinese restaurant eating with another caregiver I knew well, Valentine. Valentine asked the waitress for a “Chinese menu,” telling me that she worked in Hong Kong before coming to Israel and that she could read Cantonese. Valentine talked a little bit about working in Hong Kong with her sister, and about how her sister became a citizen through marriage. Valentine’s sister started a designer fashion line once she gained citizenship; Valentine gave me a look and said, “She got citizenship, you understand,” indicating the options that become available to migrant workers with legal status. Mark said something to Valentine in a Philippine dialect I didn’t understand and Valentine shrugged. Mark smiled and began telling me about his former employer.

Morris, an extremely wealthy Jewish-American man with prestigious social standing in the US, hired Mark to care for Jacob, Morris’s elderly Israeli father. Morris displayed attentive

thoughtfulness arranging his father's care; he endeavored to make Mark's work with Jacob pleasant and comfortable to increase his father's comfort. Morris's actions humbled Mark, and over the years he developed deep respect, compassion, and affection for Jacob, Morris, and the entire family. Jacob experienced care that harmonized his needs, his family's interests, and his caregiver's willing sacrifices into a health project that all the stakeholders agreed upon and prioritized.

Jacob and Mark experienced a relationship defined by mutual affection and consideration. Mark told me that Jacob loved him "like a son." Mark's smile radiated happiness in the Chinese restaurant as he repeated, "he loved me like a son." Mark evidenced this with examples of Jacob's insistence on introducing Mark to his friends and doctors by saying "This is my son." Whenever Mark took Jacob to socialize with Jacob's Israeli friends, gossiping and drinking at a local bar, Jacob included Mark in their socializing. When Mark took Jacob shopping to buy "very nice fish" for Jacob's Shabbat dinner, Jacob insisted on buying extra kilos for Mark to share with his friends in his weekend apartment. He paid Mark's wages in the US dollars Morris provided to give Mark the most financial benefit from his earnings. Mark always received his bonuses and wages on time, and Jacob made sure that Mark took days off. Mark never had trouble getting the time to go to Mass on Saturday nights or to participate in FCO events. In exchange, Mark provided Jacob with the best care he knew how to provide, sacrificing everything to ensure Jacob's comfort.

Mark and Jacob developed a (slightly unusual) relationship of mutual care where the distinctions between family and employee blurred considerably to the benefit of both parties. Zelizer (2005) defines "care" as the good that creates a specifically encoded relationship between people, either contractually stipulated or based on kinship. Mark provided Jacob with the

intimate care he required in old age, and Jacob reciprocated Mark's attentiveness with affection, constituting care through his recognition of Mark as a person Jacob related to socially as well as economically.

Eldercare requires continual intimate exchanges, including the caregiver helping the elderly person to bathe, dress, attend to toileting needs, eat and drink, walk and other forms of movement (e.g. sitting and lying down), manage medications, socialize, attend to emotional needs, and at times manage the older person's household including insurance claims and finances. Borris and Parrenas (2001) characterize the work at the core of these tasks as *intimate labor*, or the "... day-to-day work that individuals and societies require to survive – and flourish" (Borris and Parrenas 2010: 1). Yet, they argue that the *work* of providing care is often elided by the *intimate* nature of the work. The affective nature of caregiving associates it with women's unpaid domestic labor relegated to the private sphere. As the private sphere is philosophically made distinct from the public domain structured by market forces, domestic labor remains prescriptively coded as un-remunerable. This exemption of intimate labor from the market effectively marks carework as "non-labor," producing a central contradiction: carework *is* negotiated routinely on markets, both domestic and global– thus, intimacy gains a market value.

Gal and Kligman (2000) argue that the public and the private are not distinct social spheres: rather, these socially defined places of labor and exchange are nested. The expectations of the public and private are not distinct, but instead operate within each other. Each "private" contains a "public" and every "public" has a "private." The nesting of the public and private in domestic work exposes the assumptions of gender and kinship that shape the domestic realm as a place of non-remunerative labor. Yet, these assumptions are contradicted by the market-based behaviors of domestic workers who are not tied to affective engagements with employers (Gal &

Kligman 2000). Thus, the affective nature of caregiving diminishes its market value and legibility as *work*, resulting in low status and low wages.

It follows that if *intimacy* holds a low market value because of its association with the domestic / private sphere, then those who provide the work of intimate care also are undervalued, both economically and socially. Borris and Parrenas (2010) argue that the gendered nature of intimate labor is further characterized as racialized and low-status, an argument that Sassen also makes regarding the flows of women from industrializing nations in the global south to provided gendered domestic labor in global cities (Sassen 2002). The resulting social implications, especially when migrant workers provide care, lead to the undervaluing of migrant caregivers' labor and consequently their social identity.

Mark's account of his rapport with Jacob suggests that they resolved the tensions between specifically defined market-based labor exchanges and the affective sacrifices expected as part of non-remunerated affective labor in the private sphere in their cooperative configuration of care. They forged a relationship of respect that mediated the vulnerabilities inherent in intimate care: the interpersonal exchanges around bodily care, the social hierarchies that inform a waged caregiving relationship, and the complicating influence of work visas for providing professional care.

I first met Mark on an FCO trip months after Jacob died and Mark's visa subsequently expired. Mark found illegal caregiving work that allowed him to remain in Israel, earning money for his wife and granddaughter. However, he found the conditions of his new employment dissatisfactory compared to his years with Jacob although he expressed gratitude for the help his Israeli friends offered, recommending him to distant relatives and friends of friends willing to hire an undocumented caregiver. Yet, as I became better acquainted with Mark I learned that his

bitterness developed only after Jacob's death. This trip also took place directly after Maria lost her visa and struggled angrily with the limited options available to her. I rode with them and four other caregivers with the military compliment of three Filipino soldiers in a white UN van to the Golan Heights, going to the UN camp to commemorate Philippine Independence with the Filipino Battalion.

One of the caregivers in the van asked at the beginning of our drive if I spoke any languages other than English. None of my travel companions quite believed me when I answered that I spoke some Hebrew and some Tagalog. Thus, when one of the caregivers told a slightly crass joke in a mix of Tagalog, English, and Hebrew,⁵⁴ the caregiver's body turned away from me and towards the rest of the van. Maria didn't intervene even though she glanced at me. Maria and other FCO members took care to manage my perceptions of Filipinos through their careful politeness around me. Maria let the moment slide, assuming that I wouldn't comprehend the humor.

The joke begins with a caregiver assisting an elderly employer to the toilet and preparing to clean the older person. The caregiver reaches for the toilet paper, and the older person becomes very upset at the amount of toilet paper the caregiver intends to use. The older person angrily accuses the caregiver of wastefulness. The joke continues as the elderly person insists that the caregiver use only two squares of paper, which turns out to be insufficient for the job. As a result, the caregiver's hands become soiled. The caregiver politely protests this frugality, and the employer begins yelling about the *agorot*⁵⁵ (the equivalent of pennies or in general small

⁵⁴ I jokingly named the frequent occurrence of this linguistic melding as *Tagbrewlish* which I became functionally fluent in during the months of fieldwork.

⁵⁵ During my fieldwork, a shekel was worth about \$.30 (thirty cents) USD. *Agorot* were worth less than a US penny. Filipinos were always basing the worth of their wages against the market value of the US

change worth less than a *shekel*) that extra toilet paper costs. The punch line repeats the employer's loud protestation over wasting *agorot* while the caregiver comically looks at his or her hands in dramatic bafflement.

Mark, Maria, and the other Filipinos caregivers with us burst into uproarious laughter while the three soldiers chuckled more quietly. The caregiver telling the joke comically repeated the punch line, staring in disbelief down at his/her hands, sending everyone in the van into renewed gales of laughter. Maria recovered first, growing suddenly defensive as she stated, "They don't care if we get shit on our hands." She shook her head, looking out the window. Mark arched an eyebrow in agreement before saying wryly in a mix of Hebrew and Tagalog, "We're *Filipini*, not worth *agorot* to them."

I reacted slightly to what Mark said and he turned to me. "Do you understand?" he asked me sharply in English, glancing around at everyone else in the van as if looking for evidence. "Most of it," I confirmed. "She doesn't understand everything," Maria told him in fast Tagalog, implying that I hadn't understood the gist of the joke. She directed this assurance to all the Filipinos in the van to warn them that I required translation, and as a reassurance of their linguistic privacy. Because of this, I reasserted, "I understood most of it."

Mark nodded and very explicitly took charge of the conversation as the other caregivers watched with interest. He held my gaze as he asserted, "It's *very* special how these Israelis watch every *agorot*.⁵⁶ You know, Filipinos, sometimes they don't mind ten *agorot* or something, but these old people, they know where every *agorot* is and how they spent it. You bring home the *cheshbon* (bill, but here he means receipt) and *kessef* (money) left over from the *makolet*

dollar, and trying whenever they could to get and save US dollars. Needless to say, they were sharply aware of the comparative worth of *agorot*.

⁵⁶ The singular of *agorot* is *agora*. None of the caregivers I knew ever used the singular form, defaulting to the plural in all usages.

(small grocery store), and they study it and argue, even when it is all there. That's why they have so much money, because they watch every single *agorot*. They hold onto their money and they watch it. Filipinos are not like this. Very special. Very, veerrry special."

I nodded, aware of his criticism in relation to Israeli frugality that allowed for a disregard of other factors such as a caregiver's sense of comparative worth, and that he valued the Filipino approach to valuing social relationships over monetary matters in comparison. Maria shook her head again, a look of disdain on her face that another caregiver, Evelyn, mirrored. "We're not worth the *agorot* to them," she repeated. "They can just throw us away when they are done." Then she firmly changed the subject.

As the joke attests, both parties directly involved in intimate care experience vulnerabilities. The work of providing care necessarily communicates detailed private knowledge of the person requiring care, and engenders the need for trust between the caregiver and care receiver. The joke also shows that the trust between caregiver and care receiver is mediated by the perceived value that each party holds of the other's human dignity. The questionable appropriateness of the joke hinges on the betrayed trust of the older person requiring care in an intimate moment. On the other hand, the lack of concern the older person exhibits for the caregiver shows his/her disrespect for the caregiver's humanity, feelings, and experiences while performing these intimate tasks.

The reactions from the other caregivers in the van indicated their grounded understanding of the events in the joke. They didn't just "get" the joke – they *related* to the caregiver in the joke. Watching them react to the ironic humor, I witnessed a community of people sharing a joke that spoke to their own experiences, enjoying the seeming absurdity of the humor but also sharing the harder truth beneath the joke that Maria revealed, showing the humor not to be so

very absurd. Caregivers provide necessary services to older people and often on the terms set by the older person and his or her family. The joke exposed the tension that exists between the abstract concept of “caregiving” and the actual daily practices of this work that confronts cultural norms and values that may de-value the person providing this labor.

The intimacy between the care provider and care receiver (the care dyad) is constructed through necessary daily routines (e.g. bathing, dressing), but the race, class, and gender of both parties influence how intimacy is shaped (Borris and Parrenas 2010: 1). Other variables are negotiated inside the care dyad that mediate, challenge, or reinforce the perceptions of social value that the caregiver and the care receiver relationally embody. Maria’s comments about the deeper meaning of the joke revealed one form of mediation and reinforcement of migrant caregivers’ decreased social value. In her reading, the presumed nationality of the caregiver (e.g. Filipino) provided the employer’s underlying logic for prioritizing the minimal cost of toilet paper over the disrespect communicated by soiling the caregiver’s hands. Maria implied that if the older person employed an Israeli caregiver or received care from a family member then the intimate exchange might have been different. Or, we can presume, a caregiver with more social power and a shared set of cultural values pertaining to frugality may have lodged a more effective complaint.

However, Mark, Maria and the other caregivers in the van also stereotypically characterized the employer in their reading of the joke. They fell back on derogatory stereotypes about Jewish frugality to manage the uneven access to power within the caregiving dyad, giving deeper meaning to the joke. Not only did the employer show intentional disrespect to the caregiver in their reading, but the caregivers’ interpretation resituated the employer in a disrespectful and derogatory light. By de-valuing the Jewish employer through this kind of

stereotype, the caregivers in the van refuted the assumed disregard the employer felt towards the dignity of the caregiver. Intimacy, in this case, is affected by the larger categories determining human worth that both parties bring to the relationship.

Other interested parties that influence and surround the care dyad, such as the employer's family, also affect the construction of social value within the caregiving context. Romeo spoke to the added complexity that families bring to caregiving practices one afternoon on a bus coming home from a FCO trip. We began talking about caregivers' and their health, slowly transitioning to conversations about mental health and the emotional involvement that caregiving often entails. Romeo tried to make sense of Filipinos' emotional involvement within the power-laden dynamics of the caregiving relationship to me by explaining:

Yes, we care a lot about the people we care for. We care about them from the heart... Our work is very emotional. We love our employers and it can be very hard on us [when they are sick, or when they yell]. But, it's not just the employers, it is the families, too. Often, the families don't trust us. They don't let us do our jobs. For those of us with medical backgrounds, like I have, we know how to give medications and take care of people. The families can't just come in and give more medicine or start changing things.

It can be hard working for Israeli families because they have a very high ego. They have it deep inside and they can seem nice, but they are always thinking, 'I'm better than you, and you are my slave.' I've seen it with them, on their faces, and I know it is true. And that makes it very hard to work here. Filipinos are very emotional people. When we get upset, we get very angry and we cry.

Romeo continued to talk about the incredible difficulty Filipino caregivers encounter when facing abuse, harsh treatment, or accusations from an employer or the employer's family, especially when the power dynamic persuades caregivers that they cannot safely respond (or be heard as an equal voice) without losing their job or suffering other consequences. This often leads to repressed emotions that explode into tears, anger, or produce negative repercussions for mental and emotional health. Romeo insisted that the family of the employer ought to respect the caretaker, their work, their intellect, and their decisions, adding wryly that this "should"

rarely occurred in his experience. It is critical, he told me, for the caregiver to have good relationships with the older person s/he cares for, but also for the caregiver to have a good, professional working relationship with the family. Equally, the family needs to respect the caregiver and their professionalism, and to view them “as human.” Yet, as Hochschild (1985) states, “Where the customer is king, unequal exchanges are normal, and from the beginning customer and client assume different rights to feeling and display. The ledger is supposedly evened by a wage” (86).

In Romeo’s representation of the intimate caregiving dynamic, the caregiver’s ability to provide good care is abbreviated by outside forces interfering but also challenging the caregiver’s knowledge, actions, and their right to respect. Romeo explores the uneven social positions of caregivers, employers, and the employer’s family in negotiating intimate care. As migrants and as socially marginalized individuals in Israel, caregivers feel unable to speak openly, to defend themselves from verbal attack, to challenge abusive treatment, or to assert their own authority. The weak position of migrant caregivers exists within the domestic setting and in the larger social context, leaving caregivers with no easy recourse. Instead, caregivers must manage their emotional responses to feeling disrespected and as if their professionalism, dignity, and social worth is degraded through interactions with employers, families, and society.

Hochschild (1985) coins the term *emotional labor* to describe “...the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display; emotional labor is sold for a wage and therefore has *exchange value*” (7). In the context of caregiving, the exchange value of emotions that marks the caregiver’s feelings are not simply how she or he reacts, but that these are emotions that are intentionally produced to engender feelings of contentment in the employer and his/her family. Similar to many service-industry workers, caregivers manage their emotions

in two main practices: by *not* displaying what they are feeling, and by presenting certain emotional responses to please their employers. In both cases, the caregiver's emotions hold much less importance within the caregiving relationship than those of the employer, reinforcing the power dynamic between the two parties.

Romeo points to the emotional response that caregivers have when they feel disrespected or angry; yet these are the responses that are most frequently repressed in order to maintain employment. Similarly, Maria discussed a range of emotional responses to Sveta and her family, charting a difficult path of her own beliefs, her reactions to how the family made impossible demands on her without the reciprocal support, and her own best interests (including her rightful time off). But, despite all this, Maria told me that she was careful to always present a “good face” when interacting with Sveta and the family. This reflects Hochschild's characterization of emotional labor where the employer is able “to exercise a degree of control over the emotional activities of employees” (1985: 147). Maria understood the importance of having a good working relationship with Sveta and her family even while asserting her own rights, resulting in presenting the “right” kind of emotions. Furthermore, as shown by Etta and the man at the lecture, the determination of what constitutes a legitimate emotional performance of care is socially constructed and judged both within and outside of the individual instances of caregiving.

Hochschild terms the performance of emotions that are not sincerely felt as “emotional dissonance” which emphasizes the primacy of the employer/client's comfort and desire to engage with a certain kind of narrative (relating to gender, race, nationality, power, and the constructions of dignity and respect in relation to personhood) about the employment dynamic. The caregiver is performing certain kinds of emotion as part of his or her job; to do this, the caregiver has to manage his or her own emotions in order to give space to what is expected. As

Hochschild describes, this can create strain, resulting in coping mechanisms such as trying to feel the proscribed emotions as authentic in order to no longer feel as if he or she is only acting (1985: 90). This devalues the care provider's sincere emotions that must be dismissed because they do not shore up the ideological notions of the market-based care relationship (Hochschild 1985; also discussed in Borris and Parrenas 2010) – i.e. the notion that you can pay someone (a low wage) to care about you in great detail and to fulfill your every whim, order, request, and expectation.

Migrants are also easy targets for the “displaced” emotions of others based on their socio-legal vulnerability and their social status as racialized outsiders. It is unusual for host countries to view migrant labor as having a high social value and in part the obviousness of a migrant worker's inability to fight back contributes to this devaluing of their labor and social contributions. The critical point is that migrants can be expected to work for low wages in unappealing occupations and conditions without having the permission to object. Migrants also choose to work overseas for their own collection of reasons, and their need for higher wages to meet these criteria make them dependable workers for the most part (Barber 2000: 406). Thus, migrant workers, particularly women, are working within global and national systems of labor that are shaped by gender ideologies and power dynamics operating between labor -sending and -receiving nations. These women hold very little power relative to the other stakeholders as they manipulate these systems in order to fulfill their own needs and desires that brought them to migration in the first place.

Mark's employment with Jacob provides an example of a positive working relationship where Jacob valued Mark's labor and respected Mark's rights. All parties involved in Jacob's care acknowledged and appreciated Mark's attentive devotion to Jacob, and they reciprocated

Mark's care in a variety of ways. Based on the testimonies I heard at the NGO and in conversations with other caregivers in the FCO, this multileveled positive relationship was notably absent in many other care dyads. Discontented migrant workers testified to their constant struggles with their employer and the employer's family in order to receive their agreed upon wages, the amount of money for unused vacation time, or to maintain a set of expectations for their work that aligned with the caregiving labor they had been hired for.

My conversation with Farah, an experienced caregiver, illustrates the power dynamics that shape caregiving exchanges, but also provides an example of a caregiver pushing back to advocate for her own rights. Farah established deep roots in Israel and showed her cultural fluency in a range of practices, but like Romeo she showed a willingness to critique Israel even in the good times, which Mark and Maria refused to do.

Farah and I sat in one of the shared apartments in the FCO community with Alona, another caregiver. Farah and Alona conversed in fast Tagalog about a mutual friend I didn't know while I listened, until Farah suddenly switched to English to intentionally bring me into their discussion. Farah wanted confirm what she had heard about my research. She told me that she wanted to talk to me about health, which started her on the following narrative.

Farah began by describing her work to me. She didn't explicitly define her relationship with her employer, but I got the sense that she liked the older woman. Farah listed off her tasks: cleaning, cooking, shopping and caring for her older employer, and she provided specific details about how she prepares the household for Shabbat. Farah illustrated her role in anticipating and managing the household's daily needs, keeping everything running with an experienced hand. She communicated not only her ability to do all the work required of her, but her rhythm and system for making sure that she completed all the tasks in an orderly, calm manner.

The older employer felt very fond of Farah, but Farah and her employer's family had a series of uncomfortable interactions. The family found problems with her work and attitude, complaining to both their mother (Farah's employer) and confronting Farah. They complained about the groceries she bought for herself to make food that she preferred, and accused her of stealing their mother's money for these purchases.⁵⁷ Farah emphasized that they didn't present her with concerns about the quality of her work, but with *how* she did the work, and how she managed the quiet hours when her elderly employer watched television programs or napped. One Thursday after Farah cleaned the apartment and settled the older woman for her morning rest, Farah took the laundry to her own room to fold and organize while listening to music on her laptop computer, the Skype window open in case her daughter (in the Philippines) came online.

The employer's daughter, who had come by the apartment unexpectedly and let herself in, knocked on the door and asked if she could talk to Farah privately. She proceeded to complain about how Farah "was watching TV instead of working." Farah gave me a dramatic, stunned look and repeated her response to me, "*Ma? Ma zeh?*"⁵⁸ I was doing the work, and I'm not scared of my employers. I do the work every day." She told me that when her employer's children suggested that maybe Farah should be fired, the older woman would hold onto Farah's arm and insist that Farah couldn't leave her.

"She needs you." I surmised. "Yes, she needs me!" Farah agreed firmly.

Farah worked in Taiwan and Saudi Arabia before coming to Israel, and she assured me that she's experienced in working domestically abroad, and furthermore that she found the work in Israel easy compared to Saudi Arabia.

⁵⁷ See the discussion in Zelizer (2005) of food politics.

⁵⁸ Hebrew, meaning "What? What is this?"

Farah told me about the large house her Saudi Arabian employers owned and all their expensive material goods including high-end cleaning equipment. When she began working in Israel, she said that her employers showed her the vacuum cleaner and asked her if she knew what it was. She gave me an incredulous look, and said, “Of course I know what it is!” She shook her head. “In Saudi Arabia, the houses are palaces, and they had two fancy vacuum cleaners!” She said, “Israelis want to think that they have the best of everything, but I want to tell them that what they have isn’t that special. And that I’ve seen more than they have.”

“Why do they always treat the Filipinos like they are small?” Alona interjected. “Everyone thinks we don’t know, that we are small.” She repeated, shaking her head in displeasure.

Farah shook her head in agreement with Alona to show her low opinion of people who held such belittling beliefs about Filipinos. She then said to Alona, “But your employers aren’t Jews like mine.”

Alona looked at me and shook her head no. “They aren’t real Jews. Well, the man is, but the wife...”⁵⁹ she shook her head no again. “I used to have both of them, but now just the man. I used to take care of the wife, only take care of her. But now the man can’t stand to cook, so I cook, clean, take care of him, everything. I used to pick up two children...[the employer’s grandchildren] ... from school. I had to take them on the bus.” She gave me a wide eyed look of displeasure. “Two! On the bus after school!”

“But, your employers aren’t *dati* [religious].” Farah pressed, wanting to make a point.

“No.” Alona scoffed.

⁵⁹ I’m not sure of the criteria they used to determine an authentic Jewish identity as they did not acknowledge this question when I asked it later. Based on what I knew of Alona’s employment, I would guess that the wife of the couple she cared for was from the former Soviet Union.

“Mine are *dati*.” Farah told me knowingly.

“Do they not want you to bring your own food because they keep kosher?” I asked, wondering her employer’s children complained about Farah cooking for herself based on their economic monitoring of the household, or also because they doubted Farah’s ability or willingness to follow the rules of *kashrut* even though she handled all the cooking in the kosher house.

Farah gave me a shocked look. “I wouldn’t bring any of that in the house. I want to prepare fish, and drink the drinks I like [referring to juices] and to have snacks when I’m hungry. They say to me, ‘how long will you have the money to buy [her own food]?’ and I say, it’s not their problem! I work for the salary, the place to live, and the food.⁶⁰ But, if they don’t want to let me eat food that is healthy for me, then I will buy it myself. I can buy for myself. It’s not their problem. They look at the *cheshbons* [bills, but she meant receipts], they count every *agorot*, they don’t want to buy for me, so I buy for myself. I’m not afraid. I’ve been in Israel for eight years. They want to hire a new *metapelet*? They [newly arrived migrant caregivers] are young, they don’t want to stay in jobs that are hard, they change jobs all the time, I’m not afraid.”

This conversation with Farah and Alona provides a number of important insights into how respect, power, and cross cultural assumptions shape and direct the caregiving relationship. Farah’s commentary asserts her identity as a professional, experienced manager of her elderly employer’s needs and of her employer’s household. She articulates not only her experience with employers in Israel but in other national contexts (e.g. Saudi Arabia) with cultural and linguistic skills that increase her value as a caregiver. She positions herself as a cosmopolitan subject in

⁶⁰ See Hondagneu-Sotelo (2001) for other commentary on the availability of adequate food for living-in domestic workers.

contrast to Alona's statement that Israelis view Filipino migrants as "small." Both Alona and Farah comfortably entered into the discourse around what makes an authentic Jew (and contribute to ideas that there *is* a clear line of authenticity for Jewish identity), perhaps mirroring how they are judged to inauthentically embody the competency, modernity, fully sovereignty of cosmopolitan subjects (rather than economically desperate and culturally impoverished migrant workers).

The power dynamics that Farah and Alona expressed through their different experiences point to Romeo's comments about the working partnership that frequently doesn't exist in caregiving relationships. He notes that Israelis consider Filipino caregivers to be "slaves," underscoring his perception of Israelis' lack of recognition of Filipinos' full humanity that Farah and Alona echo. This view that migrant domestic workers are subservient to their more economically and socially powerful employers is common in industrialized nations and not unique to Israel. What is interesting here is how Farah and Alona challenge Romeo's focus on how Filipinos are very emotional people in response to these confrontations with their own views that *as* Filipinos they are competent, valuable employees who are entitled to respect and autonomy. Additionally, they issue their own comments on authenticity of Jews in Israel from confident positions formed by their own experience and knowledge of Israeli society, entering into a discourse that they not only can understand, but also articulate.

However, caregiving relationships are not only managed by employers, but also by state policies and laws. The limitations for renewing visas and the instability of migrant workers' employment hem migrant workers in legally, but also interfere with providing care. One complication that visas pose comes from the repercussions when elderly employers pass away or when the family suddenly fires the caregiver. Israeli law allocates legal migrant workers vacation

time, sick days, religious holidays, and a weekly day of rest.⁶¹ Having the legal right to the time does not always equate to having the freedom or latitude to use it. Many migrant workers find it hard to negotiate their permitted time off with their employers. Caregivers also fear that their employer will die if they are absent for more than a day at a time. Depending on how many years the caregiver worked in Israel, this could result in an invalidated visa. When Mark's mother died, Jacob wanted to buy Mark a ticket home to attend the funeral. Mark didn't go because he worried that Jacob might die in his absence, which clearly would have distressed Mark, but which also would have ended Mark's ability to work in Israel.

There is also the risk that the employing family will fire the caregiver in his or her absence. Employing families summarily fired caregivers during their vacations to hire a new caregiver (not wanting to find alternative care for their elderly relative during the caregiver's absence) or to avoid paying the monetary benefits that begin to accrue after the first year of employment. Employers can fire caregiver at will and only have to pay a fee as compensation. Caregivers then must face a visa that cannot be renewed because of their long tenure in Israel, or the incredible pressure to find a new job within thirty days.

When an employer dies the caregiver must manage their personal emotional responses and their changed legal status. Mark and another caregiver in the FCO, Rose, both articulated intense emotional reactions to their employers' ill health and eventual deaths, but their concerns with their visa status interfered with their approach to providing care in the context of serious illness. In one of the latter months of 2010, Mark asked Jacob if he felt well. Jacob didn't have a fever but Mark's certainty of Jacob's flagging health prompted him to take Jacob to the hospital. Mark stayed with him for twenty-four hours a day for over two weeks without a break.

⁶¹My discussion of the emotional and psychological health of caregivers who did not take vacation time or personal time during their day off is located in Chapter 4.

Finally, Mark left the hospital to eat, shower, and get clean clothes.⁶² Jacob assured Mark that he felt fine, and the nurses promised Mark that they would stay with Jacob. Mark returned after two hours, rushing back because he felt a premonition that Jacob needed him. When Mark returned, Jacob had died unnoticed, alone in the hospital room. He stood by the bed repeating ‘no, no, no, oh no...’ crying and praying for him.

Mark felt sincere affection for Jacob, and when Mark described Jacob’s death to me he began to cry. However, Mark’s affections did not change the fact that his visa expired thirty days after Jacob’s death. Mark’s labor no longer held value after eleven years in Israel, and without the ability to renew his visa, Mark had no avenue through which to stay in Israel legally. Rose found herself in a similar position. She cared for a very elderly woman, Shoshana, with multiple health problems. Shoshana’s age and faltering health prevented her from speaking, feeding herself, or swallowing food easily, and her social engagements suffered from her rapidly deteriorating cognitive awareness. Rose cared deeply for Shoshana and devoted herself to the elderly woman’s well-being. However, Shoshana’s family decided to let Shoshana’s life end. They told Rose not to call the doctor or hospital if she grew ill, and to let her die when her time came.

Rose objected to this on multiple levels: 1) Rose’s real affection for Shoshana and not wanting to “let” her die; 2) Rose’s fervent Catholic beliefs that life should be preserved at all costs; and 3) Rose’s awareness that once Shoshana died her ability to stay in Israel would be significantly diminished. Instead of abiding by the family’s wishes, Rose exerted herself to the point of exhaustion to keep Shoshana alive, insisting that Shoshana did not want to be

⁶² Depending on the hospital, nurses allowed caregivers to use the hospital showers and facilitated their meals. Mark accepted this assistance from the nurses, and from Faith who also brought her employer to the hospital and stayed for a number of weeks. However, Faith’s employer did not have a serious condition, and Faith left the hospital for periodic breaks.

“abandoned” and left “in pain” to die. Rose argued to me, angry and upset with Shoshana’s family, that she lived with Shoshana and cared for her every day for five years. Rose felt confident that she knew better than Shoshana’s absent family how to best shepherd Shoshana towards death. At the end of this particular conversation Rose slid into grave concern over what her own options would be if Shoshana died.

As discussed above, Rose acted on what Ibarra terms a “deep alliance” which describes relationships where caregivers “commit to stay and care until the end and put their own lives at the service of another for a protracted and undetermined amount of time” (Ibarra 2010: 117-118). In Rose’s case, this meant taking on increased responsibility for Shoshana’s well being when Shoshana’s mind and body slowly declined. In Rose’s case, similar to Mark’s, their employers’ deaths elicited devastated emotional responses. Yet, Mark and Rose struggled with their employers’ deaths through the overwhelmingly complicating factor of the elderly person’s symbolic connection to their work visas. The death of their elderly employer may involve an agreement about how to achieve an ideal end of life, but it also brings complications for the caregiver. The issue of legal status and the ability to continue working in Israel shadows the relationship between the caregiver and the elderly person, complicating the idea of a good death with the realities of what will happen to the caregiver when an employer dies. Thus a caregiver’s grief is necessarily paired with questions of what comes next.

This concern for the future is not only the concern of the individual migrant, but for his or her larger social network. Mark and Maria worked in Israel to support loved ones, members of their larger kinship networks, and their home communities. For both Mark and Maria, deportation or failure to secure a new work contract meant financial hardship and loss of opportunity for many people in their social networks. Thus, as we saw with Mark and Jacob and

with Rose and Shoshana, there can be very real affection between the older person and his or her caregiver, but the continuing life of the older person has a great deal hinging on it that exists independent of the real, sincere affection that often resonates between the care-dyad.

The question of what came next after Jacob's death loomed for Mark who was unable to renew his visa after more than a decade of employment, even if he found a new employer. After the funeral and *shiva*,⁶³ Morris offered Mark a new job. Morris wanted Mark to come to New York to oversee his taxi business. Mark would live in an apartment in the garage, and at night he would wash and clean the taxis. States' regulations of visas again caused complications: Mark only had a low likelihood of securing a US work visa. To solve this, Morris suggested that Mark return to the Philippines every six months and re-enter the US in order to keep his temporary tourist visa. The success of this scheme rested on the compliance of the US and Philippine nation border bureaucracy, allowing Mark to routinely exit the Philippines and enter the US without suspicion or hassle. This sounded as unlikely to me as it did to Mark as he explained how the plan required the Philippine government to allow Mark's regular return trips (I felt more uncertainty about the US government approving a tourist to re-enter on this kind of repetitive schedule). This also does not take into account Mark's fervent belief that his political rival might kill him if he returned to the Philippines.

Mark turned the offer down, concerned about the uncertainty of a temporary, unstable visa situation. However, sitting in the Chinese restaurant as Mark told me his story, all of us confronted Mark's undocumented status; after his employer died Mark became undocumented.

⁶³ A *shiva* is the seven-day period of semi-public mourning, where community members and extended family visit the immediate family members of the deceased. This is a period where the family is meant to sit and receive comfort from friends, family, and community members (the practice is often called "sitting shiva"), creating a situation of group mourning and remembrance. The Filipino caregivers I knew often referred to this period as "the week" or "the sitting."

Ending the conversation, Mark repressed strong emotion as he said to me, “I should have gone. I could be in New York.”

When Mark lost his visa he faced a predictable quandary. Should he return to the Philippines? Should he try to get a new overseas contract in another country to continue his legal work abroad? Or, should he stay illegally in Israel, a place where he felt at home and where he had a community network willing to help him? He chose to stay, taking the gamble that he would be able to evade the Oz Unit (immigration police). He used economic terms to explain his choice, setting goals for a target amount of money he wanted to earn before returning to the Philippines. Yet, these explanations didn’t seem to convince anyone, not even him. Mark’s comfort in Israel and his professed relationship to the county continued to provide persuasive evidence for why he stayed. His undocumented life in Israel included a cat and mouse game he played with the immigration police, like most undocumented migrant workers. I end this section by addressing one of Mark’s encounters with the Oz Unit.

On the night of the FCO New Year’s Party, I had not yet met Maria or Mark. Nurit invited me to attend with her and her husband specifically to meet the leadership of the FCO, a group she thought might fit well with my research. Nurit’s invitation noted her as a distinguished guest along with The City’s mayor, owners of recruiting agencies, the head of the consulate offices, and others individuals considered to be patrons or sponsors of The City’s Filipino community. Nurit introduced me to Maria despite Maria’s obvious distraction organizing the rush of guests, checking details for the evening’s performances, and (as I found out later) hiding Mark who decided against everyone’s better judgment to attend. Maria showed us to the table near the stage and encouraged us to eat from the overflowing buffet table.

Everything proceeded as expected with Maria giving the welcome speech, a guest vocalist singing the Israeli and Filipino national anthems, a series of dance and singing performances, and the presentation of awards for service to the Filipino community. The mayor of The City gave a very complimentary speech about the Filipino community, and Nurit received an award for service to the FCO membership. Maria abruptly interrupted the program, calling for an intermission as loud popular music blared over the speakers. Nurit's husband and I laughed about how we couldn't hear each other in any language even though our shoulders almost touched due to the close seating right as Maria rushed to our table, addressing Nurit.

“Please help us, we're being raided by the Oz [the immigration police].”

Nurit took Maria by the arm and pulled her towards the doors, asking a million sharp questions as they strode off. I looked over at Nurit's husband who said to me with an unhappy expression, “Sometimes our police do very ugly things.”

Nurit stood at the door extremely close to one of the immigration police and his drawn gun, shouting in his face in rapid-fire Hebrew. I watched her argue with him, soon joined by the mayor who also yelled angrily at the immigration police. The immigration officer didn't like their aggression and moved towards them in his own aggressive actions. Two other police officers joined him but they couldn't pacify, calm, or intimidate Nurit, the mayor, or the three other Israelis who rushed to join in the argument.

Many caregivers quietly left while Nurit and the others Israelis argued, but then it seemed to be over. Nurit returned to the table as one officer remained at the door and the other two officers retreated down the stairs. Nurit spoke rapidly into her husband's ear, and he nodded, standing up. She looked at me and said, “They are going to do passport checks at the door, not raid the party.”

Nurit's husband left to get their car, and Nurit insisted on taking me home. She walked me out the door past the immigration officer, saying in clipped Hebrew, "She's American." He nodded and let us pass without saying anything. She took my arm and personally escorted me to her car, her husband nodding in approval, summarizing the situation by saying, "You don't know how to argue. You shouldn't be here alone with them [the immigration police]."

The Oz Unit came to the party looking for Mark. They received a tip about his whereabouts at the party, and they forced their way through the door with guns drawn, surprising nearly everyone. The table where Nurit and I sat as distinguished guests was at the other end of the nightclub, preventing us from seeing the police come in. Maria knew before the police arrived because a guest rushed out early to return to her employer and saw the immigration police as soon as she left the building. She called Maria from around the corner to warn her. The immigration police closed the doors, intending to lock everyone inside. They threatened loudly that they would close down the party to find an undocumented migrant worker right as Nurit crossed the room to confront them.

The club owner hid Mark in a closet in a back hallway out of view. As Mark ducked into the dark closet, he stepped on a nail that sunk into his heel. He tried not to move or make noise as he heard immigration officers walking by the closet. He heard a police officer yelling at the owner of the bar on the other side of the door of his hiding place, nearly biting through his lip trying not to react to the pain. Mark got away from the immigration police by waiting them out and then sneaking out a back window, climbing down balconies until he reached the street. He confessed to me that the raid scared him, but his realization that someone in the FCO community turned him in bothered him more.

Mark's migration story illustrates migrant workers' differentiated experiences with intimate labor, ranging from positive relationships of reciprocal care to the strained dynamics Romeo and Farah describe and which Mark also experienced after his visa expired. Intimate labor's value is negotiated on the market, but its social worth is fraught by association with gendered, unremunerated labor generally relegated to the private sphere. Thus, not only are the wages for intimate caregiving labor low, but the social status of the labor *and* the laborer are diminished.

Romeo and Farah describe the power imbalances that disempower caregivers and highlight their marginalization. The demands on caregivers to manage their emotions continues the process of distancing caregivers from full experiences of personhood in caregiving contexts and limits their perceptions of their own social worth outside of their labor. Caregivers articulate their feelings of belittlement in the Israeli context, particularly when their efforts to care for their elderly employer and integrate into Israeli society are met by Israelis questioning their professional conduct, threatening their employment, and making them feel "small," in Alona's words.

Finally, caregivers struggle with the emotional closeness and concern they feel for their employers, especially near the end of life while knowing that the employer's death will place their visa in jeopardy. Mark found his options limited after Jacob's death, where neither the American or Israeli visas systems provided him with the necessary flexibility to continue his legal employment abroad. Instead he stayed in Israel illegally, and as his encounter with the Oz Unit at the New Year's Party illustrates, he did so with a degree of risk.

The relationship between caregivers and their elderly employers range from extremely positive to the abusive, and the quality of this relationship depends on numerous diverse factors,

including the participation of the employer's family in the caregiving landscape. The caregivers in my research spoke happily about their sanguine experiences with employers, valuing their employers and their luck working in such a healthy dynamic. However, they interpreted their cumulative negative experiences through the lens of how these moments continued to affect their sense of self in Israel. The caregivers with particularly long tenure – Mark and Maria, and to a lesser extent Romeo and Farah – negotiated their attachment to Israel as a place where they felt a strong sense of belonging, a place that they did not want to leave and in fact wanted to bring their families to live with them. Yet the reminders they routinely received from employers, employers' families, from expired visas, and in social messages about the low status of migrant caregivers in Israel's social hierarchy challenged not only their feelings of integration, but also their right to actualize their full personhood in Israel. Rather than taking these cues that they should give up on feelings of attachment to Israel, these caregivers asserted their own claims as discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.

Conclusion

Two questions structure the ethnographic data that I present in this chapter: 1) what does it mean to belong or to be excluded? and 2) how do we define home? In the context of the FCO and the beauty pageant I discuss transmigration per Glick Schiller et al (1995). Transmigration raises questions about where "home" exists for migrants. Is the conceptualization of "home" a single location that captures ties to family and a sense of generations of history to which we feel a personal connection? Or this definition too limited to capture the experiences labor migrants have in labor-receiving nations that create feelings of rooted, durable belonging? Glick Schiller et al suggest that the concept of "home" for migrants is shaped by their participation in global

labor flows creating possibilities of belonging through multi-sited assemblage of places, people, and resonant emotions and memories.

Similarly, Cuba and Hummon (1993) theorize that a person's *place identity* emerges from how an individual creates a conception of self that draws from "environmental meaning" to "symbolize or situate identity" (548). They assert that place identity is able to answer the representational questions of "who am I" with the counter questions of "where am I?" or "where do I belong?" (Cuba and Hummon 1993: 548). Cuba and Hummon argue that migration does not necessarily produce feelings of "rootlessness," but that a sense of place can be created through developing social networks in new locations.

This chapter brings together a multitude of migrant caregivers' experiences and reactions to their employers. I show how various caregivers in my research struggled to create places of belonging where they feel respected, valued, and recognized for more than their labor capacity alone. Rather, they wanted Israel to afford them dignity and the right to live as equals to Israelis, reinstating their right to full personhood that the category "economic migrant" excludes. The accounts that I discuss above connect their struggles with employers to the larger legal and political foreign work system.

Caregivers' desires to claim a formal space for themselves in Israel are met occasionally with agreement from Israelis, but more frequently with hesitations, uncertainty, and outright objections. The social hierarchies that situate migrant caregivers in a weak position in relation to their employers extend into the structure of Israeli society itself. Public discourse on foreign caregivers' inability to feel compassion, elder abuse, and the hidden threat that caregivers pose to Israel as a nation reiterate racist and culturally demeaning narratives that communicate a gentile threat to Jewish people. From a demographic perspective, views of Filipino women as "baby

makers” also pose a perceived threat to the nation in the form of non-Jewish children making claims on the state. Concerns about the quality of care that migrant workers are able to provide, such as Nurit’s concern about language skills and how caregivers manage in emergency conditions, and honest hesitations about the foreign worker system’s propensity to exploit Asian women, are paired with more conservative concerns such as domestic unemployment rates and citizens’ job opportunities. Overall, caregivers imagine Israel as a local place in Massey’s (1994) definition as open to global flows to defined its particular character, while Israelis continue to view their society as attached to specific identities tied to the geopolitical territory. Thus, the social, secure space that caregivers seek for themselves in Israeli society is not secure or totally endorsed by Israelis or Israeli politics.

Caregivers seek mutual care as an indication that they are respected and valued by Israelis and in Israeli society. Mark’s employment with Jacob presents one example of reciprocated care. Caregivers’ use of kinship terms and affection highlight another areas where they indicate that their caring labor is worth more than wages, and that the care itself requires acknowledgement. Thus, they argue that their work as caregivers in Israel requires not only social status and respect, but that they deserve security from the instability of migrant visas and the hierarchical systems that degrade migrant workers and disempower them as a form of reciprocity. In Chapters 4 and 5 I show how caregivers configure categories of health in order to make these claims.

As Israel continues to struggle with the presence of foreign workers, the question of elder care looms as a practical reality. The question of who will care for Israel’s elderly is inherently complicated by the question of how the Israeli government will continue to manage migrant caregivers and their desires for greater inclusion. In the next two chapters I address how migrant

caregivers are constructing their notions of health (Chapter 4), and how they are making claims for greater inclusion based on their health requirements (Chapter 5).

CHAPTER 4: HEALTH AS A REFLECTION OF SOCIAL LIFE

Chapter Three provides focused accounts of two caregivers and the NGO, all of which made significant contributions to my data and shaped my comprehension of caregivers' lives in Israel. Maria, Mark, and Romeo portray different aspects of migrant caregiving, and the varied relationships that caregivers have with Israeli employers. Chapter Four continues to think through the relationships that caregivers have with employers and Israel from the perspective of caregivers' concept of "health." Specifically, caregivers claim that their health is compromised by their inability to attain permanent, stable lives in Israel. I align caregivers' health claims that implicate migrant status as negatively affecting their health with Social Determinants of the Health literatures to frame how social factors produce negative health outcomes. Furthermore, I outline what caregivers mean by "health," which I suggest may be better characterized by the term "well-being" based on Powers and Faden's (2006) definition.

Caregivers defined their conceptualization of "health" in relation to the optimal living conditions they imagined possible in Israel in contrast to their actual daily lives marked by social marginalization. They described "health" as a network of influences ranging from reciprocal notions of care, to perceptions of respect, and to their insecure status in Israel as migrant workers. Migrant workers view health as indicative of a larger range of issues than accessing health insurance and clinics. This is not to discount the very real importance of health services. I am pointing to caregivers' expansion of "health" beyond the biomedical definition that

prioritizes the body with secondary mental health considerations to include mental, emotional, social, and spiritual health in equal parts.

Not all caregivers sought citizenship or permanent residency in Israel; however, all the caregivers I worked with wanted the Israeli government to broaden its recognition of migrant caregivers' personhood. They believed recognition of their sociopolitical subjectivity was integral to their well-being. They argued that without complete well-being they would not be healthy, and moreover that they had a *right* to the configuration of health they conceptualized. Filipino caregivers who expressed their desire for permanent residency in Israel did so through a variety of channels. Among these, caregivers advanced claims based on a platform of health, uniting the project of assuring optimal health with their desire for the security prescriptively conferred by permanent legal status.

Filipino caregivers situated their right to health in an uncommon configuration. Denizens tend to implicate states in health claims based on easily identifiable illnesses or health conditions that elicit sympathy (Ticktin 2011), due to a health deficit in their country of origin (Farmer 1999), or actions by the state that further the health complications embodied by its citizens (Fassin 2007, Petryna 2002). Rather, Filipino caregivers expressed health as predicated on formal social acceptance and integration. Israel requires caregivers to have health insurance,⁶⁴ and Israeli labor law assigns migrant workers certain days off, sets wage requirements, assures caregivers annual monetary benefits, and mandates caregivers' enrollment in pension accounts. Caregivers' demands for a full package of social and political rights as non-citizens may seem illogical in light of the provisions that Israel's labor law makes for migrant workers. Yet, these

⁶⁴ The health insurance available to foreign workers allows them to access Israeli clinics and hospitals for health related needs, but is not the equivalent of the resources available to citizens.

provisions fall short of the full compliment of right advanced to new immigrants and citizens, and do not confer a stable social status.

My interest is less in the practicality of making these claims, and instead in the construction of the logics that formulate them. These logics include vernacularizing the right to health based loosely on the UNDHR definition, and situating health as constructed within a field of social forces that extends beyond maintenance of the holistic body into the domain of a person's social position and life possibilities. In order to understand how caregivers construct these logics, it is first necessary to outline the existing international precepts of a right to health. In doing so, it becomes obvious how caregivers are stretching the boundaries of these allowances to suggest an expanded understanding of what health is, and what they conceive is meant by a "right to health." Furthermore, I consider the specific provisions in international regulations regarding migrant workers' rights and the expectations for how receiving countries are to meet these obligations to highlight how migrant workers are expanding the field of existing possibility.

International standards establish basic expectations for how labor receiving nations treat migrant labor. For example, the International Labor Organization (ILO) states that migrant workers must be provided with certain health provisions,⁶⁵ including access to necessary medical care and freedom from explicit forms of abuse. Labor receiving nations are encouraged to protect migrant workers' psychological health by providing regular rest and relaxation days. Migrant rights groups and international health organizations recognize these days as important for reducing the stress incurred by caring for another person in intensive situations; when caregivers

⁶⁵ C097- Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97).
http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C097

don't have opportunities to distance themselves from their work their psychological and mental health suffers.

Additionally, states are directed to permit and honor migrant workers' cultural identities and practices. The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families⁶⁶ (1990) addresses migrant workers' particular vulnerabilities in labor receiving nations as working in a foreign country without access to the privileges and protections that the foreign nation's citizens prescriptively hold. Article 28 of the Convention states that migrant workers and their families have the right to "urgently required" medical care, and the medical services necessary for their work in the labor-receiving nation. The Convention is careful to establish migrant workers' social and political rights *in their own countries*, and that the labor-receiving state is mandated to respect the identity, religious, and cultural ties that migrant workers have *to their own countries*. However, there is no obligation by the labor-receiving state to consider health in other configurations. Israel meets these international standards, providing migrant workers with necessary health resources, attending to somatic notions of health (e.g. mandatory health insurance), confronting sources of psychological stress (e.g. criminalizing abuse, providing days off), and considering migrant workers' religious affiliations when assigning weekly days off.

International standards provide generalized recommendations for assuring migrant workers' health. These provisions do not account for migrant workers' cultural constructions of health or the cultural notions of health in the labor-receiving country that inform *how* physical and psychological health needs are created and addressed. Even more so, these general

⁶⁶ Which the Philippines signed and ratified, but Israel did not. United Nations - Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. "International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families." <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cmw/cmw.htm>

international guidelines do not address the particular conditions in labor receiving countries that challenge migrant workers' perception of worth and acceptance. Overseas migrant workers live in cross-cultural contexts where their concept of health is redefined as they navigate the social expectations of labor-receiving countries. Migrant workers rethink ideas of "good health" when in new social conditions, influenced by: different social environments, unfamiliar cultural norms, changed diets, language barriers, unavailability of resources, and new experiences of stress.

Similar to international provisions for protecting migrant workers' health, definitions of health and the right to health shape the landscape of states' obligations. The UNDHR defines the right to health in Article 25 as the entitlement to a:

standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.⁶⁷

This definition of health emphasizes the general requirements for physical and psychological maintenance (e.g. access to food, clothing, housing, social services). The UNDHR's definition of a right to health is broad in its inclusion of social realities beyond exposure to illness, but it limits the social factors understood to affect health. Particular to my research, the UNDHR definition of a right to health does not explicitly include visa or immigrant status, the affects of social or political discrimination, or the stress of asserting an identity delegitimized by social and legal authorities.

The right to health is further explicated by the Declaration of Alma-Ata (1978)⁶⁸ that contextualizes health as a social project informed by social and economic factors. Primary care is prioritized for its role assisting individuals in their goals of living a "socially and economically

⁶⁷ United Nations. "The Universal Declaration of Human Rights." <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr>

⁶⁸ World Health Organization. "Declaration of Alma-Ata." http://www.who.int/publications/almaata_declaration_en.pdf

productive life” (Article V), expanding the definition of health provided by Article 25 in the UNDHR. Again, while this move to contextualize health socially expands the influences recognized as determining health, there are particular limitations to exactly *which* social concerns are understood as constituting negative health influences.

Article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) considers the category of “health” further. The ICESCR establishes occupational and environmental conditions that states must meet in order to ensure physical and mental health.⁶⁹ This version of health is further detailed in Comment 14 from the discussion of Article 12. States are required to recognize each individual’s right to live and work in the conditions necessary to satisfy basic health needs. Yet, states are not charged with ensuring the health of each individual nor assuring that its denizens are *healthy*. This important comment draws the line between the state providing the best conditions for health that it is able (which recognizes that states may fail to provide these conditions completely or consistently due to available resources), and the actualization of health by the entire population.

International precepts recognize social factors as health determinants and the necessity of certain conditions to produce good health. However, none of these definitions of “a right to health” entitles a person to be admitted to a foreign country as a new immigrant, or ensures the acknowledgement of their full social, legal, economic, and spiritual personhood in their country of citizenship or any other. However, the role that social factors play in shaping a person’s well being is inherent in the World Health Organization’s (WHO) definition of health. The WHO takes a broad view of these factors, situating health as, “... a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” This definition

⁶⁹ United Nations - Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. “International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.” <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/ICESCR.aspx>

powerfully includes the social environment in determining health outcomes, extending health's domain beyond the body proper. Mann et al (1999) show how the WHO's definition of health shifts the discussion away from a biomedical and pathological sphere and into a "more positive domain of 'well-being.'" (8). Indeed, the WHO Constitution states: "the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being."⁷⁰

Yet, this definition prompts questions, such as how far should the boundaries of "health" stretch? Should "health" include every possible social influence? Where are the boundaries between "health" and other issues of discrimination or social harm? Or are these divisions ignorant of the pervasive effect social closures have on bodily and mental integrity? How do we draw these lines, and for what purposes? In other words, when we draw these lines and situate these categories, which parties are privileged, protected, or limited and to what ends? As Powers and Faden (2006) argue, the WHO definition of health plots an expansive field of social factors that determine health with the implication that all social influences have the same weight for affecting health outcomes. Moreover, the category "health" loses specificity if *all* human experiences pertain to health, effacing other categories of social life.

To recognize the importance of social factors in caregivers' construction of "health," while also maintaining clear boundaries over what "health" entails, I propose two frameworks through which to understand migrant caregivers' claims. First, I draw on Social Determinants of Health literatures to show how social factors have a concerted effect on health outcomes. Then, I integrate Powers and Faden's clearly defined interlocking categories of well-being to specify how various social influences affect a person beyond the somatic and mental domain of health. Powers and Faden's careful categorization of the array of social determinants moves the

⁷⁰ World Health Organization. "Constitution of the World Health Organization (1948)."
<http://apps.who.int/gb/bd/PDF/bd47/EN/constitution-en.pdf?ua=1>

discussion from the large effects society has on marginalized groups to thinking closely about what in particular is threatened by these social influences.

Social Determinants of Health (SDH) identify social factors that privilege or limit how groups achieve good health. These social conditions can be positive or negative, effectively protecting individual's health (e.g. through social support or access to ideal living conditions) or exposing health to vulnerabilities and harm (e.g. discrimination or exposure to risk-laden environments). Certain social factors have a stronger effect on health and an individual's ability to insulate him- or her-self from health risks. In particular, chronic stress produced by racism or other forms of social inequality or oppression has a measurable negative impact on life expectancy and severe illness (Brunner and Marmot 2006). Similarly, a person's perception that s/he lacks control over his/her social environment and work life produces negative health outcomes such as lower immunological performance (Adler et al 1999). A person's integration into social networks is also used as a critical indicator of health, as a person who feels cared for, supported, respected, and valued tends to have better health outcomes than people who are socially isolated. Yet, these socially supportive relationships must be reciprocated; individuals need to see themselves as within a multidirectional set of exchanges that happen in an understood equilibrium for health to thrive (Stansfeld 2006).

Socioeconomic Status (SES) comprises a significant area of stress within society, promoting serious health problems for individuals with a comparatively low SES, including heart disease, strokes, and susceptibility to infection (Adler et al 1999). Higher SES protects individuals from many life stressors through effective social networks and access to resources that buffer unexpected or unwanted life events. Without these resources or forms of social support individuals are exposed to the full repercussions of these events. Additionally, the

perceptions of having a low SES compromise psychological and physical health, generating stress from the perception of vulnerability and lacking resources and opportunities. Inadequate psychological and material living conditions, lack of medical care, and constant exposure to uncertainty or instability in routine life practices also produce chronic stress that effects immunological performance and creates risk factors for other serious illness such as cardiovascular disease (Adler et al 1999).

The SDH literatures do not create an entirely open field of social factors tasked with determining health. The literatures informing SDH link social factors to measurable health outcomes, such as the correlation between chronic stress and cardiovascular disease and strokes. Yet, there are aspects of social life which SDH do not encompass as influencing health outcomes, but which migrant workers routinely cite. The WHO's inclusive definition of health allows these social forces not directly correlated to a health outcome to be considered, but the expansive nature of this definition weakens its practical applications.

Powers and Faden (2006) propose *well-being* as an organizing framework to recognize the social forces that affect people's overall sense of health but which do not fit directly into "health" as a category. They define health as the conditions of mental and physical status necessary for people to thrive. Health, therefore, includes the social influences that support or challenge a person's ability to physically or mentally "flourish," but does not include other ways in which society positions a person in relation to achieving *overall* "social well-being." The other components of well-being are personal security, reasoning, respect, attachment, and self-determination. These six components influence each other, working in dialogue to produce or challenge a person's sense of well-being. In particular, I suggest that caregivers' claims resonate closely with Power and Faden's categories of personal security, respect, and self-determination.

Powers and Faden reference torture, rape, and assault as key threats to personal safety; I would argue that the threat of deportation, depending on its form, can also constitute a serious risk to the personal security of migrant workers. Whether or not immigration police's actions or deportations constitute injustice is contextually dependent, but the possibilities for injustice are present in the configurations of power, the permission police have to use force on behalf of the state, and depending on how migrant workers are marked as vulnerable to illegal status and deportation procedures. Migrant workers' vulnerable status created by unequal access to power in employment relationships, and based on the protections and privileges that labor-receiving states withhold from migrant workers also raise questions about their personal security.

Powers and Faden position perceptions of respect as equating to a person's sense that he or she deserves dignity and moral concern. This obligates society to afford the individual sympathy and to identify with the individual as a moral equal. Respect, in Powers and Faden's use of the term, also requires self-respect. The individual must be able to apply these same measures of worthiness, dignity, and equality to themselves based on the social conditions they live within. When an individual is endowed with respect, society recognizes the individual as an equal and worthy member. Forms of discrimination, including racism, sexism, classism, and negative judgments based on appearance, situate individuals or groups as outside of moral worthiness and equality. Migrant caregivers connect the disrespect shown to them by employers, bureaucrats, and Israelis in general to the stress of marginalization and social exclusions. They argue that their social personhood is diminished by this power-laden disrespect; Alona referred to it as treating Filipinos as if they are small (Chapter Three).

In short, self-determination defines our control over who we are, and who we will become (Powers & Faden 2006: 28). The right to make uncoerced decisions about important life

events is a central aspect of idealized citizenship based on precepts of the liberal individual. This type of choice depends on cultural norms and legal structures as well as political frameworks securing individual rights and liberties. Uncoerced choices depend on material conditions, such as food security and stable employment, but also on working and living conditions where the individual is not partially or entirely beholden to someone else. In effect, questions of self-determination analytically describe many migrant workers' points of contention over Israel's citizenship restrictions. Migrant workers' claims arise from their inability to act on desires for citizenship, to take new contracts after fifty-one months in Israel, to raise their native-born children in Israel, or to effectively protect themselves from the immigration police even as legally documented workers. Their dissatisfaction arises not from unsuccessful achievement of these desires within the appropriate channels, but that there *aren't* available codified paths to address these goals.

I believe that caregivers are making claims that pertain to their well-being where certain social forces are producing their negative physical and mental health outcomes. This makes terminology complicated as there is a gap between the term "health" that my research participants uniformly used, and the case I make above for well-being. With this in mind, I continue to use *their* term – health – with the stipulations that I stick to this term as a misnomer for a more specific idea of well-being that I argue is actually implied by their use of "health."

The ethnographic examples I discuss in this chapter attempt to make explicit the landscape of social factors that caregivers draw from to construct "health." Caregivers did not engage in extensive conversations with me about what they meant when they referenced health (see Chapter One for a discussion of methodological complications). We discussed health in short bursts and fleeting moments that when considered together comprehensively articulate

what they meant by “health.” Despite the brevity of these exchanges, caregivers raised issues of health so often that the importance they placed on health became impossible to overlook. I’ve selected examples that illustrate the major issues caregivers identified as denigrating and challenging their health, and which compelled caregivers to advocate for better health conditions.

I begin with a well-circulated discussion of health endorsed by the Philippine Embassy that identifies physical and mental health concerns and their social causes. These well-circulated concerns raised other conversations in my fieldwork that expand on the social context in which caregivers encounter certain physical and mental health risks. I put these conversations with Filipino Embassy employees into dialogue with a conversation I had with Nurit based on the same information. Nurit’s comments reveal the larger challenges to caregivers’ sense of well-being in the Israeli context that (perhaps unintentionally) belittles caregivers’ cultural practices and knowledge.

I then consider the UN Medical Mission as one way that caregivers’ seek health resources. The Medical Mission reveals the complications caregivers encounter when in need of health services, and also points to a multifaceted version of “health” that the Medical Mission provides. Similarly, I discuss a conversation I had with Father Michael, a Filipino Catholic priest, about caregivers’ health options in Israel, where he articulates how the Israeli government does not provide avenues through which caregivers could alleviate the stress they experience as temporary labor migrants in Israeli society.

Finally, I address how food symbolizes a person’s worthiness for citizenship based on neoliberal notions of personal responsibility and the value of not “burdening” the state with illnesses associated with obesity and unhealthy diets. In particular, I look at what disagreements over salad communicate about interpersonal displays of respect and valuing cultural forms of

health knowledge. Furthermore, I discuss what lectures on dietary choices articulate about caregivers in Israel and how “worthiness” is constructed through food choices.

These disparate ethnographic examples do not fit together cleanly, nor do they provide a seamless justification of how caregivers conceptualize “health.” However, these examples speak to significant tensions caregivers identify emerging from their interactions with employers and arising from Israeli policies. These examples situate caregivers’ use of “health” in connection with the health claims that caregivers make, discussed in Chapter Five.

Cleansers, Stress, and Negative Health Outcomes

The outgoing Philippine Embassy’s Welfare Officer, Petrona Bergado, elucidated the Embassy’s views on health risks in an interview with *Focal Magazine*, a glossy, popular monthly publication for Filipino overseas workers distributed out of Tel Aviv. Every caregiver I met faithfully read *Focal*, discussing its content and referencing information they found during their attentive perusal. Ma’am Bergado spoke about her work, challenges, and successes in Israel including her efforts to learn the Israeli healthcare system that is very different from the healthcare system in the Philippines. When the interviewer asked her about her views on caregivers’ health in Israel, she gave the following answer:

In my two years stay in Israel, I handled 391 [welfare related] cases. Of this number, 173 cases (44%) were medical/health-related. The leading cause of sickness is cancer, accounting for 25% of all medical cases. Rene Franco (of the Assistance to Nationals Section of the Philippine Embassy) and I have visited more than 20 hospitals all over Israel, plus other rehabilitation centers and hospices in the country...

As mentioned earlier, cancer is the leading category of medical/health cases in Israel. It may be noteworthy also that from January to April 26, 2011, we handled six cases of stroke. Of this number, four died. While the two others survived, they suffered half body paralysis.

While there is no study to correlate the incidence of cancer vis-à-vis several variables, it was observed that majority of those who got sick in Israel have stayed for more than five

years. During the Post Arrival Orientation Seminars (PAOS) conducted by the Embassy, attendees were cautioned on too much exposure from household chemicals. Precautions are likewise taught as to the correct use of the household cleaning agents. May I add that workers need to seek advice on the correct mixture and application of the chemicals to avoid exposure to harmful solutions. This is important as most of the chemicals are labeled in Hebrew of which many Filipinos could not read nor decipher.

My personal observation has something to do with the amount of sleep that we get. Our bodies need to rest. Yet, lured perhaps by the opportunity to earn a few more shekels, many of our compatriots still take on part time jobs on top of their caregiving duties, forfeiting sleep.

There were 25 cases of mental illness reported at the Embassy over the two-year period. These illnesses occur mostly in winter. There were four cases that were reported to be caused by the patients spending too much time with their computers.

One worker was found wandering around the park in Akko while another one was found somewhere in Herzliyya. The common factors were that they were both in their early 50's, had been in Israel for more than 10 years, have overstayed their visas, and were scared of being deported.⁷¹

In Ma'am Bergado's discussion, "health" is affected by multiple social influences. She noted the importance of cultural skills such as literacy for ensuring good health; migrant workers unable to read warning labels printed in Hebrew risk over exposure to potentially harmful chemicals. Ma'am Bergado did not take into account the interpersonal dynamic between caregivers and their employers when warning against overexposure to household cleansers, where the employer's personal preference dictates the amount of cleanser used in routine household cleaning. Ma'am Bergado noted that good health is dependent upon basic biological realities such as getting enough sleep, making a connection between taking additional employment opportunities and caregivers not taking enough time to rest. Again, she elided the important dynamic within the caregiving pair, where the older person's around the clock needs may also reduce a caregiver's opportunities to sleep.

⁷¹ Bautista, Ruel P. (2011). Up Close and Personal with Ma'am Petrona Bergado. *Focal Magazine*. June 2011.

Ma'am Bergado's comments addressed concerns with caregivers' social isolation that can result in mental health problems. She mentioned that some of these caregivers spend too much time with computers, perhaps emailing, IM'ing, or video calling their relatives in the Philippines. Again, while conveying careful, documented health concerns Ma'am Bergado did not extend her perspectives into other probable causes of social isolation such as employers who have intensive needs for continual care. Caregivers who take additional employment also reduce their available time for social interactions, making a trade between personal needs (e.g. sleep and social stimulus) and capitalizing on economic opportunities that may be used to support family at home. In Ma'am Bergado's depiction of caregivers' health choices, sleep and mental health are exchanged for money. In effect, she's indicated that caregivers trade mental and physical health for economic health. Sacrificing social opportunities for rest and relaxation reflects this balancing act that must contend with the stress resulting from economic needs, debt, and family obligation.

Finally, Ma'am Bergado talked about the two caregivers found "wandering," suffering from mental illness. She mentioned that both were undocumented and had been in Israel over a decade, implicitly indicating the stress that structure migrant workers experience when they can no longer renew their visas but also for various reasons are reluctant to leave Israel (see Chapter Six). She mentioned the fear of deportation as a specific contributor to both caregivers' mental illness, again subtly noting the stress that compounds with an undocumented status.

The report that Ma'am Bergado gives focuses on mental and physical health concerns, but interwoven into the categories of ill health she encountered in her official capacity are social conditions that define migrant workers' lives in Israel. The health information that Ma'am Bergado relates is limited to officially verifiable information and conservative personal opinions.

She does not detail the legal, physical, or mental health outcomes related to pregnancy, nor does she speculate on health problems that perhaps were not serious enough to be reported to the Embassy. What is evident is that caregivers work with a number of variables that they do not directly control: while caregivers can learn Hebrew, they are not necessarily in a position to correct employers as to the proper amount of cleanser to use while cleaning. Caregivers also do not control the type and frequency of care their employers require, meaning that they cannot always assure that they get enough sleep or are able to take their days off. They must also balance the benefit that earning extra money brings to them and their families with their own needs for sleep and social engagement.

Nurit revealed the cultural context of assessing health risks during one of our weekly conversations. She asked me what I learned through my research about migrant caregivers' health. I related the information from Ma'am Bergado's interview as a starting point, which prompted Nurit's dismissive response. She gave me a skeptical look before telling me that she has been using these same cleansers over the course of her life without gloves (as have most Israeli women) and she has never heard of problems with health arising from cleaning agents. She questioned me dismissively as to if Filipinos use cleansers in the Philippines, to which I told her yes, but potentially with very different chemical properties or with gloves or in different concentrations.

Nurit considered my comment about the potential relative strength of cleaning agents and the use of gloves before challenging me by saying that perhaps Filipinos weren't used to Israeli cleansers. I gave her a dubious look, but she continued, adding that perhaps the new exposure might be the cause because they don't have a built-up resistance to these chemicals. I mentioned again that many older Israeli employers want to control the amount of cleanser used which is

often more than the amount directed. Nurit shook her head firmly and told me that something was wrong with the Filipinos – either that Filipinos don't use cleansers in the Philippines, or that they just aren't used to Israeli chemicals.

Her reactions illustrated an Israeli response to caregivers' health concerns that I heard caregivers regularly reacting to. This response involved initial doubt, followed by Israelis challenging their specific concerns, and then suggesting that the problem rests with caregivers themselves or their culture. Nurit's conclusion that either Filipinos don't use cleansers in the Philippines or that the problem is inherently Filipinos' lack of exposure to Israeli cleansers invalidated the hypothesis that the danger with the chemicals arose from using too much cleanser without gloves. Instead, she concluded that something must be wrong with the caregivers themselves.

This response resonates with caregivers' complaints about how their employers routinely dismissed their health-related concerns, whether about their preferred diet (see Chapter 3), or about taking time off to see friends or to travel home to visit family, or about overuse of chemical cleansers. Caregivers read these responses as disregard for their health and also patronizing views towards their country and cultural practices. In these instances, not only do caregivers struggle with what they view as legitimate health concerns, but also with perceptions of belittling and a lack of care from their employer. Caregivers' "health" concerns resonate with stress caused by unequal power distributions in caregiving relationships, unequal reciprocity of care and concern for the caregivers' well being, and disrespect for caregivers' culture and knowledge about health issues.

The connection between cleansers and health risks emerged again in a conversation with Bryan, the Embassy official, while participating in an FCO event. Bryan's job entailed visiting

all the caregivers admitted to hospitals or who encountered severe problems with their employers. When I asked Bryan about the common health issues he saw among Filipino caregivers, he gave me a shrewd look. After rattling off his professional reasons for not answering questions like mine in his role as an Embassy employee, he told me about the conclusions he drew from actuarial insurance tables. His summary expanded slightly on Ma'am Bergado's comments: that it is statistically likely that Filipino caregivers will experience health problems after four or five years in Israel. Bryan related that the insurance companies suggest that these health problems result from dietary change resulting in hypertension, strokes, and diabetes. "I don't agree with this," he told me. Instead, he echoed Ma'am Bergado's summary that cleaning agents cause these patterned health problems.

Romeo chimed in, supporting Bryan's statement about the risks cleaning solutions pose to caregivers' health, especially when employers determine how much should be used. Often, employers want caregivers to use more solution than the manufacturer recommends, but employers don't want to pay for gloves. The exposure to chemical cleaners then is very high, which both Bryan and Romeo argued pose a significant factor in the health problems Filipinos have in Israel.

Romeo explained that caregivers have very different experiences in Israel based on the "character" of their employer. He described his employer to me as "good" with a "kind family," who all treat him well. Bryan and Romeo nodded in agreement as I told them about caregivers I met through the NGO who are fired after eleven months so that the employer won't have to pay the benefits that begin to accrue after a year. Romeo added that many employers are very nice through the fourth year, but then become more demanding and inflexible because they know that the worker doesn't have the option to leave without losing his or her visa.

“Do you think that adds to bad health conditions, the problems that some caregivers have with their employers?” I asked Romeo and Bryan. They agreed, Romeo pointing out that gloves and other accommodations can only be expected when the working relationship is positive. I asked the question again, emphasizing a broader context than specific problem with gloves or cleansers. Romeo smirked but just looked at Bryan. Bryan raised his eyebrows at me and assured me that the actuarial insurance tables don’t reflect that kind of data before firmly changing the subject.

Bryan and Romeo connected overuse of chemical cleansers as the technical cause of poor health to larger issues of well-being in Israel that result from feelings of respect, dignity, and good treatment. Bryan and Romeo challenge the insurance company’s suggestion that diet is the cause of caregivers’ health concerns in Israel, refocusing the analysis on cleansers and the social context in which the overuse of cleansers occurs. Romeo’s discussion of how the relationship between a caregiver and employer determines health risks such as overuse of chemicals points to underlying dynamics that inform physical and mental health problems. Bryan and Romeo nuance what these numbers don’t necessary capture through their comments, but also in their silences. Bryan’s refusal to comment directly on social influences on health problems based on his job at the Embassy suggests that his response to that question may involve criticism of Israel or Israelis that would not be diplomatically correct.

Later, I asked Bryan more about the mandatory OWWA emergency insurance that all Filipino overseas workers are supposed to hold. This insurance must be renewed annually through the Philippine Embassy. Bryan looked grim as he told me, “It is hard to get workers to renew (every year) because Filipinos have a “leave it to God” mentality. Filipinos assume that God will take care of things until something goes wrong, and then they find themselves faced

with big medical bills or flights home they can't pay for. We do not have an insurance culture," Bryan summed up. We discussed different approaches to health care in instances of serious illness, particularly since this mandatory insurance includes emergency repatriation services. He explained that Israeli doctors only stabilize critically ill migrant workers in order to let them die (rather than to aggressively treat the illness), which many Filipino workers prefer.⁷² "They don't want to burden their families," he summarized. "They work to support their families for years, and then don't want to go home when they are dying." He shook his head again and told me that after four years in Israel he feels worn out and ready for a break. "It's too much for me" he joked lightly.

Vicente, Bryan's supervisor, also spoke to me about the welfare of Filipino workers. His job put him into constant contact with the problems that caregivers encounter in Israel and he provided me with a different perspective on caregivers' health concerns. I asked him about Filipino caregivers' health in Israel and he immediately began discussing his views based on his work experiences. He spoke forcefully about caregivers' difficult struggle balancing their jobs with taking time off, echoing Ma'am Bergado's comments. Vicente told me gravely that he wasn't making this claim lightly; he spent a large portion of his time helping caregivers under extreme stress. He explained that caregivers often felt pressured not to take time off to visit their family at home because they feared losing their jobs. As a result, their mental and emotional health suffered. In contrast, as a diplomatic employee, Vicente visits the Philippines once a year to see his (now grown) children and family for a month.

⁷² I could not verify or disprove this claim about Israeli doctors despite many attempts to do so. I think that at the very least Bryan's claim presents an interesting perspective into emergency care, but it must be noted that I am not sure how pervasive this practice actually is or the factors that influence this kind of medical decision.

“It’s hard to be away from children and family, especially in the moments when they really need you to be there” he sighed, narrowing his eyes before outlining the trade offs between sending money home to provide opportunities like education, but having to make the decision to “let go of your family” and accept only a distanced role in children’s (and spouses’) lives.

I asked him what common physical health concerns troubled caregivers in Israel, but he shook his head to indicate that I was asking the wrong question.

“It’s not only sickness,” he told me, “that’s not the only trouble.” He gave me an example, a caregiver who suffered from a stroke that paralyzed one side of her body. Her daughter traveled from the Philippines to provide care and to take her home, but the caregiver’s family didn’t have enough money for both plane tickets back to the Philippines. The Embassy asked the caregiver’s employer, “This woman took care of you for eleven years, can’t you give her some assistance getting home?” They refused, and the Embassy ended up paying for both plane tickets. However, the Israeli family’s refusal to economically assist their very ill former caregiver communicated to the Embassy and the Filipino family that Israeli employers don’t have any sense of reciprocity beyond wages towards caregivers. This angered Vicente, who pointed out that caregivers tend to Israelis’ older family members 24 hours a day for years, keeping the elderly person alive, comfortable, and feeling cared for.

Vicente provided me with another story for balance, about a woman who worked in Israel for thirteen years before becoming very sick with stage four cancer. She was not married and had no children, but she supported a number of nieces and nephews through college and continued to financially help them after their graduations. When she required care none of them wanted to help her. Vicente told me that when he visited her in the hospital, she just cried and cried, not sure of what would happen to her once she arrived home without support from her

family. Vicente summarized for me that she invested her money in her family and her care in her Israeli employer, but that despite these forms of investment she still ended up without a support network to care for her. Going home to the Philippines without family support meant that she would be alone and without the necessary resources to provide for her own care.

Vicente, Bryan, and Romeo expand Ma'am Bergado's health summary by showing the social aspect of making health decisions and for creating environments that influence health. They acknowledge how a caregiver's relationship with his or her employer affects health decisions but also constitute stressful environments that can degrade caregivers' health. Similarly, they discussed how caregivers' families influence their health decisions particularly through economic concerns. Caregivers' families provide long distance support and care, but they also make constant financial demands and at times fail to recognize debts of reciprocity. Yet, when families refuse to reciprocate care, migrant workers are in a difficult spot as they cannot remain in Israel to benefit from any social provisions afforded to citizens for ill health or old age, nor have they invested in care possibilities in the Philippines due to their work abroad other than their families.⁷³ Caregivers' obligation to meet their family's needs increases the pressure to keep their job, to earn as much as possible, and to avoid adding to their family's burdens.

Caregivers cope with cultural challenges as part of maintaining their health, such as reading warning labels printed in Hebrew. They also must navigate the unequal allocations of power in employment relationships that structure caregivers' lives in Israel. Migrant workers may not be able to demand gloves when working with cleansers if they fear for their jobs or if they do not want to have confrontational exchanges with their employer. Employers may use

⁷³ See Barber (1997) for a complication of retirement choices for migrant caregivers who are able to access retirement and pension options in the labor-receiving nation.

strategies to avoid paying caregivers annual benefit payments or change their relationship with the caregiver when it is no longer possible for the caregiver to work for a new employer.

Employers may not intend to socially isolate a caregiver they employ. However, caregivers may be pressured into giving up their own time meant for socializing and relaxing when an older person requires 24 hour care and the family is unable to step in during the caregiver's day off. In these common cases, caregivers spend months alone with an elderly, needy charge day in and day out without a break with their only social contacts coming from internet or phone communications.

Additionally, caregivers develop expectations of reciprocity within family relationships and in caregiving dynamics. Vicente's angry response to the Israeli family's failure to reciprocate forms of care towards their former caregiver points not only to caregivers' perceptions of mutual care encoded in the employment relationship but also the Embassy's view that this mutual obligation ought to be honored. These expectations complicate the care-based relationship that is technically balanced by wages for services. The Embassy and caregivers are expressing the inadequacy of this exchange to completely value the care-labor that elderly Israelis receive from migrant workers. Frustrated expectations of reciprocal actions point to Powers and Faden's description of respect, as the lack of concern Israelis show for caregivers' overall health experiences denotes their lack of moral regard. Vicente's example of the Filipina woman whose family reneged on their assumed responsibility to care for her during her critical illness also represents failed reciprocity. However, he situated the caregiver's family's failure to pay a care debt as an unfortunate reality while contextualizing the Israeli family's unwillingness to reciprocate care as part of a systemic issue that caregivers and the Embassy struggle against.

“Care” may denote medical attention (i.e. receiving health care), or the recognition of another person’s needs that deserve attention. Caregivers do provide some nursing services, but their time is largely spent on attending to their elderly employer’s overall physical, emotional, spiritual, and social needs. To attend to these needs with appropriate care, care providers must comprehend how care is culturally framed, and then provide culturally knowledgeable responses to those needs. Caregivers respond to these cultural calls by learning to cook Israeli food, by helping employers observe Shabbat and other holidays, and by forming close affective relationships with the older person to make him or her feel loved, respected, and not socially abandoned. Thus, ‘health’ and ‘care’ are both constructed within social contexts that require the care provider to recognize the personhood of their patient.

Certain messages are communicated within the care-relationship about what care entails and about the relative social positions of the care provider and the care receiver. Those messages may focus on how to achieve the best health for the care receiver, or could extend to implications about the status of the caregiver and care receiver in the shared social context. The social construction of care thus articulates both the caregiver’s and the care-receiver’s relative social positions (as discussed in Chapter 3), and communicates which parties in the socially constructed care dyad are *deserving* of care and moral concern. Caregivers all too frequently feel that while they provide attentive care, their employers and Israeli society as a whole fails to return forms of care in response.

The Medical Mission and Father Michael: Care in Impermanent Situations

Migrant workers must hold health insurance to be legally documented; this health insurance allows caregivers to receive care in clinics and hospitals when required. However, Filipino caregivers in my research communities expressed a preference for finding health

services within the Filipino community in Israel. For example, in a conversation about general health concerns, Mark told me about how he used to go to Tel Aviv at least once a month before his visa expired because he knew “a Filipino”⁷⁴ there who gave therapeutic massage. This massage addressed the muscular strain incurred by lifting an older person as well as other ailments.

When I asked if anyone in the City could provide similar massage he gave me a wry look and said decisively that “these Filipinos” weren’t good for anything. He reiterated to me that he needed medical attention, but not the kind he could receive at one of the FCO Medical Missions, which he usually spoke very highly of. He required Filipino healing techniques to attend to his heel injured in the New Year’s Oz Unit raid, and other muscular pain. His back bothered him from lifting the man he currently cared for on a kibbutz, an old neck injury reasserted itself, and he said the stress of being undocumented made him feel unwell (e.g. headaches, anxiety). He shook his head, saying he couldn’t get out at all lately, meaning that he hadn’t attended Mass. I knew that he cared deeply about religious devotion, and that he must be very concerned if he hadn’t gone to church.

“What would a Filipino doctor do to help you?” I asked.

“He would give me massage and snake venom. Cobra venom.” Mark told me brusquely with clear bravado. “I’ve had venom before. It makes you stronger.” He explained to me. Valentine, who sat with us during this conversation, glanced at me and said pointedly, “You should not drink it. It would make you sick.” Mark snorted. “It would kill you,” he assured me.

⁷⁴ Mark always referred to Filipino caregivers I didn’t know as “a Filipino,” never as a caregiver, or with a term more specific to the particular person. Nationality trumped everything else in his social categorizations. Interestingly, the term “Filipino” was commonly used in my research community. Very rarely were Filipina, Pinoy, or Pinay used.

Marked pointedly remarked that he needed care outside of what a UN Medical Mission could provide, but he indicated his need for culturally-specific healing techniques. In particular, he referenced health practices that lay outside of the biomedical domain, but on other occasions Mark spoke very highly of the (bio)medical services offered at the UN Medical Missions, particularly in regards to the availability of Filipino nurses and doctors at these Missions.

The FCO hosted Medical Missions two or three times per year in The City, arranging for UN doctors and nurses from the UN Philippine Battalion to travel from the Golan Heights to provide medical services. The Missions provided caregivers with opportunities to receive basic medical services and some dental care within a familiar cultural context. Migrant workers encountered complications in Israeli clinics trying to understanding the doctor's English or Hebrew, or receiving culturally unfamiliar modes of care. Filipino doctors and nurses attended to Filipino caregivers at the Missions, speaking through a common national language and shared cultural narratives about health and the body.

The Mission took place in a tiny nightclub on a very hot evening in August, with around three hundred caregivers attending. The nightclub's furniture was cleared out to accommodate the tables and chairs for the medical services. FCO officers set up the registration table outside the door with a sign-in sheet, forms for medical or dental services, and handouts including a small notepad with a magnet on the back and a handbook entitled *Pinoy Care Handbook Para sa mga kababayan natin sa Israel* [Filipino Care Handbook for our Countrypeople in Israel]. A poster hung in the bar's window that outlined the services offered: blood pressure reading, blood sugar reading, general check up, and tooth extraction. The dentists did not offer dental cleanings due to time constraints, and for similar reasons the doctors were only performing general medical exams, limited in scope.

Security activity on the border between the Golan Heights and Syria delayed the UN doctors, holding up the event. Mark and the other FCO officers contained their annoyance; caretakers had been counting on this Mission and made plans to come based on the FCO's promise of a Filipino doctor, and medical and dental services. FCO officers viewed the doctor's tardiness as disrespectful and thoughtless. The waiting caregivers murmured some very critical comments about the FCO's organizational effectiveness, annoyed by having to wait for services when the clock ticked away the precious minutes of their day off. Some caregivers who did not regularly take their allowed time off due to their employer's inability to stay alone for any period of time arranged for a reliever so that they could attend the Mission. They were particularly irritated by the long wait, constantly calling their reliever to make sure their employer was doing well. Filipino registered nurses from the Embassy began the blood pressure readings for the waiting caregivers, and the dentists started providing most of the promised services. But general check ups couldn't begin without the doctor.

I talked to the assembled caregivers while we waited for the doctor to arrive, asking particularly why caregivers preferred the Medical Mission to Israeli medical clinics. Their answers immersed me in a sea of informal commentary on the social aspects of health. As they talked, one immediate benefit stood out: the Medical Mission provided a context steeped in familiar Filipino social norms to discuss and manage health concerns. Many caregivers came in pairs or met other friends while waiting, taking the opportunity to catch up, gossip, and network. The talking, networking, and staying connected seemed as important as the medical and dental services offered. Moreover, these caregivers also spoke about wanting to come to an FCO event to integrate themselves into the network of resources that this particular community organization could offer, such as contacts with the Embassy.

The Mission addressed the realities in caregivers' lives. The services offered at the Mission concentrated on health issues that caregivers wouldn't normally take time off of work to address. Blood sugar and blood pressure readings indicate other, serious health concerns but these services aren't pressing enough for caregivers to take time off of work to address, in contrast to a broken bone, significant pain, or illness that impairs caregiving duties. The Medical Mission took place on Saturday night right as Filipino caregivers' day off began. Filipinos ran the Medical Mission creating an "insider" Filipino space on the Israeli street and in the nightclub by privileging a shared cultural understanding of health and health practices. I overheard caregivers in conversation, idly talking about why they came to get health services, what was ailing them, what kinds of treatment they expected to receive, and their complaints about Israel or their employers in connection to their health.

When walking into an Israeli clinic, even with the proper insurance, Filipinos are immediately visually assessed as social outsiders. They often struggle with language comprehension particularly with Russian-Israeli doctors (according to routine comments in the FCO, particularly from Maria, Mark, Rose, and Faith) due to Russian-speakers' particular accent in Hebrew and English. Health clinics present complex encounters even for cultural insiders, and to navigate cultural and language obstacles on top of the clinic itself adds to the stress. In contrast, Filipino attendees at the Medical Mission found the cultural context familiar and they liked how the FCO community leaders (e.g. Mark, Faith, Rose) actively hosted the event to create familiarity and comfort. FCO leaders chatted with everyone, made introductions, apologized profusely for the tardiness of the doctor, and re-established social connections. Many caregivers in line waiting wanted to meet the FCO officers if they hadn't already, as the FCO often worked directly with the Embassy Consuls and Officers on behalf of The City's critically

ill caregivers or Filipinos who were having serious employment issues. I watched the FCO officers answer questions, give information, and send caregivers to me for on-the-spot discussions about their legal rights based on my volunteer role at the NGO. The Medical Mission addressed questions of bodily health while providing opportunities for strengthening important links in the social network.

It was late and dark when the UN van pulled up on the street. The UN doctor and other personnel hurried inside. With only an hour or so to go before the Mission ended, there was a flurry of activity determining how many exams the doctor could realistically perform in the time remaining, the FCO officers pushing for as many appointments as possible while the doctor gave them wary looks. The best course of action was finally determined behind the scenes, but afterwards the Medical Mission was declared a success based on FaceBook posts by attendees and articles in the OFW publications.

I walked back to Maria's former shared apartment with Emilie and Valentine when the event ended. They asked me when I was leaving Israel. I told them my departure date, and Emilie asked me "You'll come back to us? You won't leave us here?" I hedged, telling her that it depended on funding and visas. She gave me a strange look before saying, "You can always get a visa [to come to Israel as an American]. *Filipinis* can't come here except to be *metaplot*, and even then they [Israelis] don't want us here after *ima* or *abba* dies. We can't come back afterwards. You have to come back soon. No one knows for how long we'll be here."

Emilie's statement revealed the underpinning of the Medical Mission, and how it testifies to the instability of migrant workers' lives in Israel. The Medical Mission shows the immediate limitations migrant workers face when managing their own health through Israeli health resources. They contend with struggles to take time off for doctors' visits, they have to

conceptualized health in a cross cultural context where the Israeli doctor may not understand or acknowledge the caregiver's particular health concerns or preferred treatment, and they have reasons to seek an understanding doctor when confronting illness that might threaten his or her visa. For example, Rose experienced periods of intense stomach pains that nearly incapacitated her during the extent of my fieldwork but she refused to consult with a doctor. She feared that it might be stomach cancer, and she avoided medical treatment to delay knowing if she might lose her visa if she became very ill. Mark encouraged her to see the doctor at the Medical Mission, pointing out that the Filipino doctor would understand Rose's situation. She agreed to an appointment, but then gave her time to another waiting caregiver when the doctor arrived late. Managing the potential for these devastating illnesses in a familiar context makes a difference, as the stakes for staying healthy were completely acknowledged at the Medical Mission. In the context of taking time away from an employer, wanting health concerns to be understood, and fearing a possibly severe diagnosis, caregivers use Israeli health services as a luxury or a necessity, but not a normal preventative practice.

The Medical Mission exposes a deeper layer of health realities: the social components of health. Isolation is a serious concern for caregivers providing round the clock care, especially for those caregivers tending to elderly employers who simply cannot be left unattended. The opportunity to get out of the apartment and socialize in a relaxed atmosphere is important for caregivers' mental health. The Medical Mission offered opportunities for caregivers to make important social connections with the FCO, Embassy employees, and even UN soldiers who eagerly chatted with the gathered caregivers once they arrived. With these connections, caregivers have a contact to ask for advocacy or assistance should a serious health problem arise. For caregivers working without a visa, these are essential connections. Even for legally

documented caregivers, making these connections promised diplomatic assistance in the case of serious need.

The Medical Mission overtly addressed concerns about physical health but operated as an integrated health event. Perhaps unintentionally the Medical Mission also acknowledged that migrants often have very different health outcomes than the general population of the host nation. James Nazroo (1998) argues that migrant workers show worse health outcomes because of their lower social position that often leads to lower standards of living. He states:

...ethnicity does not exist in isolation, it is within a social context that ethnicity achieves its significance, and part of that social context is the ways in which those seen as members of ethnic minority groups are racialised. Indeed, one of the most important purposes for undertaking work on ethnicity and health is to extend our understanding of the nature and extent of the social disadvantage faced by ethnic minority groups. Not only is health part of the disadvantage, it is also a consequence (Nazroo 1998: 8, quoted in Shaw et al 2006: 212).

Caregivers' marginalized social position, which is in part a result of their ethnic difference in Israel, affects their health outcomes. The Medical Mission is an avenue through which to reinscribe migrant workers into a context that culturally values them as complete social individuals (not only for their labor), but the Medical Mission is a fleeting, impermanent, and also marginalized event within the larger Israeli context.

Yet, the framework for the Medical Mission and the FCO's role in hosting it provided caregivers with the kinds of social opportunities that are essential for good mental health; for a feeling of *belonging* within a social context that routinely marks how caregivers are explicitly and implicitly excluded; and connecting caregivers to important networks with resources to help them manage health challenges (such as an abusive employer or support after surgery). The Medical Mission created a space where caregivers felt cared for as individuals, respected, and as if their voice was heard as they expected to be heard. These moments that the Medical Mission

provided caregivers are a part of the package of health services it offered, but also pointed to the *lack* of these broader components of well-being for Filipino caregivers in Israeli society.

Finally, the Mission itself indicates migrant workers' insecure place in Israeli society. There are no Filipino-Israeli doctors, although some caregivers do provide healing services such as massage within their community. Filipino caregivers struggle to find medical care that resonates with familiar notions of health, making the Medical Missions a valuable resource. Without the Filipino battalion in the UN Camp, however, this resource wouldn't be available. Caregivers' cultural constructions of health and medical needs take priority for a few hours twice a year, but generally are ignored or navigated through the parts of the Israeli health system available to non-citizens. The priority given to health on an individual level (individuals only go to a doctor when they feel seriously unwell or they ignore the problem), on a community level (the absence of Filipino doctors or clinics), and symbolically (only addressed meaningfully by community organizations) points to the perilous place of Filipinos in Israel. Some caregivers like Maria felt empowered to preventatively address health concerns, such as going to the doctor whenever they felt a cold or the flu coming on. She did this to ensure her own health as part of caring for Sveta, her employer. However, Maria appeared as an exception; most caregivers I spoke with decided not to take time off of work to see a doctor unless they felt so unwell that their work suffered.

The Embassy, UN, and Filipino community declared the Medical Mission a success. However, many of the FCO officers appeared grim throughout the event, and Emilie's comments to me brought the issue home. The Medical Mission offered limited services to a marginalized population in a nightclub. Emilie's assessment that "No one knows for how long we'll be here" resonated with the Medical Mission: while it was a useful service and a good deed done by the

FCO, it also symbolized the tenuous nature of migrant life in Israel. This instability and uncertainty combined with Filipino's material and symbolic limitations accessing resources such as comprehensive healthcare are at the root of caregivers' advocacy for rights and inclusion.

The Medical Mission seeks to address a specific set of caregivers' non-emergency health issues in a culturally familiar context. The impermanence of migrant workers is recognized through the workings and nature of the Medical Mission. In essence, it is a fix that depends on available resources (e.g. Filipino military doctors from the UN) and is limited in its reach.

Vicente's comments show that health is a concern for caregivers in Israel, but that these concerns are managed in light of what families need and require, and that these health concerns are deeply imbedded in social factors in Israel and the Philippines such as the reciprocity of care. Another perspective on caregivers' holistic health concerns comes from Father Michael, a Filipino activist priest at a theological seminary in Jerusalem.

The Theological Seminary is located near Jerusalem's Old City on a quiet side street. I waited for Father Michael on the seminary's covered veranda until he appeared, wheeling a small suitcase. He showed me into one of the classrooms; he sat behind a desk in the front row and I sat opposite him. Father Michael asked for more information about my research. I summarized my interest in "caretaker's" health in Israel and my curiosity about his new health-related community organization. He immediately corrected my use of "caretaker" and supplied "caregiver" as the appropriate term. "Caregivers aren't cared for here," he told me with a joking smile that didn't reach his eyes, "they only give care." This launched his rapid-fire, thirty minute lecture that I absorbed as he talked.

Father Michael viewed caregivers' health in Israel based on his comparison with Italy's migrant work program that he knew well after years working in Italy. His critique of Israel came

from a sense of Israel's comparative reluctance to see caregivers as people, recognition that he thought Italy was more willing to extend to migrant workers. He brought his interest in health from his work in Italy coordinating projects to improve overseas workers' welfare, socio-economic status, and professional development, to Israel. In Israel he developed the Philippine-Israel Community Aid Association (PICAA), a new organization chartered to assist Filipinos' serious health claims including situations that involved a loss of visa due to severe illness.⁷⁵

Father Michael's new organization provided financial and general assistance to sick Filipinos without adequate resources in coordination with the Philippine Embassy, church resources, and Israeli doctors and hospitals. He described PICAA's mission as attending to caregivers' serious somatic health needs through community supported medical services. Father Michael explained that PICAA most commonly helped OFWs requiring surgery, or who suffer from entopic pregnancy, cancer, or strokes. He identified the important forms of support coming from Filipino clergy in Israel able to access necessary resources for the caregivers and liaise as necessary with the Embassy, health care providers and so forth in cooperation with the caregiver. He also spoke about hospital visits, assistance traveling back to the Philippines, and short term emergency financial support.

Additionally, the organization promotes perspectives of lifelong health, encouraging caregivers to plan for their health needs once they transition from Israel back to life in the Philippines. Reiterating Bryan's assessment that the Philippines is not an "insurance culture," Father Michael characterized PICAA as providing training in long term health planning and changing cultural attitudes towards planning for the future. I interjected, reiterating the Embassy's statement that a long tenure in Israel correlates to caregivers' negative health

⁷⁵ In 2010, a migrant worker's visa was invalidated after 90 days of sickness that prevented the caregiver from working. This indicates severe illness requiring hospitalization or other intensive forms of medical care.

outcomes. I asked Father Michael the same question Bryan dodged: if the instability and vulnerability of migrant status in Israel contributed to negative health outcomes. He answered, “maybe, yes.”

Father Michael asserted that Israel’s foreign work program exasperates the social and psychological stress that overseas labor migrants generally experience independent of the country they work in. He identified Israel’s unwillingness to allow caregivers permanent legal status or opportunities for family reunification as magnifying isolation from families which encourages negative health outcomes. Similarly, he worried about the absence of a strong religious community among Filipinos in Israel despite the many churches, seeing this as severely heightening experiences of stress for caregivers in Israel. He grew passionate, telling me that caregivers in Israel have profound problems with their spouses at home, children, families, and infidelities evidenced by what he heard during confession. Caregivers confessed incredible stress generated from their relationships with employers and family, and particularly tension and fear around visas.

Father Michael admitted that these problems exist in Filipino migrant communities in Italy, but that Italy’s system is structured to alleviate at least some of that stress. For example, Italy allows for family reunification when migrant workers secure citizenship or residency rights (similar to the US and Canada). The possibility of citizenship and the hope of family reunification is a powerful message from the Italian government that migrant caregivers are recognized as potentially worthy of citizenship. Furthermore, the Italian government implies through family reunification programs that im/migrants’ families and social ties have positive value in the eyes of the state. These forms of recognition reduces the social and psychological

stress OFWs feel in foreign national contexts where they are vulnerable, often experience discrimination, and are living away from their families for long periods of time.

Italy also provides opportunities for migrant care-workers to gain new skills and advance in a nursing career. Migrant workers are offered courses in Italian and professional nursing; a caregiver may sit for the nursing certification exam after a year of study. Italy needs nurses, and nursing offers a more stable professional occupation than caregiving.⁷⁶ Options to reunite with family members or to shift occupational niches are not available in Israel, causing Filipino caregivers no occupational movement or mobility. Father Michael did not suggest that caregivers in Israel are the only overseas workers to experience stress on account of migrant status and the associated forms of sociolegal discrimination, nor did he argue that the particular problems that caregivers bring to him via confession in Israel are unique. Rather, he dissected the structure of Israel's foreign work program in comparison to Italy's and found that while hardly perfect, Italy's program recognized holistic aspects of migrant workers' identity and provided avenues through which possibilities for greater social inclusion could be found.

While other labor receiving programs, such as in Hong Kong, limit migrant visas to prevent migrants from integrating into their societies, Israel allows caregivers to stay up to a decade or more as long as they fit within visa requirements. This permissibility is paired with exclusions and restrictions preventing migrant workers from stabilizing their lives in Israel as the question of their visa is *always* at the forefront. Some caregivers cannot stay past four years and three months while others stay for thirteen years, but none of them know when the end will come. They live in a state of uncertainty while they manage discrimination, social exclusions, various forms of vulnerability, and constant interactions with immigration (e.g. passport checks

⁷⁶ See Tacoli (1999) for a discussion of why some Filipino OFWs tactically do not apply for permanent residency options or enroll in nursing courses.

as discussed in Chapter 6). Thus, Father Michael asserts that Israel's system for managing migrant workers compounds the stressors inherent in labor migration without providing avenues through which to address these sources of stress, leading to potentially serious health outcomes.

As Israel's laws are unlikely to change, Father Michael proposed strengthening the Filipino caregiving community through the auspices of the church, investing in the ethical and moral character of the Christian community. Father Michael envisioned a stronger religious community character to diffuse the stress caused by restrictions that prevent migrant workers from applying for citizenship, reuniting with their families, or securing a future for themselves in Israel. He proposed a program similar to one he ran in Italy, involving lay leadership system designing and presenting community seminars on hard ethical choices⁷⁷ and to fortify religious values in communities. He theorized that these religiously-informed community networks are capable of challenging social isolation, providing support during difficult times, and creating a shared worldview that reinforces an individual's decision making in a disconnected context. Father Michael suggested such a community provides a "fix" for the stress incurred by living away from family, friends and home when the only options are to work and be alone, or to go home without employment. He did not suggest that these lay leadership teams could entirely prevent these stresses from acting on migrant workers; rather he saw these options as helping migrant workers in a system that doesn't value their personhood but which was unlikely to be responsive to the calls for change.

Without directly criticizing Israel, Father Michael communicated his belief that Israel's foreign work program does not work in caregivers' best interests. However, he criticized the policy-induced high turnover among caregivers for negatively affecting the mental and

⁷⁷ Father Michael's example was how to resist the temptations of adultery while living away from home for years at a time while combating loneliness, isolation, and feeling detached from loved ones.

emotional health of individual Filipino care providers and the elderly requiring care. I heard this complaint repeatedly from caregivers, how the visa limitations forced them out of Israel where they wanted to stay and work with the cultural skills they gained. Yet, the Israeli government prioritized a system that made experienced caregivers “illegal” and recruited a constant stream of new migrant workers without any language skills or comprehension of Israeli culture. Father Michael highlighted how this practice harmed the Israeli elderly requiring care as well. In his opinion, Filipino caregivers drastically improve the health of their elderly employers in private households, the *beit avot*, or hospital because caregivers address the overall health of the elderly or infirm person. Companionship, affection, sympathy, concern, and social connections are integral to the care *metaplot* provide, constituting a holistic approach to care. The elderly person often malingers or dies when their caregiver resigns, is fired by the family, or goes on vacation.

Father Michael also critiqued the state’s provision of one caregiver per elderly person even if the older person suffered from serious illness. In these cases, caregivers often suffer lack of sleep, social isolation, and at times emotional abuse while providing the elderly person with care. If a caregiver finds a “reliever” in order to take a day off or visit family in the Philippines they take the risk of the elderly person growing very ill or dying during their absence. Father Michael advocated for a two-caregiver system to alleviate exhaustion, allowing for better care, and to provide the elderly employer with a second caregiver she or he already knew and trusted when one caregiver took vacations. Father Michael became quite animated on this point, raising his voice before he caught himself and regulated his volume again, clearly seeing the Israeli system as disadvantaging caregivers *and* the elderly. He insisted that no one “wins” in the

current system of high turnover except for the agencies.⁷⁸ Father Michael actively repressed his agitations, but said sharply that when anyone critiques the Israeli system he or she is accused of anti-Semitism. In effect, this anti-Semitic label prevents anyone from naming problems in the system, even those problems that are harming Israeli citizens.

Father Michael represented three aspects of Filipino health concerns: serious illness and a shortage of resources such as health insurance; the policies that structure Israel's foreign work program to marginalize caregivers and put them under undo stress; and the lack of strong religious commitment in Israel's Filipino community which he connects to caregivers' unstable situation based on the closures of the migrant work system. These factors together comprise the problems Father Michael saw in Israel's system and the areas where he sought to intervene. Despite his critique of the system, Father Michael's solution did not directly confront policies or the general attitude Israel displays towards migrant workers. Rather, he created a separate sphere via the church and PICAA to address these problems within the migrant caregiver community, bypassing both the Israeli and the Philippine State. His pessimism about the plausibility of political change led him to seek informal solutions to caregivers' struggles with well-being.

Like the caregivers advocating for greater rights, Father Michael saw Israel's reluctance to recognize migrant workers as potential citizens (or deserving expanded opportunities in Israel such as career development) as problematic and damaging to the well-being of caregivers. Unlike caregivers, he clearly believed that it was pointless expecting what he considered to be justice from Israeli politics. Where caregivers argued that they have a right to belong and made certain kinds of claims based on their rights-based view, Father Michael rhetorically established Israel as unjust. Based on this assessment, he sought solutions through alternate informal routes

⁷⁸ All liberal civil rights organizations in Israel shared this view that manpower recruiting agencies benefited from the high turnover in migrant caregivers while all other parties experienced detrimental effects.

to health even while in partnership with Israeli institutions to achieve these possible forms of care. Yet, caregivers did routinely make claims that were dependent on the notion that Israel could change its laws and practices. Many caregivers were willing to make changes to lifestyle in order to fit into Israel's prioritized citizenship categories as a way to prompt the state to recognize their personhood and worthiness for expanded rights. These rights, in their view, were the necessary step to protect their health from the stress of a migrant status.

Salad, Diets, and Eating Like a Responsible Citizen

Diet, food, and consumption patterns are politically charged, particularly in cross-cultural contexts. The food a person eats marks him or her in relation to cultural ideals, influencing a person's access to the culturally approved dietary resources thought to contribute to good health. Food represents home and familiar practices, constituting a central part of daily cultural performance. Caregivers also discuss their home cuisine as symbolic of Israeli society's strong negative reactions to Filipinos and their cultural practices. As Farah illustrated in Chapter Three, food becomes a contentious area; it represents concerns about health and eating "right," it represents a line between cultural insiders and outsiders (e.g. dietary laws), and it is a mode through which social hierarchies are articulated. Tension between caregivers and their employers over food can leave migrant workers feeling disrespected, discriminated against, and as if they have to defend their cultural identity and practices as normal in an othering context. Conversely, Filipinos making claims of belonging often cite their commitment to Israeli food as part of their embodied conversion to an Israeli lifestyle. In these claims, caregivers use food to indicate a shifting identity that aligns with conditions for belonging within Israel's body politic, seeking greater respect and the ability to operate as a social and legal agent in society (see Chapter 5).

Bryan mentioned in the section above that insurance companies attribute migrant workers' greater susceptibility to heart attacks and strokes to the change in diet Israel prompts. He dismissed this finding, but international concepts of health outcomes often focus on diet and dietary changes. Obesity recently joined malnutrition as a major global health concern, reworking discourses on diet, exercise, genetics, illness, and individual responsibility for managing a body mass index (BMI) assigned by age, gender, ethnicity, and height. A person's diet and physical appearance have become measures of their social value and the burden he or she places on society, contributing to narratives of what constitutes a "good" citizen. Diet and health are strong discourses in Israel and the Philippines, although in the Philippines serious concerns about malnutrition compete and correspond with critiques of obesity. Malnutrition takes the form of Protein Energy Malnutrition (PEM), micronutrient malnutrition, and obesity resulting from inadequate access to a diversified diet in the Philippines, particularly among children.

Nationally, the Filipino diet is considered inadequate in all categories except protein.⁷⁹ Caregivers, especially those who originate from more rural areas in the Philippines, told me about food concerns in their provinces and their contributions to help their families ease the burden of food expense. In addition to remittances, caregivers send large boxes home every few months filled with basic food staples, including rice. Rice is a primary agricultural product in the Philippines, but due to the relatively small percentage of land in the Philippines suitable for rice farming the country still depends heavily on imports for staple foods. Caregiver eased the household budget and increased their family's food security by procuring these goods in Israel where these goods are relatively less expensive and sending them to the Philippines by boat.

⁷⁹ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Nutrition and Consumer Protection: Philippines. http://www.fao.org/ag/agn/nutrition/phl_en.stm

Food thus is a measure of a family's economic security, a cultural indicator, and a measure of health behaviors. Food also gauges an individual's attentiveness to performing responsible citizenship, where ideas of diet and nutrition and proper BMI represents more than weight and general health. Rhetoric pertaining to weight, diet, and associated illnesses are applied to citizens and other subjects of the state to imply that those people who do not engage in preferred health practices are burdening the state by engaging in risk behaviors for heart attacks, strokes, diabetes, etc. and acting irresponsibly. This elides the social context of food and blurs the conditions under which some people can eat "healthily" and why other people struggle to achieve the normative goal. Eating habits, bodily appearance, and health concerns become measures of worthiness and sites of critical comparisons.

Migrant workers are particularly subject to equations between bodily appearance and social worth. To be selected for an overseas contract, Filipina and Filipino applicants must meet the receiving nation's ideas of attractiveness and physical appearance based on gender and ethnic stereotypes. Prospective migrant caregivers must have nursing skills, but a physical appearance and personality traits that align with the host nation's ideals for gendered domestic workers are as important as having the necessary skills for eldercare (Mahler and Pessar 2006; Tyner 2009). Israeli recruiters look for migrant caregivers who are attractive, competent, but also passive and docile (Drori 2009; fieldnotes).

In addition to selecting for physical appearance and docile personality traits, host countries routinely institute policies meant to control migrant workers' bodies and to create clear separations between migrant workers and the citizenry of the host nation – literally and figuratively. In many countries, migrant workers are prohibited from sexual relations of any sort but particularly with the host nation's citizens; routine mandatory pregnancy tests are a condition

of employment; and curfews prevent migrant workers from freedom of movement. The enforcement of these forms of control differ across nations and occupations, but there is a consistent concern about how migrant workers' bodies (from the threat of illness, to "irresponsible" pregnancies, to their mere visible presence in society) might threaten the well being of the nation.

Israeli labor recruiters want to offer employers attractive, pleasant, appealing *Filipini* caregivers, knowing that many Israeli employers (or their families) find higher social worth in foreign workers who are attractive with a pleasant demeanor (Drori 2009; fieldnotes).⁸⁰ Caregivers take on responsibility for elderly employers by nature of their job duties, but their symbolic value resonates as gendered, racialized, domestic employees. Additionally, the sexuality, reproduction, and visible presence of migrant workers are of great concern within Israeli society and politics, engaging in different modes of discipline and control or attempts thereof. Dieting, food, and health are not only individual concerns, but are linked into larger fields of meaning that structure overseas work contracts, employment, and the empirical bodily realities of migrant work (Mahler and Pessar 2006; Tyner 2009).

Caregivers used food to symbolically differentiate from, or align themselves with, Israeli society. In moments of differentiation caregivers strive to maintain a separate, protected Filipino identity in the context of marginalization as foreigners in Israeli society. There were caregivers within the FCO whose employers enjoyed eating the Filipino food their caregivers prepared for them, or who did not have strong opinions about their caregiver preparing personal food in their kitchen. Yet, most caregivers regaled me with stories of their employers complaining about how

⁸⁰ Recruiters also balance the appeal of Filipino workers based on the training they receive before migrating and their general ability to pick up at least some Hebrew relatively quickly with the availability of migrant caregivers from India, Sri Lanka, and Nepal who are considered to be less confident and more easily managed within the household.

Filipino food smelled or their concerns about the ingredients necessary to prepare it (pertaining to dietary restrictions). As a result, it was common for me to hear that employers restricted which foods caregivers could bring into the apartment and/or prepare. The employers' complaints operated within and reinforced social norms, established and reinforced social hierarchies of citizen-insiders and foreign worker-outsiders, and opened a space to make proclamations about which culture produces legitimate knowledge about health and health practices.

Food also provides a symbolic space for migrant workers to conceptualize what constitutes their socially appropriate body within Israel, and how the Filipino body articulates with neoliberal notions of the individual's responsibility to achieve ideal health. This manifested in assertions of Filipino food as *healthier* than Israeli food in the face of Israeli disapproval of Philippine cuisine, retorting that Filipinos are less of a social burden because of their "healthy" diets. Some Filipino caregivers also used food to symbolically show their alignment with Israeli culture, articulating their comfort preparing and eating Israeli cuisine to emphasize their integration into Israeli norms and practices (discussed in Chapter 5).

I draw from three ethnographic examples to illustrate these points. The first is a discussion of salad as an area of contention about health and diet between Israelis and Filipino caregivers. In the two particular conversations that I juxtapose below, salad represents larger issues of knowledge, sophistication, and possession of the necessary subjectivity to participate in industrialized society. The second example focuses on Romeo's short discussion of the Filipino diet in contrast to the Israeli diet, offering a counterpoint to the salad discussion in his claims that Israelis are much healthier than Filipinos. This example draws out questions of how food preferences reflect the symbolic ways that migrant workers seek to align themselves within

Israeli culture. Finally, I recount a lecture given by the Caregiver's Union on healthy eating and diets presented by an Israeli dietician. These lectures provided mini-lessons on how to eat according to Israeli national ideals, and how to break bad eating habits that are implicitly encoded as specifically Filipino. All of these examples understand food to be about more than what a person or community eats, but instead to resonate with how caregivers engage with the production of their own well-being.

Salads

Filipino caregivers and Israelis saturated my data with discussions of salad. The mere mention of “health” prompted their opinions on proper ways to prepare and eat salad, and their connections between health and arrangements of vegetables. The Israeli diet prioritizes salad, in part because vegetables are grown locally and are relatively inexpensive. In cafes, the “healthy” option is usually a salad high in protein. While the English and Tagalog⁸¹ ‘salad’ and the Hebrew *salat* seem similar enough in pronunciation, the concept and cultural investment in salad/*salat* are quite divergent and telling. Their social coding of salad proved that the concept of a salad and what it symbolizes is highly culturally variable. Many people in my research community made a direct link between salad/*salat* and cultural notions of health, providing important insights not only to ideas of good nutrition but also to how health is managed in unfamiliar cultural contexts. Moreover, the subtle judgments of unfamiliar cultures, the manipulations of global hierarchies, and the jockeying around self-representation through food shows that food is not just what a person eats, but furthermore offers a dynamic perception of their place in local social contexts and global systems.

⁸¹ Salad is a frequent yet English-borrowed word in Tagalog, while *ensalada* is a local term (borrowed from the Spanish). Most Filipinos I knew used salad rather than *ensalada* or a word in another Filipino dialect.

In Israel, the vegetables in *salat* are cut very small and do not usually include leafy greens (e.g. lettuce or spinach), and are frequently paired with bread. *Salat* is inexpensive and considered healthy, constituting a complete meal with a protein source (e.g. tuna fish, cheese, chick peas, egg) and served with a small loaf of bread. Israelis also make *salat* sandwiches by spooning the vegetables into pita rolls with *labane* (soft white cheese). *Salat* is served all day in cafes and restaurants, and can conceivably be consumed at all meals. It is a pervasive food that you expect to see as a regular part of the Israeli diet.

Similar to Israelis, Filipinos express clear notions of what is and isn't considered salad. Their salads are heavily coated with mayonnaise-based dressings, and often include some sort of leafy green and a different composition of vegetables. Salad almost never appeared at weekend potlucks or parties because Filipinos found it difficult to find the correct ingredients to make salad to meet their preferences. Fruit salads replaced vegetable salads, also mixed with mayonnaise or sour cream dressings. Filipino caregivers described their adoption of Israeli cuisine as a difficult part of their immersion process, both in terms of adjusting personal tastes but also emerging from frustrations over trying to eat in a manner they considered healthy. Filipinos and Israelis used salad as a metaphor to articulate notions of health and to evaluate cultural correctness about health knowledge, values, and behaviors.

Only a minority of Filipino caregivers told me that they preferred Israeli food to their own national cuisine. Caregivers with long tenure in Israel showed proficiency in navigating Israeli cuisine and ordering local specialties; I was never permitted to order *falafel* for myself when eating at a street stand with Filipinos as they wanted to show me the "correct" way to order. These caregivers enjoyed some aspects of Israeli food, but they made it clear to me that Filipino food is healthier and generally better. They found Israeli food to be low in protein and

generally bland. Filipinos learned to integrate *salat* into their daily dietary expectations, but evidence that they did not entirely internalize the Israeli logic about *salat* emerged in small comments and jokes: at a shared weekend apartment looking at a table filled with food, “Hoy! There’s nothing to eat, where’s the *salat*?” was met with gregarious laughter; a caregiver’s sardonic comment when complaining about a particularly bad week with an employer, “I should be a beauty queen [e.g. thin], eating nothing but *salat*.”

Despite comments and jokes like these, most caregivers in my research community showed unwillingness to directly criticize Israeli food, as many of them mobilized their relationship with Israeli food as evidence of their integration into Israeli society. However, a recently arrived caregiver spoke openly to me about his views on Israeli cuisine, explicitly voicing the general feelings that more experienced caregivers hinted at but did not speak to directly. Mike arrived in Israel only months before I met him, and he spoke his opinions on Israeli *salat* without the affable desire to fit into Israeli society that caregivers with longer tenure demonstrated. Mike voiced his personal opinion in the discussion quoted below, but the sentiments he bluntly states were present in less frank comments made by other caregivers.

Mike was twenty-six years old when I met him on the FCO’s trip to the UN Camp in the Golan Heights. Mike worked in a large hospital in the Philippines as a Registered Nurse. He achieved an important supervisory position at the hospital with a lot of responsibility early in his career, but his inability to earn enough money to marry, buy a car or a house, or to eventually support children or family members prompted him to consider overseas employment. Mike decided on Israel after Maria, his aunt, recommended him to an Israeli recruiter. His professional training and career success in the Philippines didn’t sit easily with his less-than-stimulating work in the suburbs of The City caring for one elderly man who couldn’t speak or interact much due to

debilitating illness. Mike couldn't hide his dubious opinions of Israel or the efficacy of migrant nursing systems.

We reached the outskirts of The City when our UN escort asked if we could stop for them to shop for groceries before dropping us off in the City Center. The driver pulled over on a busy street near a seafood shop and a grocery store that catered to Filipinos. I stayed in the van with Mike as the UN soldiers and the four other caregivers got out.

Mike asked me why I didn't go with the others, and I told him that I don't eat seafood. He gave me a surprised look. "But, you eat pork?" he asked before lecturing me in his capacity as a nurse about the merits of pork, proving his "medical" opinion that pork is a very healthy, "clean meat" despite Jewish dietary prohibitions. He related disapprovingly that Israelis don't eat enough protein in general but specifically due to their unwillingness to eat pork, thus impoverishing their nutrition.

I asked him if he liked Israeli food. He made a slight face and shook his head no.

"There's too much salad." He told me, looking a bit worn out as he said it. "They cut up vegetables and pour oil over them and call it a salad. It's not good for you. Oil isn't dressing for a salad. They think mayonnaise is unhealthy, but it's not. It has eggs and protein and natural things. It's fine for you."

I made a joke about the abundance of salad in Israel and he nodded gravely, not finding it funny. "I don't like the food." He told me, looking tired. "It's not healthy. Not enough protein and just vegetables in the salad."

"What do you eat here?" I asked.

He sighed and said, "There are only vegetables for food here," before talking more about pork's nutritional value.

Shortly after I had this conversation with Mike, Nurit and I discussed her views on salad. In the same conversation where we discussed the potential dangers of cleaning agents (see above), Nurit and I debated the cultural role of salad. Again, I'm using Nurit's personal views as representative of similar comments I heard Israelis make in the NGO office and in other social exchanges that I was present for.⁸² When Nurit asked me why insurance companies claim that Israeli food is linked to Filipino caregivers' health problem, I suggested that changes in diet can have a strong affect on some people. She nodded enthusiastically and said, "Yes, they [Filipinos] don't like the food. They don't like *salat*."

"Yes." I confirmed, and this set her off in two directions.

First, she argued that the Israeli diet is very healthy – perhaps healthier than any of the "other" western diets. After a long discussion about American food politics, I drew the conversation back to Filipino complaints about the sheer amount of salad in the Israeli diet. Nurit made a face and began talking about "types" of salad. She provided me with a long discourse on the difference between American salad where the vegetables are cut large, Polish salad where the vegetables are "medium cut," and Israeli salad that is finely chopped. She tried to convince me that finely cut salad has a higher nutritional value, and that this style of salad is what Filipinos find unpleasant. I mentioned that there were many factors that caregivers mentioned not liking to me, but Nurit asked bluntly,

"Don't Filipinos eat vegetables at home?"

"Some, but not as many raw vegetables."

⁸² The most unexpected of these social exchanges was at a dinner party I attended at an Israeli friend's house. Her friends asked what I was doing in Israel, and when they heard that I was researching Filipino caregivers' health they erupted into questions directed at me as to why caregivers (they all had grandparents with caregivers) didn't know how to make something as simple as *salat* correctly.

This made sense to her, as one of her relatives married a person of Chinese decent, and the Chinese side of the family also disliked raw vegetables, which Nurit clearly thought was odd. In fact, she asked me directly, “Isn’t that weird?”

I mentioned that the Filipino diet is very high in protein, such as pork and fish but also chicken and some beef. In comparison, the Israeli diet offers much less protein, particularly meat-based. Filipino caregivers thought that Israelis lack sufficient protein in their diet. Nurit dismissed this, saying that this was completely wrong, and that Filipinos don’t understand nutrition.

At the time, her last comment that Filipinos don’t understand nutrition held this conversation in my mind. I spent the bus ride back to my apartment ruminating on the value judgments embedded in accusations of not understanding nutrition. In an American context these accusations are often directed at economically struggling individuals who are associated with consuming large quantities of fast food. Affluent American discourse associates the negative health outcomes more likely among the poor with their dietary choices, and categorizes the poor as lazy and indulgent in their food choices, or ignorant of good nutritional habits. What does it communicate when Israelis label Filipino migrant workers as not understanding nutrition based on their preference for Filipino cuisine and their general dislike of *salat*? Similarly, what are the deeper implications of Filipino caregivers stating that Israelis have misconceptions about the nutritional value of pork and mayonnaise, and are lacking important levels of protein in their diet? In this context, I suggest that Israelis and Filipinos use food as a means to articulate the value of cultural knowledge that each nationality constructs, and to negotiate notions of what factors make a group deserving of social inclusion.

Filipino caregivers also associate their ability to shape their own diet as an important factor in self-care, and as a common sticking point with employers. Caregivers grew very agitated about their employers complaining about the smell of the food caregivers cooked for themselves, and expressed frustration over their inability to eat as they wished in their employer's home. They reacted not only to changes in their diet that they could not control, but moreover to feeling disrespected by their employer concerning their food preferences and cultural practices. This respect mattered to them because of how food came to mark Filipinos as explicitly not-Israeli based on their consumption of taboo foods (e.g. pork and shellfish), and emphasized caregivers' foreign different-ness in contexts where they sought inclusion. Food and diet not only marked Filipino caregivers as gentile others in the Israeli context, but it marked them specifically as migrant workers whose bodies are subject to production first by global labor recruitment practices and then by the norms of the labor-receiving society.

The caregivers in my research community joked routinely about being on a diet and social conversation among caregivers included humorous jokes about weight. The tag line, "I'm on a diet" predictably accompanied occasions where Filipinos ate together at events or in weekend apartments. This comment did not communicate actual shifting behaviors associated with diet and health, but rather the continuation of eating large quantities of food that by global public health standards do not meet ideal nutritional measures. It was almost a cynical, ironic statement indicating personal deviation from an ideal but also a shared cultural understanding about the politics of food, weight, and appearance. Filipino caregivers made these joking comments to each other as part of a larger narrative of health in the Philippines, but they also constituted a quiet act of resistance against Israeli food, and notions of "good health" that challenged Filipino cultural food norms.

Romeo offered a different view on diet, health, and social influences. When he said that he was “watching his diet” he actually meant it. He expounded individualistic and conservative views on migrant workers’ social conditions, unintentionally giving the counterpoint to his peers’ opinions. We were talking about life in the Philippines compared to life in Israel as we rode the bus home from a FCO event. He finished telling me that social groups often encouraged bad choices rather than supporting positive changes in a person’s life, explaining the care he took when committing to friendships and social obligations. Suddenly, he shifted gears and began to talk about food.

“You saw how they ate today. White rice, meat, almost no vegetables. And we eat this five times a day. Look at how Israelis eat: vegetables every day, salad, and they only eat three times a day.” He compared the life expectancy of Filipino men (mid-60s) to Israeli men (mid-70s to early 80s). “That’s a lot of years we’re missing, because of how we eat.” He talked about food-related illnesses such as type two diabetes and beriberi⁸³ as further evidence of the problems with the Filipino diet.

“You need balance. In the kinds of food you eat, but also in your exercise and food. If you don’t get exercise, then you need to eat less and more healthy things.” He asserted. “I live a structured life. I get up every day, I work my hours, I get my exercise. I eat vegetables like Israelis. Most Filipinos, they don’t have structure and they don’t try to live right or change the things that make them unhealthy.” He then said, “You know, a lot of our jobs aren’t very hard. We help someone get up and dressed, we cook the food, once a week we clean, and we go to the grocery store, but mostly there is a lot of time to sit with a computer or TV. It’s boring, but most

⁸³ Beriberi is a disease that originates from nutritional deficiencies that in the Philippines are linked to the over-reliance in the daily diet on foods such as white rice that do not provide adequate amounts of essential vitamins or minerals.

Filipinas [and he did specifically gender this] don't use this time to exercise. They just sit and eat.”

Romeo's opinion supports the relationship between individual worth and diet, and echoes a dismissive characterization of caregiving labor. Romeo's comfort navigating Israeli culture was second only to Faith's within the FCO community, and his job conferred a higher status than most as he worked in a nursing home. While Romeo engaged in the “proud Pinoy” discourse that wove through the Filipino community, he admired Israeli culture and lifestyle. Romeo challenged the “healthiness” of Filipino food and lifestyle by claiming that Filipina women didn't attend to their health by overeating, eating unhealthy foods, and refraining from exercise. But, his argument only considered life expectancy as a measure of dietary impact. His comments elided other health concerns that can emerge through diet (e.g. the much higher Israeli consumption of sodium and bread), and he negated the cultural importance embedded in certain dietary practices. Romeo's opinions show the degree to which he integrated Israeli values into his own thinking and habits, and the discomfort he felt around caregivers who did not follow the same path.

Romeo's dietary choices, his commitment to exercise, and his attempt to balance work and personal care are part of his efforts to assume an Israeli subjectivity. Romeo fought to stay in Israel during complications renewing his visa and after his employer died, using his networks of Israeli social connections. He presented himself as a Filipino who fit into Israeli society and who could adapt to the social norms and ideals. His ideas about exercise and diet mimicked conversations in Israel about “being healthy” similar to how Mark and Faith insisted on ordering falafel for me because they “knew how to do it like an Israeli.” Food prompts certain kinds of performances about preferences, social hierarchies (who is ordering, who is preparing the food,

what language is used to order, was slang used appropriately in the course of ordering), and appropriate bodily comportment that communicate a public identity.

As discussed above, bodily appearance and diet articulate with national and global ideas about “worthy” and “responsible” individual behaviors. This discourse on proper diet as a method of cultural uplift, elevating people with bad eating habits out of disease environments, was modeled by the nutrition lecture at a Caregiver’s Union meeting.

Caregiver’s Union Diet and Nutrition Lecture

A group of Hebrew University students attempted to organize migrant caregivers into a union during my fieldwork. Their main activities in 2010-2011 entailed organizing protests and rallies to advocate for migrant workers’ expanded rights, and hosting four seminars on health issues confronting the migrant caregiving community. The student organizers envisioned the caregivers’ union spearheading a Health Rights project, and these lectures began the conversation about migrant caregivers’ rights. The lectures took place in a Jerusalem community center on Saturday nights.⁸⁴

The first meeting of the Health Rights lectures offered tips and strategies for maintaining good health through dietary choices. Ronit, a clinical dietitian from a prestigious Israeli research hospital, presented the lecture with a particular focus on preventing obesity and diabetes. She linked these two “worldwide epidemics” to the sheer amount of “non-food” that people eat, and to the problematic “Western diet.” Her knowledge framework infused global public health norms with Israeli cultural beliefs about diet and food; the caregivers in the room showed their

⁸⁴ This posed a problem for caregivers in other parts of Israel who couldn’t attend because public transportation does not run on Shabbat, and *sheiruts* are more expensive during this time. Also, caregivers in other parts of Israel would have to leave their employment very early to arrive in Jerusalem right at sundown, and then would need a place to spend the night.

familiarity with these ideas through their attentive nodding and murmurs of recognition as she talked.

Ronit began with the premise that no one *chooses* to be overweight. She set the stage for her lecture by stating that the largest threat to good health are the kinds of food available at reasonable costs. Yet, most of what she discussed pertained to individual choices about food that ignored the cost involved in eating food included in global and Israeli norms for a “healthy” diet. Even though vegetables and fruit are relatively inexpensive in Israel, it is still much cheaper to buy bread products or processed snacks. Her lecture did not particularly take into account the dietary norms in the labor-sending countries represented by the migrant workers in the room (e.g. from India, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, and Nepal). Nor did she shape the lecture to suggest ways to mediate cultural food preferences and ideas of health; her lecture spoke to norms and ideals that were vested with authority and status in global and local rhetoric. Her advice for dietary change prioritized portion size, avoiding foods that are too energy-dense such as bread and other carbohydrates, and cutting out all “non-foods” that are sugary or very salty (i.e. all processed foods, fast foods, and soft drinks).

Over the course of an hour, Ronit walked through the problems with eating excessive amounts of breads, carbohydrates, sugary foods, and high sodium foods, which in Israel (like many countries) are easy, cheap foods to procure. Additionally, these foods tend to be portable making it easy for caregivers to snack on them while waiting in doctors’ offices, sitting in the park, or on the go while running errands. Ronit repeatedly returned to the health problems caused by excess calories and their effect on body mass index (BMI). In particular she delved into the correlation between high BMI and obesity-produced health problems such as diabetes and heart disease. She counseled that the “correct diet” consists of mainly fruit, vegetables,

“pulses” (beans, lentils, etc.), nuts, very low frequency of meat and fish, and low-fat dairy products.

There were looks of consternation around the room as Ronit outlined the ideal diet that differed drastically from the food Filipinos ate at social events or cooked for themselves. Ronit praised many aspects of the Israeli diet (which is also her own diet) that many Filipinos assert that they don’t like. Ronit conceded that Israelis eat too much high-fat cheese, too much bread, and they use too much salt, but she insisted many times that in order to be healthy that migrant workers should eat “Israeli” food, or food “like that in the Mediterranean.”

She concluded by condemning white rice. The murmurs from around the room escalated in volume, but the crowd of migrant caregivers listened as Ronit argued for substituting brown rice and whole grains for white rice. She reminded her audience that beriberi became a problem when white rice replaced brown rice in Asian countries (nods went around the room with murmurs of agreement), implicitly recognizing the role of colonialism and economic globalization in Asian nations. As Ronit emphasized sympathetically, brown rice does not cause beriberi and is more nutritionally complete.⁸⁵

Ronit opened the question and answer period to a few moments of uncertain quiet. I was interested that none of the caretakers or union activists brought up the limitations of an employer’s control over food that shape caregivers’ dietary choices. While Ronit outlined an ideal Israeli diet, this model of health was not always reflected in Israeli homes, especially not in elderly Israeli’s apartments. Israel’s labor law obligates employers to provide adequate food for caregivers. However, caregivers frequently do not control what kinds of food are purchased at

⁸⁵ Ronit also said that none of the Israelis in the room would know what beriberi was, but she suspected that all or most of the migrant workers would. This turned out to be correct, the Israeli coordinators asking for more information about the disease they had never heard of. Ronit stated that the Israeli ignorance of beriberi was due to the relatively low occurrence of white rice in the Israeli diet, but then proceeded to warn against the “Western diet” that overemphasized bread.

the grocery store or shuk for their employer's household, and furthermore are often instructed on how to prepare foods, such as the amount of salt or other ingredients to use.

Ronit's professional advice echoed pervasive global discourses about diet and health, but it overlooked basic realities live-in caregivers cope with. Many caregivers spend a few hours on pleasant days in the park with their elderly employer, snacking on prepackaged foods they often shared with their employer and other caregivers. McDonald's meals sometimes substituted for prepackaged foods, but McDonald's fell into Ronit's "non-food" category. Buying and preparing healthy food is more expensive than buying snacks like the popular Israeli *Bamba* (a puffed snack that tastes like peanut butter), and inconvenient when taking it out of the house, or when leaving the employer with another caregiver in the park to run and get snacks for the whole group. Faith, Mark, Maria, Romeo, and other caregivers with a long tenure in Israel contentedly ate falafel, sharwma, and hummus from the street stands, but these options also did not entirely fit the standards that Ronit illustrated. Dietary choices also structure socializing opportunities, such as at the weekend meals and trips to McDonalds. Romeo ate very carefully at social events, limiting his food intake to a certain extent, but most caregivers engaged in eating as part of their social activities.

Within my research community, Filipino social events involved eating heavy meals in large quantities. The hosts viewed it as rude if guests ate sparingly. Eating Filipino food became part of the socializing and also a way to reassert identity. Yet, caregivers who seek to align their identity with Israel have multiple negotiations around food. Caregivers balanced their Filipino identity with their new Israeli subjectivity when discussing their desire for citizenship. Their identity as a "proud Pinoy" didn't affect their desire to "become Israeli"; the caregivers in my research community did not see an inherent contradiction in a Filipino-Israeli dual identity (see

Chapter Three for a discussion of transmigration). Filipinos who wanted Israeli citizenship struggled against views that mirror Nurit's, reducing them to an ignorant culture only capable of producing unskilled human labor.

The caregivers who attended the Caregivers' Union lecture on diet and nutrition were interested in health and open to change. Ronit proposed a set of dietary regimens that match global trends in health while prioritizing the Israeli diet as preferable. Ronit expressed a set of global and local ideals for health in the context of a union meeting, the audience comprised of caregivers who expressed an interest in advocating for their expanded rights in Israel. The student organizers proposed a health rights project that began with lectures on how to properly attend to individual diet, weight, and health. The student organizers and Ronit intended this lecture to be informative, helpful, and to increase the caregivers' knowledge about health.

Yet, in the context of health rights and producing union members who can negotiate with the Israeli government for greater rights, the message of *who is an ideal subject of the state* was articulated. The caregivers in the audience were exposed to a mini-lesson in how to be an ideal Israeli based on eating practices. Thus, the Caregivers' Union organizers engaged in two kinds of work: 1) they communicated the kinds of changes that migrant workers ideally must engage in to be considered appropriate subjects of the state; and 2) they prioritized health in terms of individual choices and actions while eliding the power relations that complicate caregivers' choices about their diet.

In the FCO community, most caregivers integrated some Israeli / Middle Eastern foods into their diet although they did not always voice their pleasure in this necessity. Some caregivers, like Romeo and also Faith, expressed that they preferred the Israeli diet over Filipino foods. Farah (Chapter 3) and Mike provide counterpoints, rejecting Israeli food outright as

unhealthy and/or unpalatable. However, caregivers generally demonstrated their integration of Israeli and Filipino diets and food preparation, weaving together a complex representation of their particular cultural preferences while adopting Israeli food norms.

As an example, at all Filipino outings there would be bags of Bamba, an exact mirroring of beverage presentation and distribution as I experienced when with Israeli friends, a plate of produce recently procured and a discussion about where they found the best deal that week around the City for produce (“*ha’ya shevey me’od!*”), and when seasonally available there were pomegranate seeds in abundance. When I was out with caregivers, they wanted to eat at falafel stands and compare the quality for me of all the stands they had been to in The City as we ate. They liked to stop at bakeries for Israeli bread, and they would occasionally eat salad with *labane* in rolls. These practices are common of people who live in a new cultural context for extended periods of time (I also adapted to the Israeli diet although my general diet was much closer to the Israeli diet to begin with) but these caregivers used food explicitly as part of their health claims. For some caregivers, the cultural negotiations over food and what it signifies gave them ideas about how to formulate a legitimate Israeli identity through eating habits. Overall, concerns over food emphasized the foreignness of Filipino caregivers in Israel, caused them to feel as if Israelis saw their culture through a belittling lens, and challenged their ideas about how to live healthy lives while working as caregivers in Israel.

Situating Claims from a Right to Health as Well-Being

Caregivers claim that their marginal position in Israel makes them unhealthy. These claims ranged from discussing a multitude of social factors that caused them stress and produced a sense of being unwell, to actual occasional statements linking the instability and vulnerability of migrant life to negative health outcomes. One caregiver told me explicitly, “the immigration

police are bothering me all the time and I am sick from it.” Their use of health expands the term into social contexts, and they associate their negative health outcomes with social determinants. Yet, as Powers and Faden show, thinking about caregivers’ expanded health claims as *well-being* permits a specific discussion about which aspect of social life is harmed by social determinants causing negative health outcomes.

When caregivers claim that their health is negatively impacted when they are not afforded respect by Israelis or by Israeli policies, or when they encounter limitations on their self-determination due to migrant status, what are the specific, codified rights that migrant workers are entitled to but remain unfulfilled? Furthermore, what are the specific, measurable negative outcomes for migrant workers’ health when citizenship rights or permanent residency are not offered by the state? Powers and Faden ask if *all* inequalities constitute injustices (2006:3). The world is structured by inequalities, but how do we establish the relationship between differentials and serious ethical failures? Health is a site of gross inequalities that further affect an individual’s ability to live optimally. These inequalities and correlated outcomes provide the grounds to make moral claims about the social structures that disadvantage certain individuals and groups, pointing out the larger policies and goals reinscribing and reinforcing these structures meant to privilege some while disadvantaging others in society.

Claims that speak to relationships between health and socio-legal status (e.g. citizenship, permanent residency, asylum and refugee status) evidence “health” as a category that exceeds biomedical perspectives. Instead, health is a condition of the body, the mind, and of social status working in partnership to create a set of holistic experiences affecting personhood, social relations, and the experience of living. The World Health Organization recognizes the holistic nature of health by defining it as, “Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-

being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”⁸⁶ However, health is not only a physical, mental, or social status, but has also become a measure of worthiness, responsibility, and an indicator of personal and national character.

Ticktin’s discussion of France’s humanitarian exception to grant ill migrants abbreviated legal status shows the dangers of using “health” as an evaluation of worthiness as it has the potential to recognize only the suffering body at the cost of the individual’s political or social agency (Ticktin 2006). For migrants to gain legal status through this humanitarian exception they must perform their health status for officials in order to properly embody suffering and to illicit compassion. To succeed, migrants cannot prove too strategic or too effective an agent negotiating for their own health – they must be viewed as deserving of pity and empathy, requiring assistance to survive.

Ticktin’s research provides a valuable consideration of what happens to an individual’s subjectivity when health becomes the narrow rationale for citizenship or legal rights (also see Petryna 2002). Ticktin’s analysis emerges from non-citizens claiming legal status from the state based on health, providing cosmetic similarities to the claims Filipino caregivers are making in Israel. The important difference is while the migrants Ticktin discusses suffer from defined illness that is classified as life threatening, the Filipino migrants I discuss are not critically ill. Rather, they argue that their health in the form of well-being is at stake, contending that their mental, physical, and social integrity would diminish without legal status. Migrant workers in my research are fighting for expanded legal rights because they are claiming the category “foreign worker” reduces them to economic agents and removes the possibilities for their social

⁸⁶ World Health Organization 1948. “Definition of Health.” <http://www.who.int/about/definition/en/print.html>

and political participation. Unlike the French government, Israel does not offer migrant workers humanitarian consideration based on a particular illness or threats to well-being.

Despite this critical difference, Ticktin asks an important question I uproot and consider here; she asks why illness can travel across borders and mark an individual for consideration for legal status while other forms of human suffering (e.g. poverty) cannot? In the French context this question is addressed by explanations of the illness clause characterized as a “private” consideration of family life, which was symbolically removed from the political arena of migrant workers and prospective immigrants (2006: 39). Yet, the question outside of this context is essential: why does critical illness have the moral weight to influence political decisions when other factors, such as long years providing compassionate care to the nation’s elderly does not?

This lack of moral force is precisely why I think these Filipino caregivers are formulating concepts of well-being that they call “health.” I do not doubt that they are associating the pressures, stress, and fear they experience while in Israel as detrimental to their health, but I also suggest that the *value* of health for evoking human rights, ethical principles, social compassion, and public attention is at play in the claims caregivers make. Additionally, caregivers provide health services to the elderly that include care, compassion, and companionship as methods of maintaining the elderly person’s sense of self and dignity. When caregivers consider their own health they see their inability to access care and compassion in Israel, which denigrates their personhood and dignity. In this sense, they are calling on the Israeli government to provide them with the same dignity and sociopolitical care that Israel recruits migrant workers to provide to elderly citizens.

Filipino caregivers articulate deeply held beliefs that providing care to another person builds social ties that cannot be acknowledged or remunerated in wages alone. Vicente made the

case (above) that an Israeli family owed their former, very ill caregiver some form of assistance to help her return to the Philippines. Father Michael stated clearly that caregivers do not receive any care (or consideration) in Israel in exchange for the caregiving they are recruited to provide. Instead, he situates caregivers as only realistically receiving care from Filipino Christian communities, not from the Israeli government or even truly from the Philippines Embassy. The limits Israel puts on the expected reciprocation of care – namely that it is an economic transaction – angered the caregivers I knew. In Chapter Five I discuss how Filipino caregivers frame their accusations of Israel's failed reciprocity in the context of making claims. For the purposes of understanding caregivers' use of *health* as a rationale for claims, care and reciprocity symbolize caregivers' frustrations at how Israel limits their experiences of personhood. Recalling Powers and Faden's six categories of well being, caregivers' perceptions of not being worthy of Israel's care or entitled to the reciprocity they believe Israel owes them marks a lack of respect. Caregivers object to Israel's unwillingness to extend moral recognition to them as non-citizens, experiencing this reduced version of respect as denigrating their personhood, self-respect, and sense of self.

My data shows how caregivers counter the reductive category of economic migrant that Israel ascribes to them, instead arguing the necessity of a social and political life equal to that of other new immigrants to ensure their physical, psychological, and social health. This move may not foment change in Israel's foreign work program, but the method through which caregivers construct these claims encompasses an interesting tactical decision regarding self-representation. The literatures on how states are implicated in health claims and the general literature on Filipino migrant workers tend to focus on vulnerability. In particular, the vulnerability referenced in these literatures pertains to a weak, suffering, at times politically or socially helpless body that

requires intervention. The caregivers in my research perform their health claims with the awareness of vulnerability, but coming from a position defined by agency allowing them to challenge the conditions that *make* them vulnerable to negative health outcomes. In their arguments, they are confronting the political worth of the helpless suffering body and instead presenting themselves as proactively advocating for the necessary package of goods that will reinstate the conditions for positive outcomes *before* they are reduced to suffering, victim status.

Caregivers' use of "health" challenges standard definitions of this term, as does their reworking of what a "right to health" entails. The stress migrant caregivers experienced and the fear they associated with immigration raids, deportation, passport checks, and detention centers along with constant concerns about visa status all contributed to feelings of reduced health. Migrant workers experience exclusions and social closures routinely in their daily work and engagement in Israel's social spaces. That they are restricted from applying for citizenship or asserting identities that would align them with citizenship ideals and encounter routine examples of how they are not respected on an equal level as citizens contributes to their perceptions of reduced health. In Chapter Five, I build on the concepts of health I explore in this chapter to look at examples of how health claims are made based on rights concepts, ideals of democracy, Jewish ethics, attempts to have newly embodied identity recognized, and notions of achieving full health. Filipinos make these claims in a multilayered ethical landscape that struggles to understand the sociolegal "place" of the stranger in Israel (e.g. foreign workers) and the limits of their rights within Israeli social and political space.

CHAPTER 5: CONFIGURING IDEOLOGIES, ETHICS, AND EMBODIED IDENTITY TO MAKE HEALTH CLAIMS

As I discussed in Chapter Four, Filipino caregivers employed “health” to articulate a holistic vision of social, physical, spiritual, and psychological well-being. Caregivers’ negative health outcomes compounded over long tenure in Israel, particularly when they could not procure new employment contracts due to the number of years they worked in Israel. Filipino caregivers’ health advocacy aimed to achieve well-being through access to social, legal, and residency rights. Caregivers understood these rights as necessary to reduce the factors that produced their negative health outcomes. They made formal and informal claims on the state and Israeli social institutions for recognition as individuals worthy of inclusion in the body politic. I define formal and informal claims based on the audience caregivers directed their claims to. I view formal claims as those made publicly, intended as overtly political statements pertaining to rights. Claims made in the context of complaints and discussions held within Filipino communities I understand as informal.

Thus “health,” defined through concepts of well-being, was the problem migrant caregivers sought to address through advocacy, seeking an expanded package of social and political rights. Caregivers linked stable legal status (e.g. relaxed restrictions on work permits, permanent residency, or citizenship) to the basic standard of good health. In this chapter, I discuss the logics caregivers adopted, reworked, and vernacularized to underpin their claims of belonging, seeking stability through legal status, recognition, and formal rights. I begin by

reviewing Israel's citizenship structures and the complications migrant workers faced when attempting to access legal status through these channels. I draw on a human-interest story that ran in *Haaretz* during my fieldwork about an Israeli-Filipino couple, the Ben Naims, who struggled to acquire spousal citizenship through Israel's various channels for naturalized legal status. This article helps to illustrate the closures that Filipino caregivers encountered when trying to assert their own desire for citizenship.

I then move to consider the social closures that intensified during my fieldwork, particularly in the form of the housing protests that caused varying forms of moral outrage in multiple sectors of Israeli society. These closures defined the sociopolitical climate in which caregivers made their claims, and gave rise to statements from Israeli NGOs and other stakeholders that challenged the housing protests, calling upon religious ethical frameworks and democratic ideals as embedded and meaningful discourses establishing Israel's moral landscape. Migrant workers appropriated these ethical arguments, creating their own logical frameworks for asserting their health-based need for permanent legal status. Migrant workers understood themselves as having a "right to right" defined by idealized ethical principles established by democratic theory, human rights, religious precepts, and what Filipino caregivers consider to be Israel's debt of reciprocity. I explore each of these issues in the context of my ethnographic data, establishing how caregivers constructed the logics through which they contextualized their claims in local and international frameworks.

The categories that the state used to define migrant workers and limit their sociolegal participation rested in large part on the state's distinction between migrant workers' identity and the identity of Israeli citizens. Caregivers asserted their identity in multiple narratives as one tactic to rethink their sociolegal position. Specifically, caregivers grounded their claims in

established vocabularies of rights and ethical obligations by drawing from three threads: Jewish religious values, Western-style democratic principles, and international human rights discourse. For example, caregivers used pre-existing religious precepts that define how non-citizens ought to be treated to argue their greater entitlement to sociolegal inclusion. Similarly, by explicitly stating their human-ness as grounds for rights, caregivers formulated what they understood to be human rights claims. By doing so, they indicated that Israel's participation in international rights-based communities (e.g. the UN) obligated Israel to take human rights claims seriously. Finally, caregivers called upon democratic ideals to make a case for the consideration of their right to be part of the Israeli public, relying on notions of open societies, tolerance for diversity, and universal human equality.

Yet, caregivers exposed the incompatible priorities and values that emerged when placing these ideological definitions of rights and obligations into dialogue. The competing priorities sparked several questions: how should governments treat "strangers" in light of a modern immigration system that prioritizes one specific ethno-religious identity? How can Israel reconcile its democratic rhetoric with the socio-political focus on assuring a specific kind of Jewish majority? What role do religious precepts have in a democratic government, and how are those religious ideals best met in an interfaith society? Finally, how do human and democratic rights negotiate the boundaries of the nation state when considering and conferring rights in concurrence with religious ethical obligations to "strangers," notions that were formulated long before the conceptualization of the nation state, modern geopolitical borders, or these particular configurations of rights? These questions inform the friction caused by migrant workers attempting to rework their sociolegal categories by asserting certain aspects of their identity, pushing against demarcations of belonging and exclusion.

In this context, questions of who can be a citizen, and moreover a *Jewish* citizen, show the limits of democracy, human rights, and certain aspects of religious ethical primacy in light of the demographic project of the state.⁸⁷ This question of “who is a citizen” pre-exists migrant workers’ claims; most notably, Palestinians with Israeli citizenship asserted this question as part of their demands for rights and equal status in the 1990s after Israel formally asserted its Jewish identity in coordination with its democratic character (Jabareen 2013). Questions pertaining to how differentiated access to citizenship affect the possibilities for national participation for those already inside the nation, and concerns with the criteria established for determining the worthiness of different external groups for naturalized citizenship, highlight how these subject positions are formed, negotiated, invested with value, and policed. These tensions mark one of the difficult points in Israel’s attempt to wed democratic values to national ethno-religious priorities. This is the space in which migrant caregivers are making their own claims, drawing on both formulations – democratic and religious – to establish their own legitimacy.

Mahler and Pessar (2006) integrate their analysis of the nation state and gendered migration by rejecting theories that promote the “essentialized notions of the nation,” and instead pose questions such as: “Whose nation? And How are gendered technologies employed to constitute the nation and police inclusion and exclusion?” (Mahler and Pessar 2006: 40).⁸⁸ Multiple stakeholders in Israel ask the question of “whose nation,” from migrant workers to Palestinians, to the disagreements between secular and religious Jewish citizens as to the appropriate nature of Israel’s social norms. The gendered technologies noted by Mahler and

⁸⁷ See Rouhana & Sultany (2003), Cohen-Almagor (1995); and Butler (2012) for critical debates on the possibility of being a democratic state while giving priority to a select segment of the body politic. Conversely, see Smooha (e.g. 2002) for a discussion of ethnic democracy that attempts to mediate Israel’s democratic politic system with its commitment to maintaining a Jewish society.

⁸⁸ Mahler and Pessar draw from gendered migration literature to pose these questions. See further Yeoh and Huang 1999; Walton-Roberts 2004; Yuval-Davis, Anthias, and Kofman 2005.

Pessar correspond with examples of ethnic hierarchies reinforced by gendered stereotypes as discussed in Chapter Three (e.g. the beauty pageant and stereotypes of Filipina women as overly fertile), but also are evident in the situation of child deportations and the case study of the Ben Naims, discussed below. Thus, migrant workers' claims illuminated two key struggles that continue to grow in importance: how should "foreigners" be treated in Israeli society (codified as "strangers" in Jewish texts), and under what conditions can people born gentiles be considered "Israeli" or "Jewish" *enough* to enter into the nation, particularly reproductive-aged women?

In order for the state to consider migrant workers as potential new immigrants, migrant workers must symbolically transition out of economic and political categories that set limits on their formal integration into Israel's sociopolitical communities. Yet, the routes to acquiring Israeli citizenship are constructed to negate these claims even before they are made, both from the perspective of the state's preference for Jewish immigrants, and from the immigration channels for non-Jewish applicants meant to represent Israel's democratic political structures, but which are not accessible to migrant workers. I clarify the complicated challenges embedded in Filipino caregivers' claims for inclusion by summarizing the codified routes to citizenship and key complicating factors below.

Citizenship and Identity

The Law of Return⁸⁹ is the primary route to Israeli citizenship. This law, passed in 1950, grants all people with a recognized Jewish identity "automatic"⁹⁰ Israeli citizenship. Initially, the

⁸⁹Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "Acquisition of Israeli Nationality." <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/aboutisrael/state/pages/acquisition%20of%20israeli%20nationality.aspx> Accessed February 13, 2014.

⁹⁰ There is still a bureaucratic process involved with "automatic" citizenship, but the focus pertains to assuring identity and the person's intent to make Israel his or her new home, unlike other citizenship processes that require knowledge of the country's history, laws, and literacy in the majority language.

Law of Return offered citizenship to individuals with a Jewish mother, or to converts who renounced membership in all other religions. In 1970, the Knesset amended the identity requirements to include the child or grandchild of a Jew, the spouse of a Jew, and the spouse of a Jewish person's child or grandchild. This amendment allowed applicants from the former Soviet states without a recognizably Jewish mother to gain Israeli citizenship during the 1990s-2000s.

Israel's Basic Law allows non-Jews (e.g. gentiles) to apply for Israeli citizenship through secular naturalization.⁹¹ Foreign workers are prohibited from seeking citizenship through this provision of legal residency (Mundlak 2007); otherwise migrant caregivers' claims for citizenship could be managed through these secular channels. Gentile applicants must reside legally in Israel for three out of five years before applying to the Ministry of the Interior (MoI). They must assert their eligibility to live in Israel and their intent to "settle" there, and they must renounce all former citizenships. An individual is not entitled to settle in Israel if the government judges the individual a danger to Israel, to the Jewish People, or to public welfare. Most new immigrants are eligible for citizenship through the Law of Return; very few become new immigrants through the secular naturalization processes.

Children in Israel inherit citizenship from their parents. Children born in Israel cannot receive citizenship unless their parents are eligible, making the legal status of migrant workers even more important in terms of their children's claims. Children without Israeli or Jewish mothers only receive citizenship if their Israeli fathers register their birth and certify paternity. Filipino women, compared with their children born to an Israeli father, face more formidable hurdles when applying for Israeli citizenship. If an Israeli man and a non-Israeli, non-Jewish

⁹¹ Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "Acquisition of Israeli Nationality." <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/aboutisrael/state/pages/acquisition%20of%20israeli%20nationality.aspx> Accessed February 13, 2014.

woman decided to marry they must do so outside of Israel⁹² and then apply to the MoI for spousal citizenship rights that may or may not be granted.

The MoI can deny or delay residency or citizenship when the legal spouse of an Israeli citizen is not Jewish or not recognized as Jewish. Discussions about the 2003 and 2007 amendments to the Citizenship Laws erupted during my fieldwork in light of the proposed 2011 Loyalty Oath. The 2003 and 2007 amendments prohibited Israeli citizens married to residents of the Occupied Territories from requesting family reunification in Israel,⁹³ and then extended the prohibitions to all spouses from “enemy states.” Hence, an Israeli citizen cannot confer his or her citizenship to his or her spouse holding a passport from the Occupied Territories or from “enemy states,” and other family members of the spouse cannot be brought into Israel via the marriage. Two political rationales are advanced by the government to justify these amendments: the government’s responsibility to protect Israel from “terrorists” who might enter the country via marriage; and the state’s interest in determining Israel’s demographic character. Yet, according to Adalah lawyer Sawsan Zaher, the state’s security rationale for restricting family reunification rights rapidly disintegrates when confronted with the lack of numbers to support probable cause

⁹² Interfaith marriages are considered civil unions in Israel and cannot take place within the country. Couples of different religions must marry abroad, and then register their marriage with the state to have it recognized. The lack of civil union complicates marriage for Jewish Israelis as well. A legal Jewish ceremony must meet the state’s religious requirements that make many secular Jewish Israeli couples uncomfortable. Additionally, if one spouse’s Jewish identity is questioned, such as in cases of personal or parental conversion by a non-Orthodox rabbi, a second conversion may be required. My Jewish Israeli friend encountered difficulty when he was trying to marry. My friend’s father survived the Holocaust as a young child and grew up on an Israeli kibbutz. However, my friend’s Scandinavian mother converted after his birth. He was converted at birth in Israel by a Conservative rabbi, but he still could not legally marry without a second Orthodox conversion. His legal marriage took place in Cyprus; the couple had a second “religious” wedding in Israel considered religiously invalid by the state, performed by a Reform rabbi. These occurrences are not unusual among non-Orthodox Israelis of my generation.

⁹³ My discussion of the 2003/2007 amendments to the Citizenship Law and the 2011 Loyalty Oath is closely informed by a public discussion of the laws held by Adalah lawyer Sawsan Zaher at the Women’s Collective Building, November 15, 2010. Adalah is the Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel.

of such a security threat. Zaher identified the actual concern to be demographic, pertaining to anxiety over the comparative reproductive rates of Israel's ethnic groups. The state's anxiety over reproduction parallels political concern with Filipina migrants asserting their desires to become citizens via marriage or other avenues (discussed below).

Debates over demography explicitly point to the issue of children. At times, citizenship debates are less concerned with the individual applicant as a potential citizen than with his or her reproductive potential. As Kahn (2000) and Kanaaneh (2002) show for different Israeli populations, the state involves itself in citizens' procreative decisions and access to resources. The state is engaged in a demographic project that carefully monitors and attempts to control reproduction in Israel's many communities, seeking to ensure a Jewish (and preferably Ashkenazi) majority.⁹⁴ Palestinians with Israeli citizenship, and non-Jewish denizens in Israel, are socially and politically encoded as posing various threats to society, but routinely the discussion returns to demographics and rates of reproduction. This concern is mapped onto foreign workers, particularly Filipina women often described as "baby makers," as discussed in Chapter 3. The state's demographic concerns point to the question of whose nation is it, and under which terms? If the state prioritizes a Jewish majority, how do democratic principles interact with laws meant to give primacy to one sector of the population over the rest of society?

The interactions of Israel's politics that prioritize a Jewish majority and the democratic routes for non-Jewish citizenship give rise to specific challenges. *Haaretz Magazine* published a human-interest story about the Ben Naims, detailing their struggle to acquire citizenship for Roberta through various channels as Arie Ben Naim's wife and as a Filipina Jewish convert. The Ben Naims did not participate in my research, but their story exemplifies the complications

⁹⁴ Kahn (2000) points out that (particularly Ashkenazi) women seeking artificial insemination are not offered the full catalogue of donors to choose from. The fertility services representatives craft specific catalogues for each woman based on her ethnic and religious identity.

with citizenship in Israel when a spouse's Jewish identity is not clear, and points to the larger politics encoding Filipina women and their claims for social inclusion. Arieh Ben Naim,⁹⁵ a well-respected Israeli professor of physical chemistry, met Roberta via electronic introduction by a mutual friend in 2003. Roberta did not work as a caregiver; she owned her own successful advertising business in the Philippines. They met in Manila after nine months of corresponding by email. After spending four months together in the Philippines, Roberta and her youngest daughter accompanied Arieh to Israel, which began their multi-year struggle to secure Roberta's legal rights as Arieh's future spouse.

The Ben Naims' experienced a range of bureaucratic challenges that are quite useful for thinking through Filipina caregivers' struggles for citizenship eligibility. In 2004, the MoI rejected the Ben Naims' application to extend Roberta's tourist status, a necessary extension for her permanent residency application as recommended by Arieh's lawyer (even though they were not yet married). The MoI threatened Roberta with arrest and deportation if she did not leave Israel immediately. The Ben Naims used Arieh's academic status to live abroad while he worked as a visiting professor, spending their years outside of Israel completing paperwork and other administrative tasks to reapply to the MoI. Roberta converted to Conservative Judaism in California in 2006. Despite their legal marriage in the Philippines, they married again in a Conservative Jewish ceremony in California.

They returned to Israel in 2007 and Roberta applied for citizenship under the Law of Return. They met with endless bureaucratic hurdles and requests for official documents, and delays over the MoI's concern that Roberta's recent conversion might not be legitimate. The MoI continued to request new forms from Manila and the US, during which time Roberta's tourist

⁹⁵ Lee, Vered (2010, August 20). The red-tape two-step. *Haaretz*. Retrieved August 20, 2010, from <http://www.haaretz.com/weekend/magazine/the-red-tape-two-step-1.309234>.

visa expired again. The couple went to Stockholm. They returned to Israel at the end of 2009 with all the requested documents. The MoI replied with a request for proof that the Ben Naims belonged to a Jewish community in Israel based on their persistent absence from the country since 2004. The explanation required the Ben Naims to show their intent to make Israel the center of their lives. Arieh articulated his frustration at the MoI's challenging *his* identity, not just Roberta's:

"It dumbfounded me: I was born here, I served in the army, I'm a university professor here, I always had a home in Israel. I live here and want to live here. The only reason I lived abroad in recent years is because of the way the Interior Ministry acted. So because they forced us to leave the country and wander, I now have to prove that Israel is the center of my life? [...] And what's this about belonging to a Jewish community? What, am I not a Jew? Was I not born in this country? My wife, who converted in a Conservative community in America - is she not considered Jewish? How do you prove you belong to a Jewish community? We do Israeli folk dancing. Will that do? I don't live in an ultra-Orthodox community and I'm not going to pretend to be ultra-Orthodox."

Arieh's comments question how state agencies like the MoI vet and confirm Jewish identity, but also what factors inform the criteria for a person's testimony that they desire a home in Israel. He raised examples of his own embodied Jewish Israeliness to refute the MoI's doubts about his identity prompted by his Filipina wife. Roberta also responded to the MoI's doubts about their intent to settle in Israel, her response including perspectives of racial discrimination.

"I don't know how to explain to my children that even though I converted and had a kosher Jewish wedding and want to live in Israel, a government ministry doesn't think that's enough [...] I'm sorry, but I feel like I'm treated differently because of my slanted eyes and the color of my skin, because of my race. I'm not ashamed that many of my countrymen work as caretakers for the elderly in Israel. That's part of globalization. The question is why we shouldn't be treated like people, why we're treated as some inferior race. Just because we work in nursing care here? Is that something to be ashamed of? ... Because a person works as a caretaker he should be treated as if he's subhuman? Because a person has dark skin he should be paid less and treated badly?"

The Ben Naims personify contradictions in Israel's immigration system that is primarily structured by the Law of Return. The MoI viewed Roberta Ben Naim's identity as uncertain: she

converted to Judaism under a Conservative rabbi's tutelage, but she does not fit into the dominant narrative of Jewish diaspora and centuries of anti-Semitic oppression that the Law of Return philosophically rests upon. I argue that Roberta's Filipina identity affected how the MoI (and other Israeli governmental and religious authorities) viewed her conversion and subsequent Jewish identity. The Ben Naims' struggles reveal the limitations posed by a Filipina identity within Israeli bureaucratic systems, and the MoI's concern about the Ben Naims' intent to make Israel their home suggests a potential secular reading of Roberta's identity. If she is "read" as not authentically Jewish, then her time in Israel does not fulfill the secular criteria for citizenship. A secular reading also indicates the disputes between Israel's religious authorities and international Jewish authorities about what constitutes a legitimate conversion. However, religious converts are accepted as new immigrants in Israel regularly. The MoI's reaction to Roberta's conversion suggests resistance specifically to a Filipina woman claiming a Jewish identity that is legitimate enough to be included under the Law of Return.

Roberta's comments also point to Israel's struggle with social diversity arising from the stereotype of Filipinos as low-cost migrant caregivers, and concerns about Israel's demographic profile. Israeli laws and regulations operate to maintain and intensify the Jewish character of the nation. Political debates, religious edicts, and public discourse about what constitutes a legitimate Jewish identity in most instances continue to narrow Israel's ethno-religious priority. A Filipina convert married to an Israeli opens the door for other Filipinos – primarily caregivers with limited work visas – to seek similar routes towards citizenship status.⁹⁶ Roberta did not work as a caregiver, but her experience authenticating her Jewish identity and accessing her

⁹⁶ I knew of two Filipina women who successfully became new immigrants and one woman with permanent residency, their status conferred through their Israeli spouses. I knew many more Filipina women in marriages with Israeli men that were not recognized by the MoI, or who lived with an Israeli partner without legal status.

spousal citizenship rights as a gentile-born woman parallels the difficulties that caregivers encounter trying to access citizenship rights. Additionally, even though Roberta's age makes it unlikely that she will have children with Arie, if her citizenship application succeeded her children from a previous marriage could apply to immigrate as well. Their reproductive ability thus becomes a problem for the state.

This introduces two quandaries. First, the possibility of a significant number of Filipino migrant workers acquiring citizenship status challenges the conflation of Filipinos with cheap labor. Realities of discrimination prefigure the improbability of Filipinos gaining social equality through citizenship status alone. However, citizenship status would presumably increase the civil rights, occupational mobility, and employment standards conferred to Filipino-Israelis. This leaves Israel searching for new inexpensive temporary labor, and worrying over how far the door opened for other migrant workers and non-Jewish denizens to demand access to citizenship as well.

Second, even if converted Filipina-Israeli women mothered perfect *sabra* Jewish Israeli children,⁹⁷ the "look" of the country would dramatically change by adding a Southeast Asian genetic pool, as would the landscape of possibilities for determining a Jewish identity. Israel is a multicultural society, yet the struggles over sociopolitical participation and rights continue along with tensions over what legitimates a Jewish identity (Abbink 2002). Israel struggles to defend the authentic Jewish identity of immigrants from the former Soviet states, Ethiopia, and India. However, these immigrants are assumed to be endowed with a Biblical/historically supported Jewish identity that the state legitimizes (even if strict religious authorities do not) (Abbink 2002; Kaplan 1999). Converted Filipina women cannot claim a genetic Jewish identity, disrupting the

⁹⁷ For a characterization of what a *sabra* identity entails, see Lefkowitz (2001).

state's rationales for admitting other immigrants that change the "look" and character of society. I question arguments testifying to the floods of migrant workers eager to convert to Judaism to claim Israeli citizenship, but the demographic panic is present in these discussions even in politically liberal quarters. Not only do Asian converts threaten the assertions of a genetically Jewish population, but also their potential ethnic integration would contribute to the increasing population of non-Ashkenazi Israelis, threatening to confront the Ashkenazi power structures regulating political and religious authority (Lefkowitz 2001; Resnik 2006).⁹⁸

Social Diversity and Social Closures

Citizenship laws pose one obstacle to the claims migrant workers and their children make in their efforts to acquire Israeli citizenship. Social views and climates of tolerance create additional potential challenges, shaping popular thinking about the place of migrant workers in society, and what an ideal society ought to look like. A series of social closures coincided with caregivers' advocacy, refuting notions of social openness and the value of a multicultural body politic; many of these closures reinforced notions that Israel is, or ought to become, a specifically Jewish country. In one example, supporters of this belief expressed their views through secular and religious housing protests against non-Jewish residents in an effort to "keep Israel Jewish."

The housing exclusions began when a group of Ultra-Orthodox rabbis called for Jewish residents in their communities to act aggressively towards gentiles living in proximity to Jewish neighborhoods. In Upper Nazareth, rabbis instructed Jewish residents to "go mad" with

⁹⁸ Non-Ashkenazi individuals and religious communities do have varying forms of limited power in Israeli politics and society, such as the Shas Party. A pertinent example is Eli Yishai, who led the Shas party from 2000-2013, born in Jerusalem to parents who made *aliyah* from Tunisia. But on the whole the Ashkenazi sector of Israeli society continues to set the priorities for the country.

aggression to force Palestinians with Israeli citizenship to move away.⁹⁹ Other religious edicts issued by rabbis represented a more sedate approach, instructing Jews not to rent to gentiles. The Chief Municipal Rabbi in Safed encouraged the Jewish community to refuse Bedouin students as tenants in order to pressure these students to drop out of the university. As a result, Jewish residents of Safed attacked a group of Bedouin students and threatened Jewish landlords who continued renting to these students, including an 89-year-old Holocaust survivor.¹⁰⁰

Following the Safed rabbis' religious ruling, Ultra Orthodox rabbis in Bnei Brak and Tel Aviv issued similar edicts pressuring community members not to rent to African asylum seekers¹⁰¹ or to foreign workers.¹⁰² Public opinion exploded through the media when a group of municipal rabbis (paid through public funds) issued a mass *halakhic*¹⁰³ religious ruling forbidding Israeli Jews to rent to gentiles, reasserting that the Land of Israel "belongs" to the Jewish people. The rabbis encouraged communities to "caution" landlords renting to gentiles before launching public exposure campaigns.

Homeowners in South Tel Aviv initiated the secular housing protests that stretched into surrounding towns such as Bat Yam and Hatikvah. Migrant workers and asylum seekers rent

⁹⁹ Lior, Ilan. Tel Aviv rabbinical judge signs anti-foreigner letter. *Haaretz*. <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/tel-aviv-rabbinical-judge-signs-anti-foreigner-letter-1.325089> November 17, 2010. [Accessed November 17, 2010]

¹⁰⁰ Ashkenazi, Eli. Safed man harassed for renting apartment to Bedouin. *Haaretz*. <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/safed-man-harassed-for-renting-apartment-to-bedouin-1.322561> November 3, 2010. [Accessed November 3, 2010]

¹⁰¹ Jewish Telegraphic Agency. US Jewish groups slam rabbis anti-migrant decrees. *JPost*. <http://www.jpost.com/JewishWorld/JewishNews/Article.aspx?id=195532> November 16 2010. [Accessed November 6, 2010]

¹⁰² Jerusalem Post staff. Bnei Brak rabbis discourage renting to foreign workers. *JPost*. <http://www.jpost.com/Headlines/Article.aspx?id=194497>. November 8, 2010. [Accessed November 8, 2010]

¹⁰³ *Halakhic* refers to Jewish legal codes.

slum apartments in these areas, often sharing space with up to twenty other people. Israeli residents organized large, angry, public protests demanding that the municipal and state governments remove asylum seekers and foreign workers from their neighborhoods. The residents accused the foreign “infiltrators” of driving apartment rents up while lowering housing values by their corrupting presence in these neighborhoods. Homeowners accused foreigners, particularly male asylum seekers from African countries, of drunken and disorderly conduct, perpetrating violence, and creating an atmosphere of fear for Jewish women after dark.¹⁰⁴ At the protests, some of which grew into violent mob scenes, protestors chanted slogans about protecting neighborhoods and keeping Israel Jewish.¹⁰⁵ In response to these protests, Tel Aviv’s mayor launched a public campaign to restrict non-Jews from renting, arguing the necessity of these actions for protecting Jewish neighborhoods from poverty, illness, and crime.¹⁰⁶

The New York based Anti-Defamation League responded to the rabbis’ religious rulings by issuing a statement reminding these rabbis of the “Jewish tradition of tolerance and empathy,” as well as calling on secular leadership to “stand by the democratic values of acceptance and understanding” in Israel.¹⁰⁷ This use of multiple narratives to encompass Israel’s character is similarly employed by Israeli NGOs that advocate for migrant workers’ rights. NGOs, such as

¹⁰⁴ Lior, Ilan. South Tel Aviv residents call for expelling foreigners from neighborhood. *Haaretz*. <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/south-tel-aviv-residents-call-for-expelling-foreigners-from-neighborhood-1.325092> November 11, 2010 [Accessed November 11, 2010]

¹⁰⁵ Ravid, Barak. Netanyahu warns Israelis: Violence against minorities won't be tolerated. *Haaretz*. <http://www.haaretz.com/news/national/netanyahu-warns-israelis-violence-against-minorities-won-t-be-tolerated-1.332204>. December 22, 2010. [Accessed December 22, 2010]

¹⁰⁶ Lior, Ilan. Israeli town launches campaign against foreign workers. *Haaretz*. <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/israeli-town-launches-campaign-against-foreign-workers-1.326455>. November 24, 2010. [Accessed November 24, 2010.]

¹⁰⁷ Jewish Telegraph Service. US Jewish groups slam rabbis anti-migrant decrees. *JPost*. <http://www.jpost.com/JewishWorld/JewishNews/Article.aspx?id=195532>. November 16, 2010 [November 16, 2010]

the New Israel Fund (NIF) or the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI), argue that the creation of an ethical Jewish society requires drawing on these traditions from Judaism in conjunction with democratic values and human rights law to protect migrant workers' rights. These organizations, similar to the Anti-Defamation League's statement, weave together a set of integrated narratives in attempts to encase the non-citizen in social and legal protections that reflect the democratic and religious ideas that inform the modern State of Israel. Not coincidentally, these are the tropes that migrant workers called upon when asserting their own claims.

Democracy and Human Rights

As I discussed in Chapter Four, migrant workers employed a reworked notion of their right to health to illuminate the problematic effects of their experiences of inequalities in Israel. Their use of a "right to health" does not correspond to the definition used by human rights covenants (see Chapter Four), although it does resonate with the WHO definition of health and other measures of well-being. In Chapter Three, I quote Farah and Romeo talking separately about the power imbalance between migrant workers and Israeli employers. Romeo referred to Israelis' practice of treating caregivers like slaves, exploiting this power imbalance. Farah and Alona expressed their anger about how Israeli employers patronized them and assumed that Filipinos are simple, prompting Alona to ask why Israelis treated Filipinos as if they are small. These are examples of the interactions that prompted caregivers to make claims for full personhood within Israeli society to protect themselves from power-laden social dynamics that they saw occurring on account of their marginalized status. In particular, caregivers sought expanded access to rights and protections. Thus, caregivers employed concepts of human rights and democracy to 1) claim individual rights designed to protect the individual from the

unrestrained power of the state and from other members of society; and 2) to expose how their status in Israel subjects them to social marginalization and legal restrictions that prevent their ability to peruse good health. Rose provided a brief but telling example of how she conceptualized human rights in relation to these two points.

Rose and I talked during the bus ride home from a FCO-sponsored trip to Rosh HaNikra. Our conversation meandered until we talked about the government campaign to reissue citizens' gas masks as well as issuing masks to all legal residents. I asked Rose if she planned to request her own mask when picking up her employer's. She gave me a wry look before telling me about her experiences in the 2005-2006 war with Lebanon while caring for Shoshanna. She described the stressful daily routines that air raid sirens and government announcements necessitated, especially moving Shoshanna down into the shelters, sometimes multiple times per day.

“The network of Filipinos¹⁰⁸ helped everyone to be organized and get through it, but...” she shook her head in response to her grim memories.

“Did you have a gas mask then?” I asked her.

“No. They weren't for the *Filipini* then. The government doesn't care about the *Filipini*.” Rose shrugged, her agitation suddenly appearing as she demanded rhetorically: “What about us? What about *our* human rights? Israel doesn't care about that? We take care of their old people and the government doesn't let us stay or care if we die.”

¹⁰⁸ This network is called the “text brigade.” Maria outlined how the Philippine Embassy and the various community organizations banded together during Israel's military conflicts to create and operate an information network for migrant workers. This network transmitted information about current developments to migrant workers who didn't speak strong Hebrew and thus couldn't follow the news, along with keeping track of the well-being of Filipino migrants across the country during times of war and violent uprisings.

“Caregivers should have masks if they are going into the shelters and if they are responsible for the elderly,” I agreed, thinking about government rationales. But, Rose leveled me a look and said starkly,

“Everyone should have one, because we are human. Because we have human rights, even in Israel.”

In this example, Rose points explicitly to human rights principles without referencing democracy, but her use of rights illustrates the general point. Caregivers referenced human rights and democracy when critiquing how employers or petty bureaucrats at the MoI treated them, or when discussing political changes and policies that further marginalized them as migrant workers. Human rights and democracy were two bodies of rights caregivers referenced to evoke codified values, using these models to assert ideal relationships between an individual and the state. By specifically pointing to democracy and human rights, migrant workers established themselves inside these liberal ideologies as rights-worthy individuals despite their nationality, ethnicity, or religion that placed them outside of Israel’s recognized citizenship categories. Placing themselves within these narratives, caregivers negotiated what *they* understood human rights and democracy could confer to them as rights-bearing individuals despite their lack of citizenship status (as democracy usually requires) or a clear human rights claim.

Democracy is discursively positioned as an ideology, a myth, an imaginary, and a codified set of strictures pertaining to the relationship between a state, its citizens, and to a certain extent to those outside of the state’s domain. The Filipino caregivers in my research referenced democracy in imprecise language, and their exact notion of what “democracy” entailed often remained partially unexplored. When they referenced democracy they frequently

used the term to point to a set of ideals about how open societies ought to operate, particularly in terms of multiculturalism, social diversity, and relaxed immigration systems. When I asked caregivers what they meant by “democracy,” I received blank looks and they continued talking as if I hadn’t asked the question.¹⁰⁹ Their elision of providing some kind of informal statement about what democracy is, or what it is supposed to do, makes it hard to expand on how they used democracy as a concept to make their claims. Yet, caregivers referenced democracy repetitively in fleeting but important moments, making it a central idea in their views on governments, states, and avenues to inclusion.

Caregivers employed idealistic and utopian understandings of democracy and human rights to denote packages of goods that assure the equality of all people and reinvest the socially marginalized with previously withheld protections and privileges. In practice, caregivers conceptualized a democratic regime capable of expansively meeting the needs and desires of all denizens. They rearticulated Israel’s democracy in their own terms to communicate the goods that they imagined this political form to deliver, particularly immigration systems that permitted migrant workers to apply to become new immigrants (see Paley 2004: 506-507 for a discussion of vernacularizing democracy). Caregivers engaged in a view of democracy that relies on liberal notions of open borders and the relatively free flow of people.

¹⁰⁹ I think their response came from their confusion over *why* I would ask them to define democracy rather than a lack of clarity in my question. I phrased the question in a number of different ways, but I never could prompt any kind of explanation. A Filipino-American friend posited that an American asking a Filipino to define democracy might appear to be a test or in other ways referencing the US colonial relationship that continues with the Philippines in economic configurations. The caregivers in my research and I also shared a number of cultural understandings that created a degree of familiarity and shared context that emerged from the relationship the Philippines and the US have. In this context, caregivers might have felt uncertain as to why I was questioning our presumed shared concept of democracy. Whether or not the caregivers viewed me as testing them, they did appear to base their notions of democracy on a *highly* idealized US model, drawing from the rhetoric of multiculturalism and acceptance. This interested me, as none of the Filipinos in my research exhibited naivety about the complexities or the closures inherent in the US immigration system.

In a sense, this view challenges the sovereignty of the nation state in controlling the movement across its borders, suggesting that citizenship and other associated rights ought to be an open system. As Abizadeh (2008) outlines, immigration debates often focus on the tension between democratic theory that suggests the need for a bounded citizenry that is self-determined (including determining the boundaries of the state), and liberal universalist theory that advocates for open borders, the reduction of state determination over those borders, and the presumption that all humans must be viewed as equally deserving of rights. *Contra* to Walzer (1983) and Whelan (1988) who assert that democratic self-determination inherently means controlling the state's borders in order to maintain the people's control over the political community, Abizadeh takes an approach countering the arguments that democratic theory and liberal theory are necessarily at odds in regards to immigration and state borders. Abizadeh shows that within democratic theory of popular sovereignty the *demos* is a division of "the people" into "peoples" (43) but argues that while the boundaries that subdivide populations must exist that they do not have to be controlled or entirely closed by state jurisdiction. He argues that the state's use of power must be justified to all individuals it is exercised upon, citizen and non-citizen alike. Furthermore, he shows that enforcing the borders that bound a population subjects citizens and non-citizens alike to the state's power in the form of establishing the lines of inclusion and exclusion (and qualifying the freedom of movement for citizens and non-citizens alike). Thus, for a state to wield this power *democratically*, both citizens and non-citizens must consent to the use of power to police borders.

Wilcox (2009) offers a different view of liberal democratic ideals informing decisions about immigration and borders, pointing to arguments that democratic states have a moral obligation to recognize the equality of all humans within political systems, and furthermore to

mitigate global injustices through mediated immigration policies (e.g. for health purposes). These arguments situate nation states as having a global responsibility in addition to duties to their citizens, but as Wilcox shows these global obligations do not necessarily mandate open border policies. The arguments offered by Abizadeh and Wilcox summarize the mix of liberal and democratic theory that the caregivers in my research seemed to be rehearsing. Caregivers in my research spoke about democratic states as having obligations to maintaining open borders in order to fulfill the ideals of equality, democratic participation, and a (presumed) commitment to recognizing the rights of all liberal subjects. In this sense, they imagine a *demos* that is inclusive of all interested parties, and borders that are relatively porous in a liberal sense. These views resonate with the ideology that informs global labor migration, reading the liberal flows of labor across national boundaries into notions of democratic sociopolitical systems.

It is also useful to briefly consider these particular migrant workers as attempting to create a rupture in Ranciere's (2001) terms by reconfiguring the accepted composition of the *demos*. In their claims that they are entitled to recognition as potential citizens, caregivers demand a voice as those who are not authorized to politically speak within Israeli society. Ranciere makes a distinction between *politics* – or the sites of these ruptures created by those who are not authorized to speak – and the *police* who are tasked with maintaining the “partition of the sensible” by enforcing “what is visible and what is not, of what can be heard from the inaudible,” and by maintaining the existing symbolic constitution of the social. In this sense, the “police” assert that migrant workers do not have a legitimated place within Israel's sociolegal systems as more than temporary workers, yet migrant workers attempt to create a rupture via the political to claim their rights of inclusion.

Migrant workers essentially question the diametrically opposed categories of “citizen” and “migrant,” challenging the logics that construct the category of migrant as a non-citizen without options to shift into other subject positions. Thus, Ranciere establishes the space of democracy as a series of ruptures between politics and the police. The caregivers in my research would not state their struggle in Ranciere’s terms necessarily, yet they do see their claims for citizenship as a struggle within Israel’s sociopolitical system that ruptures the limits of the possible when it comes to considerations of what constitutes legitimate identities in immigration procedures. They understand themselves to be suggesting something that goes against the grain of politics, and yet they justify their demands through their *rights* as appropriate democratic subjects and as rights-bearing humans entitled to equality and political recognition.

Despite the fact that caregivers understood their claims as disruptive, they referenced human rights and (particularly) democracy as givens. Their formulations of democracy resonated not with voting or representation, but instead with liberal ideas of individuals, freedom, and open societies – in a general sense what Cruikshank calls “liberal democratic governance” (1999: 4) and Zakaria (1997) refers to as “liberal democracy.”¹¹⁰ When caregivers complained about visa problems or perceived the immigration police to be harassing them, they often contrasted these experiences with Israel’s claims of being a democracy, as if pointing out a glaring hypocrisy. The democratic values they referenced particularly invoked acceptance of social diversity, systems that evenly distribute opportunities and privileges, and opportunities for individuals to enter into the body politic. Many of the caregivers participating in my research asked (again, rhetorically) why democratic-Israel wouldn’t allow them to apply for citizenship. They argued

¹¹⁰ Cruikshank and Zakaria approach their theories of democracy from polarized political positions, but both point to the gap between the assumptions of what democracy promises and the literal requirements necessary for a state to be recognized as “democratic.” Caregivers, in their representations of democracy, leaned strongly towards liberal constitutional models of democracy.

the injustice of the visa restrictions, citing Israel's secular options for naturalization and Israel's democratic political structure as avenues towards sociopolitical inclusion that are both closed to migrant workers as foreigners and as non-citizens.

In particular, Filipino caregivers mapped certain assumptions about how immigration systems in democratic countries ought to operate based on these ideals. These assumptions depict an immigration system open to all applicants without overt discrimination based on race, ethnicity, occupation, or other identity factors. They modeled their ideas of immigration on countries like the United States and Canada. As global migrants, caregivers have realistic knowledge of governmental priorities and immigration quotas (no Filipino thinks it is easy to get US citizenship coming from the Philippines), but despite these limitations, caregivers believed that an immigration system in a democratic country would allow (almost)¹¹¹ anyone a real chance of acquiring naturalized citizenship.

In many ways, Filipino caregivers engaged with a model of democracy and citizenship that parallels "soul citizenship" as defined by Markowitz et al (2003) in their discussion of the "Black Hebrew" movement. "Soul citizenship" refers to groups who identify with a nation through assertions of personhood, "question[ing] the monopoly of the state over the symbolic markers that define membership in the nation" (Markowitz et al 2006: 302). Yet, this form of connection to land, peoplehood, and nation is not recognized broadly by Israel as a legitimate claim on the state for new immigrant status. Additionally, migrant workers did not necessarily want to remove the state's "monopoly over the symbolic markers" of inclusion, but rather for the categories that demarcated inclusion to be flexible enough to include them. Caregivers are seeking the dream of an immigrant society that is welcoming of all migrants during a global time

¹¹¹ Most of the caregivers I worked with did not think that "Arabs" should receive Israeli citizenship based on beliefs that "Arabs" are essentially "terrorists."

when nation states are restricting immigration and closing borders. In effect, caregivers' claims challenge the nation state's right to selectively manage immigration, and they challenge the nation state's obligations only to its citizens as opposed to all its subjects (including migrant workers).

Caregivers struggle to assert their expectations of Israel's democracy in the context of the political actualities that define migrant life. Reaching beyond the nation state, caregivers also call upon human rights to make their claims for inclusion (see Chapter Four regarding how migrant workers approach the right to health). Caregivers' visions of well-being rest on a version of personhood that when denigrated or abridged causes psychological, emotional, spiritual, and physical ill health. Thus, Filipino caregivers revise the concept of a right to health as enshrined in the UN's human rights language to include social standing, participation in political life, spiritual wellness, and access to the full package of rights and privileges as citizens. In this regard, they argue that good health is predicated upon full personhood in political and social life (Arendt 1948, Agamben 1998), vernacularizing the ethical language of human rights discourse and the idealized notions of democracy.

Filipino caregivers vernacularized human rights language to reflect their ideas of how a state, the police, and other members of society ought to treat an individual. They did not reference particular rights specifically except telling me about their (very abstract) "right to health;" rather, their "rights talk"¹¹² referenced UNDHR principles as a set of generalized values

¹¹² Engle Merry (2003) employs this term to describe the representational language battered women use, or are unable to use, to position themselves in relation to their batterer and as members of society. Engle Merry is interested in the subjective transition battered women must move through to conceptualize themselves as worthy of rights. She posits that this transition is partially reliant on the feedback women receive from police officers and judges who recognize or refute these women's worthiness of rights. The use of rights talk by caregivers in my research suggests that they have already conceptualized themselves as worthy of rights in contrast to police and government authorities who challenge caregivers' right to expanded sociolegal rights.

manipulated to reflect their ideals for social processes and political openness. In conversations about the inequities of Israel's migrant work system, caregivers referenced "human rights" as an assumed, normalized, and common sense set of principles. However, in place of the actual articles comprising the UNDHR, caregivers used the category "human rights" to describe a set of imagined protections and privileges able to cross national boundaries to deliver respect, dignity, protection from immigration police, and amend laws that restrict migrants' access to social and political participation. Caregivers made these references fleetingly: they complained about problems with employers or how a petty bureaucrat at the MoI insulted them in the visa renewal process, concluding with righteous comments such as "where are my human rights?" similar to Rose's assertion of her human rights above.

Israel's liberal ethical landscape, as discussed above in the case of Israel's civil society, draws from democratic principles and religious ethics. Similarly, caregivers draw on Jewish religious precepts to ground their claims of belonging in local logics, in particular from the religious tenets that instruct Jewish communities how to treat "the stranger" living among them. Religious narratives are called upon to define Israel's character, ethics, politics, and norms. These narratives are not always seamlessly compatible and often do not provide an absolute dictate for ethical behavior, but the narratives establish a rich and complex framework within which to debate sociopolitical responsibilities. Stakeholders in Israel's sociopolitical systems manipulate religious tropes to assert claims, as shown in the housing protests discussed above, and to position themselves as having a necessary voice within debates pertaining to Israel's future.

Religious Ethics: The Stranger and Christ

Caregivers use religious ethics as one logical rationale for their admission to full citizenship, borrowing from both Jewish and Christian narratives to represent their understanding of Jewish ethics while continuing to draw from Catholic logics. These religious vocabularies provided caregivers with a multi-sourced ethical grammar that endowed them with the rights of personhood, meaning that within these religious constructions they are identified as worthy and deserving of respect, dignity, social position, and treatment equal to Israeli citizens. Below I provide two short examples illustrating how the Torah's commandments for the ethical treatment of strangers in Jewish commentary and the duty of Jewish people to decry slavery are put into practice. I also discuss how Maria and Danny, another migrant worker, use Christian tropes to make sense of how their claims of belonging are disregarded by the foreign work system that defines their subjectivity in Israel. Together, these examples point to the role of religious narratives in caregivers' ethical frameworks used to authenticate their health claims.

The "stranger" appears repetitively in the Torah and other Jewish texts; Israeli social rights advocates often quote from Leviticus 19:33-34 and Leviticus 24:22. The Conservative Movement's translation of Leviticus 19:33-34 reads: "When a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not wrong him. The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as one of your citizens; you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt."¹¹³ *Ger* (stranger) refers to an outsider entering the community, not to the "prior inhabitants of the land" (*Etz Hayim*: 700). Leviticus 24:22 continues: "You shall have one standard for stranger and citizen alike" (*Etz Hayim*: 733). Furthermore, in Numbers 15:15, the verse reads: "There shall

¹¹³ The Rabbinical Assembly (2001). *Etz Hayim: Torah and Commentary*. New York, NY: Jewish Publication Society.

be one law for you and for the resident stranger; it shall be a law for all time throughout the ages. You and the stranger shall be alike before the Lord; the same ritual and the same rule shall apply to you and to the stranger who resides among you” (*Etz Hayim*: 851).

These verses from Leviticus and Numbers are interpreted, commented upon, and translated multiple ways, but liberal Israeli NGOs regularly cite these verses to advocate for the state’s ethical treatment of minorities and in the social conscience. Following this practice, caregivers in Israel appropriated these directives, arguing that they deserved better treatment than the state encodes in legal and social restrictions on migrant visas and in foreign workers’ package of rights. Caregivers and liberal sectors of Israeli society positioned the religious obligations towards “the stranger” as a tool to produce a variety of desired outcomes. The clearest example from my data of a caregiver using the concept of “the stranger” to make a direct claim occurred in the NGO offices. I summarized our conversation in my fieldnotes:

Yulia [a Filipina caregiver] came into the NGO to ask about her employer’s refusal to pay her during her permitted days off. Her situation was complicated because she already worked in Israel for over four years and three months. We discussed her situation, how exhausted she felt, how her employer regularly called her a dog and insulted her viciously before begging her not to leave.

Yulia wanted her employer to fire her so that she could go home to the Philippines,¹¹⁴ but in the next breath she talked in cascading words about how badly she wanted to stay in Israel “but to stay as someone who is free.” She pulled out a copy of the letter she wrote to Prime Minister Netanyahu, guarding it while reading me a paragraph. In this section she quoted the commandment in the Torah of how to treat a stranger, and then she confronted the Prime Minister with her assessment that Israel is not living up to its religious obligations.

She wouldn’t let me see the letter, folding it up and putting it away in her bag. She talked to me until Nurit told her to leave about how she wants to “be a person” in Israel or for her employer to fire her and let her go home.

¹¹⁴ I understood from other aspects of our long conversation that she didn’t want to resign because then she would lose a sizeable amount of money the employer would owe her if the employer ended the contract.

My brief contact with Yulia illustrated the power dynamics that often leave caregivers feeling trapped between economic needs and difficult employment situations. Yulia saw two possible solutions to her unhappy position. Her employer could fire her, allowing Yulia to collect her severance package that was financially important to her. Alternatively, the state could endow her with the necessary rights to permit her to leave the abusive employer and take another contract after four years and three months in Israel on a caregiving visa. Using the concept of “the stranger” who is guaranteed certain rights, Yulia appropriated Jewish Israeli logics to accuse the highest political authority (the Prime Minister) of letting the country fail in its ethical obligations.

She did not accept that abuse, vulnerability, and insecurity are inherent to migrant work programs. She connected her experiences to her analysis of Israel’s hypocrisy and refusal to live up to its own ethical code. She established her right to accuse the Prime Minister by quoting the Torah to him, demonstrating her knowledge of this important document establishing Israel’s ethical and legal codes. She illustrated Israel’s ethical dealings as removing her personhood and freedom in the state’s sociolegal refusal to recognize her as the stranger endowed with rights. Without these rights, she would choose to go home where implicitly these legal protections and social recognition are available to her, *but* under conditions that fulfill the category Israel traps migrant workers in: as an economic agent. She played her economic role by holding out for the full amount of money owed to her, which she suggested in her comments symbolically compensated her for putting up with her employer’s abuse.

She suggested an unethical, but *practical*, economic exchange for health that could only become ethical if the state acknowledged its obligations. In this exchange she continues to suffer but she receives the full monetary amount owed to her. Extrapolating on this logic, the state’s

fulfillment of its obligations would satisfy migrant workers' health claims by allowing her to leave abusive employment without risking her financial health or her visa, and furthermore not putting her in a position to trade on her psychological health for the money owed to her when her employer ends a contract.

The fact that migrant workers are granted any rights provides the grounds for politically conservative factions to argue that the state has done enough to acknowledge migrant workers as "the stranger." These arguments also challenge the application of the role of "the stranger" to migrant workers, claiming that foreign workers are a completely separate social category. As stated above, politically liberal sectors of Israeli civil society and popular opinion argue that the sociolegal marginalization that migrant workers experience violates the expectations that "the stranger" be treated like a citizen (or, in other translations of the Biblical verses, a native born, subject, or denizen). The use and intended meaning of this religious expectation is contested, but the ethical force of the verse holds tremendous valence in Jewish Israeli society and for non-citizens. The force of social obligations to "the stranger" is strong on its own, but also articulates with other central ethical expectations.

Merav Michaeli exemplified how "the stranger" resonates in other ethical responsibilities in her comments at a rally protesting the Slavery Laws. Michaeli, a journalist, social activist, and Member of Knesset, criticized the proposed amendments to foreign workers' labor conditions by telling a modified version of the Passover story. The Passover story focuses on the Israelites escaping slavery in Egypt and progressing through forty years in the desert to freedom, after conquering the Canaanites and claiming the Biblical territory of Eretz Yisrael. The liberal use of this story usually asserts Jewish people's obligation to protest slavery since they were slaves in Egypt. However, Michaeli gave the story a modern twist, concluding with the statement, "We

were slaves to Pharaoh in *Mitz'raim* [Egypt], and now we are free men and women so that Netanyahu and Eli Yishai can bring foreign workers [to Israel] to be slaves for us.”¹¹⁵

In this statement, Michaeli conflated two religious obligations from Jewish texts pertaining to slavery and to “the stranger.” Her statement implied that foreign workers are strangers in Israel as the Israelites were enslaved strangers in Egypt, and that Israel’s treatment of “strangers” reproduces Pharaoh’s enslavement of the Israelites. The reminder of Biblical enslavement often provides a call to social action within Jewish communities to denounce global instances of slavery. To imply that Israeli Jews are themselves the enslavers prompts a startling reversal of the ethical landscape and a re-contextualization of the assumed power dynamics between Israel and the role of the enslaved stranger. Michaeli’s provocative statements evidenced the use of “the stranger” as a metaphorical tool pointing to society’s ethical failures. This logic that resonates in Israeli society and migrant worker communities offers rich potential for asserting the ethical value of claiming greater rights. Yet, as the residents of South Tel Aviv and the Municipal Rabbis demonstrated, competing notions of personhood, community, and geopolitical territory challenge the place of the stranger in modern Israeli society, insisting that Israel is exclusively for Jewish people.

The modern state of Israel marks geopolitical territory that holds importance to many religions, complicating the claim that Israel ought to be exclusively Jewish. Maria and Danny, another migrant worker, constructed an ethical basis for caregivers’ health-related claims from Christian ideology. This conversation occurred directly after Maria told me of her employer’s death, unexpectedly transforming Maria’s visa situation from legal to undocumented. She had thirty days to leave the country or she would risk deportation. Maria felt distraught by the

¹¹⁵ Protest against “Modern Slavery” Binding Laws. Tel Aviv. March 26, 2011.

thought of leaving Israel where she worked for over a decade and felt very much at home (discussed further in Chapter 6). She expressed bitterness and anger at Israel for its laws that did not permit her to legally stay in Israel any longer; needless to say, Maria's usual steady good mood faltered, and she seemed unsteady when we arrived at Mark's birthday party.

We entered the shared apartment where other friends of Mark lived right as the party began and sat with Mark's best friend, Danny, in the empty living room. Danny sat on a couch texting rapidly on his phone, pleased to see Maria. He was tall and very thin; I guessed that he was in his mid-to-late fifties. I learned later that he worked as a chauffeur and personal assistant for a family with a disabled child. We exchanged the usual pleasantries, and I tried to explain my involvement in the FCO community to Danny. Maria joined in, telling Danny about some of the group activities I'd participated in. Danny asked if I was Jewish, and Maria assured him of my Catholicism, waving off my usual attempt to correct that statement. Danny asked me what I thought of Jewish people, and I made a number of non-committal comments, which he accepted easily. He assured me of the difference between Israeli Jews and European Jews who wore "the hats and coats." Before I could interject that the Orthodox also lived in Israel, he fixed his gaze on me and stated,

"You know, Jesus was Jewish."

"Yeah, I did know that." I nodded.

"But the Jews don't use the name Jesus. They don't name their children Jesus, because they think he is the worst of the Jews. The worst of the Jews." He repeated grimly, holding eye contact with me. "But they call their children Judah."¹¹⁶ Danny shook his head at me, while Maria interrupted with a sudden burst of uncharacteristic anger,

¹¹⁶ Rationales for naming children Judah in Jewish communities do not generally reference Judah from the New Testament as Danny implies. Rather, "Judah" references the brother of Joseph whose name

“The Jews humiliated Jesus. They didn’t recognize him [as the messiah], and then they *humiliated* him.”

My mind flashed back to the conversation I had with Maria about her situation, remembering her statement about how after eleven years of work she couldn’t bring her family to Israel or petition for another work visa. This situation did seem to humiliate her and bring her a great deal of distress along with feelings of abject betrayal. Danny continued his lecture, watching me closely.

“Judah! The Jews pick a *betray*er to name their children after. Judah betrayed Jesus, and the Jews name their children after this kind of person. Not after Jesus. What do you think of that? The man who gave Jesus to the Jews to kill is who they want to name their children after.”

“But, did the Jews kill Jesus, or the Pagans?” Maria interjected, her brow furrowed.

They debated for a few minutes, not reaching a definite conclusion. Finally, Maria shook her head and concluded, “They cast him [Jesus] out and humiliated him.”

“In the Philippines, when you are a child and you act very bad, your parents tell you not to be a *hudy*o – a Jew. Not because of the Jewish people, but because of the word *Judah* in *Jewish*. They tell us as children not to be betrayers. Judah was a betrayer, and the Jews accept him instead of Jesus.” Danny lit a cigarette, placing the lighter carefully on his thigh. His fingers began flipping the cover of his cell phone absently open and closed.

“I don’t think Jews had the first religion.” Maria said to me. “They say they were the first ones, but ... do you think this?”

“I think Islam is older.” Danny put in.

became attached to one of the twelve tribes of Israel, and is the tribe the majority of modern Jews are associated with.

They continued to discuss the evolution of religion and monotheism, orally ordering their views on the world and where they saw Judaism fitting into larger paradigms of faith and personhood. Danny turned to me once they reached their conclusion and continued lecturing.

“You know Laura, Christians feel a connection to Israel, and it is a part of their heritage. This is a place they connect to. We don’t come here just for the salaries; we come to be in the land that Jesus was from. And, there is a connection between Israel and the Philippines that is not just about religion and history. In World War II, the Philippines let the Jews come from Europe when they were in danger.”

“Right.” I agreed. “And then after the war, the Philippines recognized Israel as a state.”

“Yes. We were fighting free of the Americans, and we were a new country, but we recognized *this* new country.” Danny said thoughtfully, his eyes squinting slightly as he considered me.

“We helped them when they needed it. Now...” Maria gave me a sad look as tears welled up in her eyes before changing the subject.

This conversation reveals Danny and Maria’s perceptions about their personal and community experiences in Israel as migrant workers. Maria and Danny used a religious metaphor to map a moral narrative onto their experiences of exclusion and disrespect. Their comparison with Jesus created a sense of self-worth that symbolically refuted Israel’s refusal to consider migrant workers as potential immigrants. The Jesus narrative puts Christian migrant workers and Jewish Israelis into a longer contentious historical perspective that suggests a durable flaw in Jewish approaches to Jesus and to migrant workers both. This narrative situates Christians as the victims of the Jews, and furthermore recalls the Jewish community’s refusal to

authenticate Jesus as the messiah, which Maria and Danny extrapolate to understand that Israel also refuses to legalize their rightful claims.

Identifying with Jesus as a metaphor for suffering offered caregivers a sense of self worth as they struggled with Israel's closures and spaces of exclusion. Even as a Jew, Jesus was marked as an outsider and crucified. Caregivers who saw themselves as integrated into Israeli society before losing their visa often stated that Israel "betrayed" them, just as the Jews betrayed Jesus. Jesus' crucifixion symbolizes humiliation, suffering, persecution, and social death. Caregivers perceived abusive employers, their marginalization, and the methods through which the state prevented their formal inclusion as forms of humiliation, as constant acts of disrespect, betraying their expectations for reciprocated care, and as preventing their full engagement with social life. These daily reminders of their exclusion caused some caregivers tremendous stress and feelings of suffering, feelings that grew increasingly pronounced when faced with deportation. These factors contributed to the stress, fear, and denigration caregivers repeatedly claimed harmed their health. The image of Jesus on the cross provided a potent metaphor for how caregivers felt in Israel when confronted with their temporary status and lack of agency as migrant workers.

Maria's reiteration of Jesus' humiliation and how Judaism doesn't recognize Jesus as a prophet or the messiah reflected her own emotional response to the consequences of her employer's death. Danny's discussion of how Jewish people choose to align themselves with a historical figure charged with betraying Jesus also articulated their anger. Filipino communities communicated their bitterness over the "revolving door" of migrant workers in Israel where culturally knowledgeable caregivers who wish to stay and continue working are replaced by new caregivers who don't know Hebrew or about Israeli customs. In this sense, they saw Israel as

intentionally betraying and sacrificing them. Many caregivers spoke bitterly about their personal commitment to Israel that the government answered by discarding them at a whim. They protested what they saw as a lack of recognition for their work, sacrifices, and love for Israel.

Maria and Danny asserted that within a Catholic identity is an implied moral superiority. They supported this claim by aligning Jews with a historical figure characterized in Christianity by betrayal. They tempered their anger at the Israeli state by mediating their experiences through a religious narrative attesting to the righteousness of Christ. Maria managed her demoralization resulting from her visa situation by asserting her own righteousness similar to Jesus'. Maria and Danny use Christ's relationship with his own Jewish community to give a deeper meaning to their own identity as Christians who are not welcome in Israel. By asserting their self worth parallel to a martyr-figure believed by many to be the legitimate messiah also implicitly suggests that if Israel accepted migrant workers into society that they would be on the side of the righteous rather than re-enacting their role as betrayers.

Caregivers claim their own righteousness in Israel's denigrating migrant work program by using Jesus as symbolic of Israel's actions to betray migrant workers and to sacrifice them after providing years of caregiving services. This ethical framework is important for caregivers' health claims because it frame Israel's legal and social closures as constituting a breach of moral conduct. This framework also characterizes Israel as unfairly profiting off of migrant workers who they sacrifice without remorse. Finally, the martyred figure of Jesus provides migrant workers a way of understanding their own suffering as the result of "unenlightened" beliefs, providing a rationale for contesting the conditions that prompted their suffering.

Their decision to employ Catholic narratives in a Jewish society indicates a number of different tactical choices. Most obviously, Filipino caregivers originate from a predominantly

Catholic country, familiarizing them with Christian narratives, ethics, and belief systems.

Caregivers' *habitus* is formed in part through Catholic influences. Thus, Catholicism offers an available and familiar structure through which to express, and work through, strong feelings.

Caregivers in my research also rarely indicated that they saw Catholicism and Judaism as mutually exclusive belief systems except in moments such as described above. While Filipino caregivers did describe feelings of betrayal through crucifixion metaphors, those were the *only* times I heard caregivers placing Catholicism in opposition to Judaism. Importantly, these were the times that caregivers felt betrayed by Israel. Thus, their use of Catholic narratives might be read as a way to express their frustration and hurt when Israel rejected their claims of belonging in Israel, returning to other narratives in which caregivers found self worth, belonging, and value.

Maria and Danny's discussion of religion points to a slippage that is common among migrant workers, but which reveals a troubling political conflation. They collapse "Israel" and "Jews" into one functional category meant to represent all people in Israel, all Jews worldwide, and all of Jewish history from the Torah to the present. Comparing narratives of the Jews perpetrating Jesus' martyrdom with how the State of Israel limits the legal and social opportunities for migrant workers creates a number of concerns, but the most pertinent here is the assertion that the State of Israel and Jewish identity are synonymous.

This collapse of Jewish and Israeli identities problematically elides entire populations of Israeli citizens. This blurring of categories also silences the voices of many global Jewish communities who do not identify completely or at all with Israel, its politics, or the religiously correct decision to return to Eretz Yisrael before the messiah's return. However, it also opens a space to think about what it means to claim an Israeli identity through embodied practices without possessing a legitimized Jewish identity. Israel claims to be simultaneously influenced

by Jewish priorities, and democratic. Yet, religious values and the commitment to a Jewish national character frequently trump democratic precepts. In this system, what real ground do migrant workers have to stand on to claim inclusion in Israel without a legitimated Jewish identity? Can Filipinos assume a legitimate Israeli identity without religious conversion or by means of spousal citizenship rights?

Embodying Identity

To address this quandary, some careworkers used changes in their daily habits, practices, and beliefs in alignment with Israel's social norms and political values to assert an embodied Israeli identity. They referenced this embodiment as the process of transitioning their identity from an outsider-migrant worker to a worthy candidate for immigration. Embodiment, as caregivers represented their actions, implies engaging in acts that produce a certain kind of body and associated sensibilities within a defined social context (Bray and Colebrook 1998 quoted in Moss 2005). Caregivers engaged in a discourse that recalls Mauss' (1973) discussion of bodily techniques as marking a person's actions, habits, and comportment with a specific cultural identity produced in a particular historical-political moment. By asserting that their adoption of language (including slang), cultural practices, and political ideology re-made their identity via their bodily habits implies that they marked themselves as belonging in Israel's current social landscape. Caregivers thus asserted identity not as an essentialized, stable entity, but as a constantly forming, fluid process influenced by cultural environment, life events, and daily habits (Resnik 2006). Resnik refers to identities that are formed in new national contexts as "invented identities" designed to specifically equip migrants to navigate the host society while maintaining a non-assimilated sense of self (2006: 590). In many ways, the caregivers in my

research asserted this kind of invented identity with the proviso that while they maintained a strong “proud Pinoy” sensibility they also actively sought to *become* Israeli.

Labor-receiving nations politically produce migrant bodies through racialized and gendered national discourses. Migrants are also produced through the creation of categories that endow migrant workers with vulnerability based on embodied identity characteristics such as race, nationality, and gender (Silvey 2005). In response to these vulnerabilities, caregivers in my example sought to politically produce changes in their own bodies and bodily habits by assuming Israeli practices and customs. Engaging in routine practices marked as Jewish-Israeli and adopting normative political perspectives, caregivers argued that they internalized and produced an Israeli subjectivity. Demonstrating these embodied practices was a formal, intentional act for some caregivers. Most caregivers, however, represented their produced Israeli subjectivities as an unintentional, but completely authentic, result of a long tenure in Israel.

Despite the unintentional nature of this embodiment, these caregivers asserted that as a result they have become part of Israeli society, transforming themselves to Israeli expectations and norms as might any new immigrant.¹¹⁷ Migrant workers like Maria, Mark, Faith, and Romeo shaped themselves to Israel’s social expectations, acquiring the necessary knowledge and competencies to live a socially embedded life in Israel. Thus, in their estimation, embodiment occurred both through intentional engagement with cultural norms, but also by living within social rhythms over an extended period of time. Independent of how caregivers came to engage with Israeli culture through their bodily habits and daily practices, they claimed that these acts of assuming Israeli life had an altering affect on their identity and sensibilities.

¹¹⁷ See Golden (2001) for examples of new immigrants who challenge the necessity of adopting normative national views, and also Glick Schiller et al (1995) regarding the changes in assimilation practices by im/migrants in transnational settings.

Caregivers predicated their Israeli identity on social integration and familiarity, not on adopting Jewish religious views (although they did participate in forms of Jewish religious practice). Maria, Mark, Faith, and Romeo referenced their long tenure in Israel, living in an Israeli household, and caring for an older Israel person as a process of enculturation. For them, their transformation occurred intentionally to the extent that they embraced these changes but they did not seek out ways to “become” intentionally Israel. However, for other caregivers, particularly Filipina women with Israel-born children, the assertion of an Israeli identity that includes a central Jewish component became essential to their claims. These caregivers mapped a Jewish Israeli identity onto their children (and implicitly onto themselves), pushing the boundaries of what absolutely defines what it means to be Israeli, Jewish, and to be a Jewish Israeli. They used particular markers to show their “Israeliness”: their ability to communicate in Hebrew, their ability to cook “Jewish” foods for their employers, their competency celebrating Jewish holidays with their employer and helping him or her complete the associated rituals (including weekly Shabbat observances for religious employers), and their comfort navigating Israeli society.

Very few of the caregivers I interacted with said “I’m Jewish” as part of their articulation of Israeli identity, although I heard many ruminating on conversion. However, all of the caregivers voiced the ways in which they already felt Israeli or how they saw themselves as so deeply integrated into Israeli society that their Filipino identity became compatible with Israeli life. For example, while sitting in shared weekend apartments, Maria often told me about how she prepared for holidays or Shabbat, bragging that doing these tasks constituted a “natural” part of her thinking and actions. “It’s a part of me,” she said during one conversation, “and I say the candle-blessings and I say *chag sameach* [happy holiday] – this is how I live now.” Faith, Mark,

and Romeo offered similar explanations of their integration of Jewish Israeli social norms, referencing their regular daily acts and their expectations for social interactions. Romeo's relationship with food and his admiration of what he identified as the Israeli lifestyle formed part of his active alignment with Israeli social norms and expectations. Political sentiment also provided venues for displaying affinity with Israel. Caregivers routinely stated that they "stood with Israel," and derided "Arab terrorists" in line with conservative national mores. In general, Filipino caregivers spoke about their support of Israel's security rationales for aggressive military behavior in the Occupied Territories and in the Middle East region, and spoke warmly of the IDF.

However, caregivers did not claim that they adopted all or parts of Jewish religious practices. Because the majority of Jewish Israelis identify as secular, there is divide between what is "religious" practice and what constitutes Israeli national culture. Filipino caregivers referenced social expectations such as knowing how to bless Shabbat candles or how to engage with holidays not as religious practices but as *national* practices. Some caregivers worked for more devout employers than others, but the baseline of secular practice incorporated some rituals that are technically religiously informed. Caregivers generally separated what they saw as "religious" practice, such as Orthodox religious observance, from the secular versions of Judaism that infuse Israeli social norms. Thus, Filipinos caregivers could claim an Israeli identity without necessarily asserting their "Jewishness."

There is no one form of "Jewish" practice in Israel (or anywhere). The diversity of engagement within categories of Jewish practices complicates exactly what it means when Filipino caregivers claim that they are "living an Israeli life" by adopting certain Jewish customs, learning Hebrew, and observing Jewish Israeli holidays. Defining what exactly entails a Jewish

identity gains further nuance in Israel due to the secular nationalization of key Jewish religious “practices” that define Jewish Israeli subjectivities.

For example, is a person observing Shabbat as a Jewish Israeli when this period (Friday night to Saturday night) is marked by a nearly-nationwide pause in business and transportation as rabbinic mandate for Shabbat observance demands? Or is this person just living in Israel? Religious holidays and Shabbat have been nationalized in Israel although the explicit religious nature is not always prioritized: on Shabbat you eat long lunches and watch TV or drive to hiking trails; Rosh HaShanah is a day off to enjoy long leisurely lunches with friends and relatives at outdoor cafes; and Yom Kippur is an evening where driving is highly stigmatized so there are masses of Israelis of all ages riding their bikes down roads, highways, and major thoroughfares empty of cars. Is hiking, having a long lunch, or riding your bike as part of a national tradition equivalent to observing these holidays *as a Jewish Israeli*?

These questions may appear dismissive, but I pose them sincerely to point to a deeper question: what constitutes a recognizable Jewish identity based on daily practice that is acknowledged by the state? Many claim that a truly authentic Jewish identity only comes through a Jewish biological mother, reinforcing the argument that Judaism is a genetically-inherited aspect of personhood, not dependent on a set of religious acts. Others view the combination of genetics and religious observance as required for recognition of a Jewish identity. Conversion is a well established practice within Jewish communities, but it opens lingering and troubling questions: how rigorous is the religious nature of the conversion, how dedicated is the individual to leading a “Jewish life” defined by different levels of religious observance expected by various communities, and what is the rationale for this person’s desire to become Jewish?

The account of the Ben Naims discussed above illustrates how these are not only philosophical questions, but sociopolitical concerns that transform into concrete effects.

Notions of personhood and identity in Israel, even among recognized Jewish individuals, is uncertain, making the assertions from Southeast Asian, Catholic, migrant workers even more tenuous. Yet, Filipino caregivers routinely insisted on the legitimacy of their acquired Israeli identity, meant to be a persuasive rationale, for their deservingness as potential new immigrants. For example, Faith expressed her affinity with Israel via her embodied practices in informal but quietly powerful ways. She worked in Israel for thirteen years with the same family; she usually demonstrated contentment with her employment situation. Faith communicated her attachment to Israel informally (she never attended protest rallies or other public events), but she often sparked with anger over Israel's immigration restrictions. She resisted voicing formal claims of belonging in Israel, viewing such claims as fanciful to the point of delusional based on Israel's political climate.

Despite this, she continually talked about how she embodied Israeli social norms. One day, off-handedly, she jokingly referred to herself as an Israeli. Everyone present heard her statement as a joke, but her moment of identification held a core belief that suggested some degree of sincerity. When speaking about the Israeli government she would occasionally refer to the Knesset as "our politicians," including herself in the national "we." She laced her conversation with constant informal statements about her "place" in Israeli society, such as how the cashiers at the grocery store all knew her, and her flexible expansive social network that kept her abreast of Israeli and Filipino news and gossip. She evidenced her social incorporation by demonstrating her (startling) fluency in Hebrew, her understanding of Jewish religious practices, her comfort creating holidays and weekly observances for her employers, and her (exceptional)

ability to navigate Israel and Israelis. Faith's creation of an expansive network of Israeli friends testified to her social integration at a level that many other long-term caregivers couldn't replicate. Faith cooked Filipino food during the weekends and for FCO events, but she enjoyed Israeli food and liked cooking it for herself and her employer. She told me once that when she wasn't with other Filipinos that she never cooked *Filipini* food.

Faith knew that once her employer died that she would be deported despite her long tenure and comfort in Israel. Faith cared for her employer's wife upon arriving in Israel, and when the wife passed away she took over her current employer's care. However, her relationship with her employer began to show strain; he didn't want to pay her regularly or for her holidays, and he began telling her that she was dispensable. She summarized her views on her employer and Israel one day in the following statement that also illustrates her political alignment with Israel and her own integration into the body politic:

“When they need you, they love you. When they don't, there is no love or respect. It is really bad, really hard, because we – we caregivers, we *Filipini* – we take care of these people from our hearts. Really, from our hearts. And they don't appreciate us or what we give them. It's not nice, it's not good. It's not respectful. They expect us to agree to anything, to just say yes and suffer. Like we're not human. Not me. I won't bend over like that. I will talk back!” she told me, anger in her eyes.

She shook her head, demanding forcefully, “Where are the human rights? Look at how they treat us, where is [sic] the rights, the human rights? Where do they treat us like humans? It's just like Shalit...you know, Gilad, last week... the deal. They traded him for a thousand criminals! Bloody criminals! [Holding up her hands to reference the constant media statements that the Palestinian prisoners exchanged for Shalit all “had blood on their hands.”] What about everyone else? With all these criminals free? Where are the rights for everyone else? Where is the peace? For all of us who have to live with criminals just for him? What about rights there, huh? I was here before, you know.¹¹⁸ When Israel was at war with Lebanon, and all the bombs and the fighting. Are we supposed to do that again? With them bombing us and Israel? Israel has to protect itself. Where are the human rights and the protection of Israel with this Shalit deal?”

¹¹⁸ She means that she was in Israel during the Lebanon war, not that she left Israel and then came back.

Faith's discussion of Gilad Shalit and her engagement with current political analysis indicated her knowledge of Israeli culture and how she saw herself fitting within it. She makes a telling equivalency between how Israeli employers treat Filipino caregivers and how the Israeli government "endangered" (in her view) the Israeli public for one captive Israeli soldier. In both cases Faith references Israel's lack of respect for humanity and how power dynamics create vulnerabilities for the weaker party. However, while she acknowledges that her employer treats her with disrespect because she is a migrant worker, she then contests her visa status as indicative of her self-identification. Instead, she aligns herself with Israelis who have been wronged by the government. In both cases, she portrays the stronger party (e.g. Israeli employers, the government) as violating human rights through acts of disrespect, a lack of consideration, and exposing the weaker parties (e.g. caregivers and the Israeli public) to risk and harm.

Faith received offers to migrate to other countries before her employer died, such as to Australia where members of her family lived as both citizens (with Australian spouses) and migrant workers. She kept the possibility of Australia on the table, but mostly she spoke of the life she had in Israel, her friends and how she had "roots" after so many years. Whenever a FCO member announced plans to return to the Philippines due to an expired visa, Faith grew angry and verbally abused Israel. She occasionally ranted about the situation, clearly imagining herself faced with an expired visa and deportation, wanting to know how the government could "throw away" Filipino caregivers. She asked rhetorically in these moments, "Don't I speak Hebrew? Don't I know about a Jewish home? What more do they want?"

Reciprocity and “Illegal” Children

Caregivers with Israel-born children, as mentioned above, made claims for expanded residency rights based on their embodied Israeli identities and that of their children. They used embodiment to assert their right to stay in Israel, but they incorporated historical and sentiment-based arguments about reciprocity to strengthen their claims. Migrant workers’ children became a visible problem for the state in 2008 when the government decided to deport those children they deemed “illegal,” including children of migrant workers and asylum seekers. The government decision to deport four hundred¹¹⁹ children (from approximately 1,200 identified) evolved out of months of debates in the Knesset, protests from Israeli citizens and NGOs, and responses from international humanitarian agencies.

The government announced the initial plan in 2008; after months of debate and delays the deportations began in 2011. The government used five criteria to judge if a migrant worker’s child would be granted permanent legal status, or face deportation: he or she must have parents who entered Israel legally; s/he must have arrived in Israel before the age of thirteen; s/he must prove more than five years residency in Israel; s/he must be entering first grade or higher; and s/he must speak Hebrew. The government established an appeal process for families with unusual circumstances along with other very specific exemptions.

Public uproar ensued in response to the government’s decision to deport any child born in Israel, particularly from civil rights groups, citizens referencing Jewish deportations during the Holocaust, and migrant worker communities. The sectors of society protesting these deportations asserted that these children had a right to live in Israel because of their identity as native born

¹¹⁹ This number decreased after the hearings for exceptional cases were heard and decided. Some sources estimate that over two hundred children face deportation, while others estimated the number to be closer to one hundred fifty children.

“Israelis.” This identity claim arises from the children’s birthplace, their fluency in Hebrew, their early childhood education in Israeli schools, their comfort practicing Jewish ritual and holidays, and their deep association with Israel as their home. The parents of these children argued their ability to raise “Israeli” children based on their own internalization of what it means to live like an Israeli.

Many of these children had Filipina mothers who counteracted the label “illegal” by arguing their success in reproducing a Jewish Israeli lifestyle for themselves and their children. In effect, they claimed to be *part of* the demographic project rather than challenging it. They also called upon the Philippines’ offer of sanctuary to Jewish refugees during World War II and the care-debt they saw Israel owing migrant caregivers. They suggested that if Israel allowed caregivers permanent residency or citizenship, especially Filipina caregivers, then Israeli’s debt of reciprocity would be met.

The visas offered by the Philippines to Jewish refugees in the Second World War were a sticking point for every Filipino caregiver I spoke to at length. Filipinos view the 10,000 visas, financial assistance, and sanctuary the Philippines offered in 1939 as the initial diplomatic acts of the Philippines’ continuing strong support for Israel. The Philippines officially recognized the State of Israel in 1948, furthering perceptions of goodwill bonds. The Philippine Embassy, the Filipino Community, and Holocaust survivors raised funds to erect the Open Door Monument in Rishon Le’Zion in 2009. The monument is a testament to the relationship between the two nations, denoting the sanctuary offered by the Philippines to European Jewish refugees. The monument’s design speaks to the diplomatic relationship forged between the two countries. As the official description states:

... the Philippine flag and the Israeli flag are joined together to symbolize the close and friendly relations of the Philippines and Israel. The doors open inward and "meet" in the

middle of the triangle. A light in the middle represents the sun and symbolizes the hope that the Philippines brought to the Jewish refugees, the warm welcome they received from the Filipino people and the beacon that will guide both countries in attaining common goals.¹²⁰

Israel's recognition of the diplomatic and historical relationship between the two countries, especially the implied reciprocity of the visas offered to Jewish refugees, is significantly less generous than what Filipino caregivers expected. The decision by the government to restrict foreign work visas, to refuse permanent residency or citizenship applications from migrant workers, and to deport migrant workers' children left many Filipino caregivers expressing feelings of betrayal. For caregivers, this betrayal deepened with their knowledge that Israelis depend on migrant workers for cheap caregiving labor.

This failed reciprocity resonated in moments when caregivers felt disrespected and dismissed by the state and society. These moments of dismissal, also read as reinforced marginalization, often coincided with Filipinos confronting the reality that their claims of belonging and desires to stay in Israel – even if voiced only in informal contexts – were unimportant to Israeli politicians and many Israelis themselves. These caregivers made their claims by mobilizing their transformed identities, ideas of belonging, and assertions that as caregivers they were fully integrated into Israeli society to testify to their cultural integration. The state's rejection of their claims communicated a challenge to these caregivers' sense of belonging, reinforcing the social closures that negatively effect caregivers' perceptions of health.

On a Friday in early July 2011, I attended a protest march and rally organized by caregivers to contest the government's announcement about the planned child deportations. Approximately five hundred migrant workers with their children assembled on Rothschild Street

¹²⁰ "Monument Description." From the Philippine Embassy Israel Site: http://www.philippine-embassy.org.il/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=38:the-open-doors-monument&catid=11:the-open-doors-monument&Itemid=29

in Tel Aviv near Habima Square, joined by a few migrant fathers and a handful of Israeli families who rejected the ethical stance of a Jewish government deporting children.

Additionally, an assortment of university-aged Israeli adults with their enthusiastic certainty of what constitutes justice attended the rally with drums and pre-prepared marching chants.

Migrant workers held hand-printed signs in Hebrew and English stating, “We took care of your elders! Please do care for our children” and “We deserve to stay, we were born here” and “Bibi don’t deport us” and “Stop the deportations.”

The march proceeded up Rothschild Street through a gentrifying neighborhood of Tel Aviv. At the end of the march the protestors gathered in the shade before the speeches began. A sound system and makeshift stage stood near the Memorial to the Founders of Tel Aviv, which the children began to play on making a striking image of small Asian children against the tall Memorial backdrop covered with Hebrew names. Other children found shade sitting beneath the statue of Meir Dizengoff, Tel Aviv’s first mayor.

Ruel Bautista, the president of the Federation of Filipino Communities in Israel (FFCI), gave a powerful, impassioned speech midway through the rally, about his decision to have his two children in Israel with his (Filipina) wife and their fear of deportation. He spoke about the personalized services migrant caregivers provide for the elderly in Israel, caring for them and loving them when Israelis "don't want to do this work, and can't do this work." He clearly argued that Israelis forfeited the responsibilities towards their older family members, and now the Israeli government forfeited its *obligation* to allow migrant workers to have families in Israel after caring so lovingly for Israel's elderly. He stated clearly that these migrant workers came to love the elderly people they care for, and that they have come to love Israel. He stressed the point that Israeli-born children love Israel like a homeland, and he asked the crowd, yelling into

the microphone, if Israel truly wanted to deport these children and to create a generation “who has learned to hate Israel for making them leave their home.”

His voice grew in strength and sharp emotion as he reminded the crowd that during World War II, the newly-acknowledged independent nation of the Philippines offered European Jews 10,000 visas to the Philippines to save their lives. He reminded the crowd that the Philippines gave the Jews who came money, land, businesses, homes, hope, and protection. The Philippines treated the Jews well as refugees, and he claimed that the Philippines stood alone as the only Asian country in 1947-1948 to recognize Israel as a nation. Ruel asked the crowd why that history doesn't legitimate 400 visas for children who want to stay with their parents in the country of their birth, in a country where they fluently speak the language and where they celebrate the holidays, in a country where their parents want to do undervalued and under compensated caretaking work that Israelis don't want to do.

After Ruel Bautista spoke, Grace Cardenas, the Vice President of the FFCI, described the "terror" that Israel inflicts on migrant children who fear immigration detention and deportation. She spoke about children's panic when they see a police officer, and the fear mothers feel resulting in their “imprisonment” in apartments to avoid the Oz Unit (Immigration Police) on the streets. She spoke of parents who wanted to stay in Israel to give their children a better chance than the life available to them in the Philippines, of children who couldn't conceptualize of another home other than Israel, of the obligation a state has to children born within its borders.

While these adults spoke of difficult political realities that mixed actual policy and law with ideals of how these laws *ought* to operate in a more egalitarian world, the children played. Their listening mothers and fathers watched them as they gathered around the water fountain to spray each other, or ran around on one of the monuments in the park that held tall plaques

engraved with lines and lines of Hebrew. They laughed and yelled in fluid Heblish (sentences mixing Hebrew and English words, frequently with Hebrew grammatical structure), wearing shirts with the blue Star of David representing Israel, and demanding Israeli snacks from their parents. They created a cacophony that threatened to drown out the adults advocating on their behalf.

Migrant workers claimed that they have a personal stake in Israel as the care providers for the elderly and as long-term residents who want to make Israel their home. Furthermore, these migrant parents argued that there is something inherent in their child that *is* Israeli, and they also made this claim for themselves as parents of an “Israeli” child. Their claims resonated with constructions of well-being, particularly calling upon their ability to protect their children as another facet of “health.” They connected parenting to concepts of health by emphasizing their responsibility *as parents* to protect their Israel-born children, which they argued they could not do without permanent residency and recognition from the state.

Without this recognition, these parents saw themselves as unable to fulfill a central responsibility *as parents*, which denigrated their right to a family, their ability to enjoy full personhood, and produced mental, emotional, and spiritual stress that damaged migrant parents’ overall well-being. The psychological affects of not being able to protect children’s rights in their own homeland (working from a notion of “homeland” as argued by these migrant parents), and from the traumas of routine interactions with the immigration police were used by caregivers to evidence Israel’s violations of their right to health. By insisting on the embodied Israeli identities of their children and their own Israeli sensibilities, these parents made a case for parents’ right to protect their children against the state and to create a home for these children in the country of their birth. These parents wanted the right to live with their families while they

worked and for the state to recognize their claims of social belonging. Even more so, they wanted the state to recognize the grounds upon which they argued their child's right to an Israeli identity.

In essence, Filipino caregivers attempted to establish a healthy life for themselves characterized by living with their children, working for wages high enough to remit money home to help their families meet middle class aspirations, enjoying protections from immigration authorities and the constant threat of deportation, and enjoying social privileges such as voting and the benefits the state grants its citizens. In effect, these Filipino caregivers imagined the middle class life idealized in Western industrialized nations. They used their contribution of labor, loyalty, and personal adaptation to Israel as evidence that they had a right to these opportunities and security. Moreover, they argued that their health depended on it.

Migrant parents made another demand on Israel: for politicians and citizens to *care* about what happened to migrant workers and their children. The signs caregivers held at protests evoked interconnected forms of care that drew heavily on notions of reciprocity. Israel recruits caregivers to attend to the elderly, capitalizing on stereotypes of Filipinos as inherently caring and compassionate individuals. In response, caregivers demanded that the state cares about them *as people* as well as a source of profit from cheap labor. Migrant workers attempted to provoke Israelis to think about the outrage that would ensue if a government threatened to deport Jewish children, demanding that same outrage for their children. They made arguments of equivalent humanity between migrant children and Jewish Israeli children, making a case of parity based on birthplace, embodied national identities, and constructed notions of home.

The caregivers thus called upon the government and individual Israelis to exert the care they owed (according to the caregivers) by concerning themselves with the children who faced

deportation. Caring in this case entailed Israelis accepting that these children embodied as much right to live in Israel as children born to two Israeli parents who conferred the necessary legal identity. Filipina women's use of caring implied the state's recognition of caregivers' personhood as well. They wanted Israel to recognize caregivers and their children as worthy of rights and consideration. The commonality in these claims rests in the insistence that the state honors assertion of belonging and recognizes that the dismissal of identity-based assertions violated caregivers' notions of health.

The migrant children who did receive permanent residency rights by fulfilling the state's criteria opened another set of possibilities. How will they be understood within citizenship structures? Will they be a disruption or an anomaly? As adults, will they be able to marry, serve in the army, and in other ways participate in Israeli life with full rights, or will they struggle to claim their own place in Israeli society as they come of age? Will they be able to pass their residency status on to their children? These children reveal continuing tensions with how Israel will have to manage its social diversity and navigate how non-Jewish, rights-bearing individuals fit into the larger citizenship and social structures.

The Promise and Limitations of Citizenship

Caregivers employed a variety of methods to make claims on the state, arguing that they required greater social and political rights to protect their well-being. Yet, the outstanding question remains: does citizenship truly harness the power to do the work caregivers demand of it? Would granting migrant workers citizenship status confer the conditions they identify as necessary for their well being in practice? Is legal status a solution endowed with the necessary power to make Filipino caregivers "Israeli" and to require the state to recognize the full sociopolitical personhood of these new immigrants? Would citizenship be sufficient for

engendering acceptance in Israeli society for Filipino-Israelis, or would religious fault lines and structures of discrimination continue to marginalize Filipinos even as Israeli citizens? These questions cannot be definitively answered, but they pose necessary considerations. One such consideration is what *other* challenges to caregivers' constructed category of health are likely to arise if the state were to address migrant workers' primary concerns, primary among them anxieties over loss of visas and deportation? In other words, once the immediate sources of stress and instability are resolved, what other health concerns would subsequently arise?

What does citizenship offer in practice? What do migrant workers gain with permanent residency status or with citizenship? The Filipino caregivers in my research asserted that they sought the basic protections offered by permanent legal status: neutralizing the daily threat of arrest and deportation. They sought citizenship to reinstate a degree of self-determination in their lives while living in Israel, and to provide protections against state powers. The caregivers in the communities I researched stated that citizenship confers stability, security, and good health by reducing regularly experienced fear and stress.

In Chapter Three, I quoted Bryan, the Embassy diplomat, reflecting on disconnects he observed in Filipino overseas workers between foreign citizenship and concepts of home. Filipino overseas workers are at times eager to move their families to new countries hoping for a better future but in his experience these families tend to return to the Philippines by the second-generation abroad. Discrimination and social marginalization continue after citizenship is conferred and Filipinos can find it difficult to overcome these barriers even when living as citizens in new countries. Whether or not this discrimination would affect the migrant workers in my research should they gain citizenship or permanent residency, the question remains of

what *kinds* of social inclusion and conferring of privilege is legal status capable of, and what kind of life does citizenship/permanent residency deliver despite its promises?

For example, many caregivers speak to Israel's dependence on migrant caregivers arising because Israelis don't want to work in low status occupations or for low wages. Migrant caregivers often attested that they wanted to stay in Israel as citizens and continue to work as caregivers. However, once citizenship is conferred, they lose what makes them desirable in the first place – the ability to pay migrant workers less than citizens and offer fewer benefits. How would this affect former-migrant caregivers' attempts to find employment and make a good life for themselves as citizens? Or would they find themselves restricted in new ways to caregiving work that continued to only pay low wages, reformulating their marginalization within citizenship structures? Or would they be excluded from caregiving jobs in favor of new, cheaper migrant workers? From another perspective, how would religious authorities manage these Filipino-Israelis, including those who converted? Laws about marriage and areas of civil participation that overlap with religious regulations are strict, creating possible exclusions for not only the new Filipino immigrants but also for their children in generations to come.

Academics question what citizenship actually delivers to minorities seeking better treatment from the state and a more secure social standing (e.g. Ong 2006; Sassen 1999, 2006). The ideal of “citizenship” as a singular category that is delivered as a consistent package of goods and services to all who are eligible has been critiqued and dismantled (Glenn 2006). Glenn (2006) makes a distinction between formal citizenship (legal status and policy) and substantive citizenship (the ability to exercise citizenship rights). While an individual or group may hold formal citizenship, their substantial citizenship may be amended based on racial or gendered boundaries and policies that abbreviate access to the full exercise of rights (124).

Based on Israel's existing social hierarchy, there is reason to believe that if Filipino migrant workers won formal citizenship they would still struggle to attain full substantial citizenship. If so, does citizenship truly address the entirety of my research participants' health claims?

The migrant caregivers in my research wanted citizenship status despite their awareness of social discrimination and the inability of citizenship to move them significantly up the social hierarchy compared to other, particularly Jewish, citizens. However, they identified the status of belonging as better than the daily reminders of deportation and inferior rights. Citizenship might not deliver the expected benefits exactly as hoped for, but this status stands for recognition of the humanity and value of the migrant worker within Israeli society as much as it promises any other bill of goods.

The question of where the migrant worker can make claims to protect his or her rights and access necessary resources that are often (at least in part) managed by the state (e.g. healthcare) is complex due to the distance between the migrant workers and the state of citizenship, and not holding the necessary legal status in the country of employment. Human rights perspectives suggest that migrants ought to have access to the basic rights and protections while working abroad, protecting the international worker from exploitation. Migrant workers are routinely situated outside of both formal and substantive citizenship, but they live and work in Israel homes and assume what they consider to be a socially integrated Israeli lifestyle, creating limited parallels between them and their Israeli employers and friends. While human rights discourse claims to establish the universal recognition that humans have certain rights independent of their citizenship status, Arendt's (1948) argument for the inadequacy of human rights in instances where civil rights are suspended is central to understanding the realities that international migrant workers face. Civil rights are necessary to enact social protections and

privileges beyond human rights' basic ideological provisions. The limits of citizenship and human rights leaves the pressing question unanswered of how to best respect and protect migrant workers' full personhood within global flows of labor when nations are looking to restrict migrant workers' sociolegal participation to the greatest extent possible.

Conclusion

Caregivers argued their right to stability and security through religious ethics, human and democratic rights, embodied identity, and by making connections between place of birth and rights of belonging. First, caregivers utilized religious tropes to argue the ethical grounds for their social inclusion. Second, they asserted their "right to rights,"¹²¹ adopting Israel's human rights vocabularies to justify their claims both within human rights frameworks and liberal democratic ideology. Third, Filipino caregivers demonstrated their internalization of "Israeli" daily habits, political ideals, and sensibilities. Through this embodied "Israeli-ness," caregivers sought the state's concession that they were worthy of civil inclusion and the associated rights conferred with inclusion. Fourth, migrant parents (particularly mothers) made claims on behalf of their native-born children, arguing that their children's birth in Israel endowed them with an inherently Israeli identity. I use the debates over migrant children to show how caregivers engaged with narratives of reciprocity as another moral framework through which they saw Israel owing Filipino migrant workers expanded rights. In all of these examples, the tension existed between the categories through which the state viewed migrant workers, and migrant workers' attempts to change, alter, or redefine the nature of those categories.

¹²¹ The phrase "I have the right to rights" [Yesh li ha'zchut l'zechuyot] is the slogan of Israel's annual Human Rights March. This is also the phrase Arendt (1948) uses to define the necessary status to ensure legal personhood.

Caregivers's claims were crafted to in part force a rethinking Israel's identity categories while conforming to them. They sought to open the criteria through which an individual can be considered "Israeli," but they did so by attempting to align themselves through embodied knowledge and practice with Jewish Israeli identity categories. They evidenced their transformation through long tenure in Israel that fostered their internalization of cultural skills such as acquiring Hebrew fluency, showing knowledge of and respect for Judaism, and raising their children to identity as Israelis. They also asserted their ethical place in Israel by assuming the identity of the Biblical "stranger" and arguing their right to ethical treatment within this category. Furthermore, caregivers represented themselves as individuals who *ought* to be invested with rights, and as capable of assuming a subjectivity endowed with human rights and democratically-informed civil liberties. Caregivers thus mobilized the ethical foundations of human rights ideals and those of democracy in their quest for greater rights to assure their well-being.

Why are caregivers' health claims important? These claims stretch the boundaries of categories defining health, and confront Israel's demographic project as well as the Zionist rationale of the state. The claims are unlikely to succeed, but their advocacy speaks to the deeper conditions migrant workers cope with beyond the basic provisions of rights. The claims caregivers make highlight fissures in Israel's dual claim to be a democracy in light of its stated religious priorities, questioning the state's ability to manage minority populations within the demographic project of the state. Moreover, the social and legal categories that define belonging and exclusion in Israel are challenged by caregivers' claims, questioning how the distinguishing lines are drawn. As caregivers attempt to "become Israeli," the criteria for authenticating Jewish

and Israeli identities become fraught, forcing a discussion about the spaces among religious, genetic, national, and acquired (e.g. converted) forms of identity.

The claims that caregivers in my research made resituates Israel in a global context of labor-receiving nations that struggle with the benefit of inexpensive migrants and the threat of migrants wanting to immigrate. Migrant workers in Israel made claims based on their perceptions of health challenges posed by their status *as* migrants, using integrated cross-cultural logics and international rights precepts to formulate logics to address the status and also to protect their health. Whether or not health is the basis from which caregivers are making claims for greater inclusion in other labor-receiving nations, migrant workers are making increased demands on labor-receiving nations. In response, these governments are closing their doors to migrant workers and restricting visas, protecting their national resources and maintaining a sense of national identity in what Massey (1994) refers to as a reactionary model of “place” (discussed in Chapter 1).

In Chapter Six, I turn to situations where migrant workers lost their status and faced departing Israel. I term this process of deciding how to address an expired visa “reluctant leaving” based on the disjuncture an expired visa created for caregivers who asserted their embodied belonging in Israel. This form of leaving transpired when visas end and when claims fail. I examine particular instances of reluctant leaving as well as the larger risks that migrant status confers to Filipino caregivers, both during times of documented status and after visas end.

CHAPTER 6: RELUCTANT LEAVING

Newly arrived Filipino caregivers integrated into the FCO community during the months of my research, while other caregivers, many who worked in Israel for five or more years, departed. The departures prompted many emotions within the community because the caregivers almost always left Israel on account of an expired visa, not because they desired other prospects available in other countries or were ready to return to the Philippines. Maria and Mark both left Israel during my research, their departures shaking the FCO community. Maria and Mark had strong community ties with other Filipino caregivers and Israeli friends, and they both held important leadership roles in the FCO. They were comfortable in Israel and had succeeded in integrating into many aspects of Israeli society. Neither Maria nor Mark participated in the various protests meant to improve caregivers' rights, but they frequently expressed their own claims for greater rights and inclusion. These claims did not erase their commitment to economically supporting family members in the Philippines or their close ties to Philippine culture. They claimed a connection to Israel based on knowledge, familiarity, and a sense of fitting in with Israel *as* Filipino caregivers who wanted their rights as migrants expanded in specific ways. In particular, Mark and Maria both wanted control over how and when they left Israel.

Chapter 5 explored the methods Filipino caregivers employed to assert the right to Israeli citizenship, and discussed the cross-cultural logics of their claims on the state. In this chapter, I

outline the decisions and priorities that informed the different ways Maria and Mark left Israel. I use the term “reluctant leaving” to encapsulate the feelings of belonging, social integration, and commitment to a life in Israel that are repudiated when an expired visa mandates that a migrant worker leave Israel or stay illegally. This chapter explores the component factors of “leaving” that are integral to migrant workers’ lives in Israel.

A significant number of migrant workers want the option to stay indefinitely in Israel. They imagine a future in Israel that appeals to their hopes for a better life and increased opportunities not only for themselves but also for their families. These migrants intertwine their hopeful imaginings of long-term residency with ideals of good health and assertions that they belong in Israel based on their new subjectivity and self-identifications acquired over years working and living in Israel. Their advocacy focuses on shifting their status from temporary migrant workers to full Israeli citizens. When caregivers face the failure of these claims despite investing their sense of self into their idealized Israel, they face a departure they did not choose. This kind of reluctant departure evokes complex feelings of loss, powerlessness, and even betrayal.

“Reluctant leaving” describes the troubling and wrenching departure that Filipino caregivers confront when they resist the eventualities of an expired visa. Unwilling departures may be prompted by debilitating illness or family crises that end a work contract earlier than planned; however, reluctant leaving usually arises when a migrant worker leaves Israel to avoid arrest or when he or she is deported.¹²² In these cases, leaving entails relinquishing a place-

¹²² I was aware that some caregivers disliked Israel for a variety of reasons, but the vast majority of the caregivers I worked with actively tried to stay in Israel for as long as they could. In part, this is the result of working with the FCO that was comprised of Filipino caregivers seeking community, social connections, support, and who were committing to Israel on a personal level. The FCO implicitly emphasized the importance of caregivers learning about Israeli culture, acquiring Hebrew, valuing Jewish

oriented life, a community, and an identity that the caregiver values enough to fight for. For caregivers facing these decisions, neither staying illegally nor obediently departing appear to provide a sense of agency or taking a correct path of action. For most Filipinos I worked with, it was a no-win scenario.

I use Maria and Mark as examples to provide narratives that pose the limited choices migrant workers have within the foreign work program. The ultimate choice for caregivers like Maria and Mark is how and when to leave Israel. Not having control over this choice often belies the hopes, desires, and personal needs of migrant caregivers. Their narratives illustrate how the *real* choice of leaving is not theirs; they can only make decisions that affect the outcomes of the choice made for them. “Leaving” symbolizes the absence of control felt by caregivers who face departing Israel reluctantly. But, leaving is not limited to a bounded act of departure; it is a set of practices inscribing the entire foreign work system.

Eventually, migrant workers confront the challenges presented by their marginal relationship to citizenship structures. Migrant caregivers come to Israel with diverse personal histories, but their lives as migrant workers are shaped by common experiences. These include visa renewals, changing employers, navigating constantly changing labor laws, finding reliable information to help make sense of Israeli culture, and facing difficult decisions when visas cannot be renewed. In every migrant labor contract, the Israeli government explicitly demarcates the worker’s departure from Israel through stated limitations on visa renewals. The immigration police and other governmental bodies continually remind foreign workers of this end point. Filipino caregivers contest the necessity of leaving through their protests and claims of

practices, and supporting Zionist ideology among its members as part of a larger Christian cosmology, but also as a shared set of political beliefs within the organization.

belonging. They push against policing and refute the reminders of a final departure. Yet, for most, the day of departure arrives one way or another.

When caregivers decide to leave Israel at the end of their work visa, “leaving” implies reserving a plane ticket, packing bags, saying goodbye, and boarding the plane. However, I suggest that “leaving” informs the entire migrant contract from start to finish, based on the state’s insistence on the temporary nature of foreign workers and by limiting the foreign worker’s social role to providing economic value. The state routinely reinforces migrant workers’ assigned place at society’s margins with limited visa renewals, restricted rights, constant surveillance by immigration police, and by implicitly permitting migrant workers to be extorted or abused. I argue that migrant caregivers begin their tenure in Israel while the state plans for the caregiver’s departure. Migrant workers are reminded that the labor-receiving country only wants their temporary labor by the stress, anxiety and worry caused by routine interactions with state surveillance. The migrant workforce is managed by these emotions that are the state’s tools for making migrant workers docile to the state’s authority. Arrest, detainment, and deportation are the state’s weapons against migrant workers who challenge its authority, and these punitive actions serve as a threat to other migrant workers. Experiences of reinforced marginality and pervasive surveillance by the state affect notions of well-being for migrant workers, and this well-being faces its largest threat from the actual moment of mandated departure.

Caregivers take risks when they overstay a visa, but leaving is not always the simpler decision. The caregiver loses access to wages in a more valuable foreign currency when a contract ends,¹²³ and the migrant worker must decide where to go next: back to the Philippines or

¹²³ I encountered two uses of the term “contract” during my research. NGOs, recruiting agencies, and governmental bodies refer to each agreement between a caregiver and an employer as a separate contract.

onto another labor receiving country hoping to secure another visa and labor contract. Taking another contract involves new debt; contract fees total between \$5,000 to \$18,000 USD.

Overseas migrant caregivers work every hour they can during the first years of a new contract to pay off these debts, limiting the financial support they can provide to their family. Furthermore, once a migrant caregiver leaves Israel there is no absolute assurance that she will secure another overseas contract or visa.

In addition to monetary concerns, migrant workers struggle with leaving the social networks they formed over their years in Israel. Members of the FCO in particular articulated the difficulty of leaving friends and intimate relationships behind. In part, the FCO implicitly encouraged a connection to Israel by facilitating trips and activities that exposed caregivers to places in Israel beyond The City. These day-off activities offer new experiences and fun, along with ample opportunities for posed pictures in front of various landmarks to display for family and friends. Additionally, these trips created opportunities for creating personal associations with specific places in Israel (and the West Bank). Community events, such as the New Years Party or the Valentine's Day Pageant, opened social spaces for melding a Filipino identity with new concepts of self that emerged in the Israeli context. Caregivers who took time away from employers to join community activities spoke about feeling rooted and connected to Israel's history, religious character, and culture. For many FCO members, these recreational activities intensified the feeling of belonging in Israel that an expired visa discordantly refuted.

This contract validates the work visa assuming that the caregiver's tenure in Israel is less than 4 years and 3 months. Vernacularly, caregivers called the initial bureaucratic process of entering Israel to work legally as the "contract." This process is associated with heavy fees and complications, but it makes all further employment legal as long as it abides by the regulations of the work visa. I am referring to the vernacular usage of the contract here as this was the most common meaning associated with a contract in my research.

Maria and Mark illustrate these aspects of reluctant leaving, and the hard decisions forced by an expired visa. They both served as presidents of the FCO; as leaders in the FCO they informed and experienced the ties to Israel that the organization encouraged. I discuss how Maria and Mark made their decisions when faced with reluctant leaving, and I do so with greater reflection on my own role than in other chapters. I do this for a number of reasons. First, my involvement with Maria and Mark's decisions about leaving operated on multiple levels, and at times had more intensity than any of us expected. Second, I suspect that my presence changed the behaviors of the immigration police during some of the raids and passport checks I witnessed. Raids conducted without Israelis, Americans, or other outside parties present, I am sure, proceed without as many apologies or (shouted) justifications.

Third, I communicate some aspects of the violence of a "mundane" immigration raid through personal reactions in order to emphasize why seemingly orderly events in fact created ruptures and deep wounds. There is a horror to immigration raids that happen "calmly" – without guns drawn, without overt forms of physical violence – that is difficult to articulate. The media gives us renditions of immigration police kicking down doors with guns drawn in order to find "illegals." I experienced something similar in some immigration raids I witnessed, but I found the "non-violent" arrests the most violent and troubling. Thus, I draw on my own involvement to a greater extent to communicate why these arrests resonate despite perhaps seeming rather mundane.

Maria's Decision to Leave (June 2011)

I agreed to meet Maria at her shared apartment Saturday night before going to Mark's birthday party together, hosted in another shared apartment. I arrived at Maria's building in the oldest part of The City that is symbolically reserved for migrant workers, Ethiopians, and

Palestinians just as dusk was falling. Maria buzzed me into the building and waited for me in the hall on her floor. She looked fatigued and uneasy, and not dressed in her usual fashionable style. Instead, she was in a snug dark grey tshirt, jeans, and white athletic shoes. I knew something was wrong when all she said in greeting was “Come in. I need to tell you something first.”

She unlocked the door, and I followed her through the dimly lit hallway past the bathroom, kitchen, and bedroom to the living room that doubled as a second bedroom at night. The lamps weren't switched on and the room was dim; I sat near the open window admitting the only light along with music from one of the neighboring buildings – a loud, techno song in Arabic. Mark joined us before Maria could tell me her news. She waited as I greeted him; he was dressing for the party and clearly very excited even though he soberly told me that Maria had bad news.

Maria sat hunched on the couch, pressing her hands between her knees. Mark resumed his activity around the room, going out and coming back in a busy circuit. Maria searched for the right words while I waited uneasily.

“The woman I took care of died last week,” she finally said.

Maria's next words exposed the full importance of Sveta's death.

“I've been here for eleven and a half years,” she continued, confirming what I already knew: she could not renew her visa due to her long tenure in Israel. Maria had to leave the country or decide to overstay her visa.

Sitting across from each other as the noise from the street grew louder, Maria told me that she would stay in Sveta's apartment during the *shiva*, (what many migrant workers call ‘the sitting’ or ‘the week’) in order to clean and organize Sveta's things. Sveta's family offered Maria a room in their own home until she left Israel, but Maria decided to stay in the shared

apartment. She needed space to think. She mentioned heavily to me that she hadn't told many people about her employer's death, explaining that it was better to prevent the gossip until she knew what she would do.

"I have thirty days, *nahon* (correct)?" she asked me.

I confirmed she was permitted a grace period of thirty days¹²⁴ to wrap up loose ends before she must leave Israel, reminding her to ask Nurit at the NGO for a letter confirming the grace period in case immigration stopped her to check her visa. Maria digested this information as I sat with her in momentary silence.

Eventually Maria confessed that she wasn't sure what she wanted to do. Her decision appeared at least partially made because her next statement was voiced sadly but with clarity,

"Our friendship just began, and now I'm leaving."

The jangle of a cell phone startled us, located somewhere out of sight in the neat clutter of the room. Maria got up to find it among the small piles of personal items belonging to the other caregivers staying in the apartment. Maria found the ringing phone, ascertained that it wasn't hers, and called down the hall to the women cooking in the kitchen, "Cell phone!"

Maria sat down heavily, looking at me with newly focused intent.

"I think I might go to Europe." She confessed to me. "I have a cousin there, and if I go first to an easy country [to get work papers, and where she also had connections] and then to a better one, if [Sveta's] family helps me, then I can get work there. If the family helps me."

¹²⁴ The regulation currently states that caregivers have sixty days after their visas expire to leave the country. However, during the time of my research, the immigration police were only honoring the thirty-day grace period in The City.

“They need to pay you all the money they owe you, including benefits.”¹²⁵ I reminded her, and she nodded impatiently as if she already thought of this.

I wondered what she meant by “help” – if the assistance was comprised of the money Sveta’s family was legally required to pay her, or if they could offer her other forms of help. Perhaps they could call upon relatives or connections in Europe on Maria’s behalf. I started to ask about what she meant but Mark came back into the room. He saw that Maria finished telling me the news and he jumped into the conversation eagerly, reiterating,

“She has to leave.” He gestured at Maria. “It’s not good.” He clicked his tongue to indicate a bad situation, shaking his head.

“Will you go to the Philippines first?” I asked Maria as Mark lingered to listen.

“I want to go to Europe.” She repeated as an answer. “My husband wants me to come home. He says I’ve been gone too long, eleven and a half years. He says to me, ‘what about me? Why won’t you come home to me?’ But, he is being selfish. I have *one* daughter, and she just had a baby. My family is very poor, and I have to take care of my mother. I can still work; I can’t go home just to be with my husband. I have to help my daughter and my granddaughter. And, after three years in Europe, if I can stay there, I can get papers. And then I can bring my family [to Europe] and I can support them.”

“That would be really good.” I agreed, thinking out loud, “There are a few countries that have family reunification programs.” I listed a number off, and she nodded eagerly before adding,

“Yes, and the US and Canada, too.”

¹²⁵ Nurit shared with me a week later after Maria came to see her that Maria was unlikely to see all the money she was owed. Maria worked over 11 years caring for Sveta, and she didn’t take all of her allotted vacation time. The family owed her a total of tens of thousands of shekels that included the required pension payments and severance fees. I never learned if Maria got her full payment or just a portion of the total amount owed.

Mark and I exchanged a look indicating that neither of us thought the US or Canada would be easy options for her. I turned back to Maria as she said with renewed bitterness, “I work here for eleven years, and I can’t bring my family, I can’t stay – nothing. I have to leave. After eleven years of working!”

I nodded, but I didn’t say anything. This was one of many moments I experienced in the Filipino communities in Israel where the realities of migrant life vacated empathetic statements of meaning. Maria, Mark, and I all already knew the nature of the system, and the real costs that migrant workers paid when visas ended. Sympathy wasn’t well received in these moments; what Maria and Mark wanted were better options, and I had no way of providing those options for them. Condolences, solidarity, and empathy just emphasized the limits of choice for Maria and Mark.

Mark said something to Maria in their shared Filipino dialect that she brushed off impatiently. They were from the same province in the Philippines, and they spoke the same dialect, often using this dialect to have private conversations.

“If I go back to the Philippines, can I come back [to Israel], after six months or a year and work again?” she asked me hopefully. Mark turned from where he was looking through items in a plastic shopping bag to hear the answer.¹²⁶

“Well, sometimes. It depends on the number of visas available for caregiving work, and how lenient the system is at that moment. You know [Minister of the Interior, Eli] Yishai is trying to decrease the work visas - by a lot - before 2012, right?” I warned them.

“Really?” Maria looked disappointed.

¹²⁶ Mark always carried small items around in plastic shopping bags, continually looking through the contents as if taking inventory. I never knew what was in these bags (he stored several in various shared apartments), but he guarded them closely. He usually had only one at a time, keeping it separate from the contents of his small rectangular canvas shoulder bag he always wore in the Israeli masculine style.

“Yeah. He wants to decrease the number of foreign workers in Israel, and to have Israelis taking care of the old people instead of migrant workers.” I nodded. “It’s a complicated idea, but...”

“It’s a very bad idea. Israelis don’t want to care for their old people.” Maria said with annoyance.

“Maybe in the next election, Yishai will be voted out, and we can come back.” Mark put forward, his attention returned to his search through the plastic bag. His cell phone rang, and he went across the room to see who it was.

“If I go to Europe...” Maria sighed. “You know, there are a lot of people depending on me here. I have the UN Medical Mission this month...”

“We’ll still have the Mission.” Mark interrupted firmly as he fussed with his phone, leaning against the windows at the back of the room where the security grill was unlocked and opened. “You won’t leave before the Mission.”

“And there is the Culture Event at the Mall, and the Feast of San Lorenzo at the Church. I’m responsible for these things, and people depend on me to help them. Like Mark, and others...” she sighed, worried about the inherent uncertainty of her predicament.

Mark initiated a phone call, speaking loudly in his Filipino dialect, gesturing with his hand for emphasis as he searched through the pile of clothes stacked on the sofa in the back of the room. Something about his conversation distracted Maria for a moment before she gestured to the walls.

“See, I already took my pictures down.” I saw the blank spaces where her framed pictures hung before showing her travels across Israel and pictures with her family in the Philippines.

Maria suddenly shifted the topic, half listening to Mark on the phone again. “A friend of mine is sick at the hospital.” Maria twisted her sparkling diamond wedding ring. “She doesn’t have a visa. The family got a reliever and packed up her things, and put them outside the door. They say when she is done with the hospital, she should go get her things and not come in. Can they do that?”

I walked Maria through her friend’s limited options, both of us understanding that this question reflected Maria’s concerns about being undocumented. She asked me a number of questions about employers forcibly returning a caregiver to the Philippines and the legality of that practice. During our conversation, Mark made a series of short phone calls consisting of brief conversations and annoyed muttering under his breath. Mark’s phone rang again and he answered. Maria stopped talking to listen when Mark began yelling into the phone. He hung up abruptly, sitting heavily on the sofa at the back of the room. Maria asked him what was wrong, and he gave her a long explanation in their shared dialect. The explanation did not make her happy, and Mark was distraught. Maria turned to me and translated,

“The apartment where we’re having his birthday party, they just said that they decided to have the party down at the beach. But, he [Mark] can’t go to the beach because of his [undocumented] situation. They are all already down there, at *ha’yam* [the ocean], though... It’s not nice. They shouldn’t do that.” She shook her head, worried about Mark.

He picked up his phone, swearing under his breath as he dialed, and Maria unnecessarily explained, “He’s disappointed.”

He spoke curtly to the person on the other end while we waited, clearly telling the person off. Then Mark rolled his eyes and yelled at the person at the other end of the phone, pausing to tell Maria in English so that I would understand, “A joke. They were playing a joke.”

“That’s not a good joke.” She shot back, annoyed. “That is not a good joke at all.” She looked at the clock and then stood up. “Come on. Let’s go. I’ll get the camera, and we’ll go over [to the party].”

Sveta’s death came as a surprise, leaving Maria unprepared to make decisions about leaving Israel. Maria’s grief overwhelmed her at times; she respected Sveta and enjoyed the camaraderie they shared. The loss of her work visa only complicated those feelings of loss. However, the unexpected nature of Sveta’s death allowed Maria to keep the news quiet while she weighed her options. Maria’s decision to withhold the news of her employer’s death from her community was a tactical move; if she chose to stay illegally in Israel then the fewer people who knew the details of her situation (or that she could not get a new visa), the safer she would be.

In the end, Maria had to choose between staying with the looming fear of deportation, or leaving. Her difficult decision stemmed from two grim realities: she desperately did not want to leave Israel as she had grown to feel at home there, and she had responsibilities as the FCO president. She also worried about who would take her place protecting Mark. Maria was embittered by her paucity of options: she couldn’t continue to work legally in Israel despite her cultural knowledge and fluency in Hebrew; she couldn’t apply for citizenship and continue her work as a caregiver; she couldn’t bring her daughter and granddaughter to Israel to give them what she thought was a better life. Maria also felt reluctant to leave Israel on a spiritual level. She prized her connection to the Christian Holy Land and routinely visited a number of holy sites, especially during important holidays. Leaving Israel took her away from the grounded connection to spirituality she valued.

Maria reluctantly decided to leave Israel to ensure her family's economic stability. This required her to protect her chances of future overseas employment, which unequivocally meant avoiding arrest and deportation. She set her hopes on citizenship in a more lenient country that allowed for family reunification, trading Israel for a possible life of having her family close while she supported them. Maria thought the absence of these options in Israel was unfair and ironic. As she summarized for me bitterly: no Israeli wants to care for the elderly, no Israeli would accept such low wages for care work, but Israel won't give the work to migrant workers desperate to stay.

Maria relationship with Sveta's family changed after the *shiva*. Maria proved herself able to please Sveta with the care she provided, making her essential to Sveta and the family. Upon Sveta's death, Maria expressed realistic concerns that Sveta's family wouldn't pay her the substantial amount of money they legally owed her in separation fees, unused vacation days, pension funds, and other benefits. Israeli families and their former caregivers frequently clashed over the fees owed at the end of a contract, leading to arguments and occasionally lawsuits. Some families struggle to find the money to pay severance fees, and other families disagree with the laws requiring these payments. As Nurit commented regarding Maria's employers, it was highly unlikely that they had so much money at their immediate disposal – eleven years of continuous employment amounted to a large sum. Yet, as Maria made clear, she required her severance payment to make a new start for herself abroad. She needed Sveta's family to honor their legal obligations (and perhaps provide her with a reference or contacts), meaning that even at the end of a work contract she had limited latitude advocating for her own rights with her Israeli employers.

Some employers call immigration as soon as their elderly relative dies to report the

caregiver as unemployed, hoping to avoid paying severance fees if the caregiver is deported. Other employers pay their former caregiver in installments, in person if the caregiver continues working in Israel, or via wire transfers. However, it is much more common for employers to ignore these fees and refuse all further communication with the former caregiver. Many caregivers leave Israel without receiving their severance payments. Some non-profit organizations, such as Kav LaOved, will legally represent caregivers in absentia. However, if the court case is decided in favor of the caregiver and the money is paid, the difficulty becomes finding the caregiver outside Israel to transfer the funds.

I heard endless stories about caregivers who were swindled out of thousands of shekels they were owed by lying employers, or how they were paid in counterfeit US dollars. This gossip informs decisions caregivers make about expired visas. Some, like Maria, settle for what severance money they can get from their previous employers, often not receiving the full amount. Other caregivers decide to overstay the grace period in hopes that the family will eventually pay, or that their legal case will be decided in their favor before they are deported.

Gossip has tremendous power, and Maria managed her information with extreme caution. Her visa entered the grey area of legality when Sveta died. The thirty-day grace period was a practice and not an official regulation or law. If the immigration police stopped Maria, a passport check would show her employer to be deceased, invalidating her visa. Immigration might arrest her despite the practice of honoring the grace period. Thus, Maria was selective in who she confided in. She chose very close friends or people capable of helping her with all the tasks of departing Israel. Most of the FCO community did not know that her employer died until her last FCO meeting directly before she left the country.¹²⁷

¹²⁷ As a note on the importance of social networks and how Maria operated within a very important set of connections, Maria's departure was privileged by her close relationship with staff from the Philippine

At the meeting, FCO members bombarded Maria with questions about why she was passing the presidency to Mark, especially since she wouldn't give a return date for her (fabricated) vacation to the Philippines. When Maria finally confessed that Sveta was dead, the room hushed momentarily as she began to weep. Maria's close friends in the FCO initiated the next round of demanding questions about what she planned to do. Mark stepped in, scolding everyone to leave her alone. When someone asked where Maria planned to go, Mark yelled in response that Maria cared for Sveta for eleven years. "She's grieving," he shamed the room before ordering a younger woman to fetch the whiskey and pour shots for all thirty-some people crammed into the living room. Maria was in Europe a few days later.

Maria was angry in addition to experiencing sincere bereavement when she woke up one morning to find her employer dead and her visa invalidated. She made a decision embedded with a very limited choice: to leave Israel or to become an illegal migrant. Maria left Israel for the same reason she came: to economically protect her mother, daughter, and now also her granddaughter. She chose not to visit or return to the Philippines before seeking a new overseas contract for many of the reasons she prized her life in Israel: she wanted to maintain her independence and her ability to shape a particular kind of life free of other constraints while supporting her daughter, and to take advantage of what freedom she had in charting her life's direction. Going home to the Philippines meant involving her husband and family in these

Embassy. Two days before her flight to Europe, she jokingly wrote to me that she "turned herself in" to them. This meant that during her last hours in Israel the Embassy's "custody" protected her from immigration checks and complications at the airport. They took her to dinner with two friends from the FCO, put them up in a nice hotel, and took a "last walk" on the beach and around Tel Aviv (with endless photo ops that appeared a month or two later on Facebook). When it was time for her flight, she was accompanied through all the security checks by a very high ranking Embassy official. Needless to say, this is not the experience most Filipino migrant workers have upon leaving Israel, even if they leave of their own volition within the grace period after their visa expired.

choices and fitting herself back into kinship and community structures she absented herself from for over a decade.

After protecting Mark for months, Maria was shocked to find herself in a situation similar to his overnight. In contrast to Mark, Maria made a quick and effective decision. Because Mark didn't leave when his visa expired and delayed proactive decisions about leaving or staying, his tenure in Israel ended quite differently.

Mark's Refusal to Decide as a Kind of Decision

May 2011

Maria said we would pick someone up on our way to Mass. She instructed the taxi driver in Hebrew to detour by way of another apartment building in the opposite direction of the church. I watched the heavy traffic out the window while Maria texted rapidly on her phone. When Maria pointed to the upcoming bus stop and said "*Ha ba,*" (the next stop) the taxi driver pulled over. Mark materialized out of a protected alleyway and ducked into the back seat of the taxi as I slid over to make room for him.

Maria directed us to a section of wooden pews inside the cavernous popular church, slightly out of sight of the main doors. Filipino caregivers filled the church, waving to each other or crossing the chapel to greet friends. Maria and Mark were magnets for this attention, soon attracting a stream of people coming to say hello or to sit with us. Mark slid down the pew to a seat close to the wall and hunched in slightly. I stayed with Mark while Maria and the rest of their friends who joined us left to socialize before the service began. We sat for a few moments in silence, Mark locked in serious, engrossing thought.

Suddenly, Mark looked at me and smiled slightly. He mentioned that his shoulders and back were very sore, but he hadn't been able to get a massage. He spoke quietly and looked

worried, flexing his shoulders often. He described the evangelical church he frequently attended, suggesting that I accompany him some weekend. Remembering that there was an amateur singing competition the next Saturday, he eagerly suggested that I might enjoy it. He shared with me that some of his relatives were visiting Israel soon. Furrowing his brow, he added that he thought he might leave Israel in December. These seemingly disconnected thoughts flowed one after the next in his conversation, his eyes fixed on me or on the middle distance before him.

Right as Mass started, Mark explained with unusual humility that he viewed signs from God very seriously. If he dropped a glass of water before church, he understood that God was telling him not to leave the house. Tonight, Mark got a message from God to go to church, so he came to pray. I nodded, not knowing for sure why Mark was so cautious, but formulating a guess. Maria returned as the prayers began and Mark sank to his knees where he stayed for the entire Mass.

When Mass finished, we made our way slowly through the exiting crowd, Maria waving and calling out to friends as we passed. We lingered in the gated courtyard in front of the church talking to people Mark and Maria knew in the large group of caregivers not in a hurry to leave. Mark and Maria introduced me to people I hadn't yet met and Mark continued telling me about his premonitions. After socializing for ten or fifteen minutes, Maria called friends who were hosting a party on the beach. They assured her that it was "safe," so she called for a private taxi to take a group of us to join the party. She hung up, and turned to me. "You need to know about Mark," she declared decisively, and Mark nodded.

Maria told me about Mark's situation after we moved to a quiet corner of the courtyard. She started with Jacob's death right before Christmas. She explained that someone tipped off the Oz Unit (immigration police) that Mark was at the New Year's Party, prompting the raid. They

told me a great deal about Mark's problems caused by his undocumented status and why they were so cautious about who saw him in public or in the shared apartments. Originally, they didn't want me to meet him, unsure of why I was volunteering at the NGO or why I was interested in Filipino caregivers. They decided to take the risk after Nurit vouched for me.

They told me everything, wanting me to understand why Mark couldn't move freely, and why sometimes he avoided Church and community events. Maria made it clear that they worried about someone in the Filipino community tipping off the immigration police again. I stood in the courtyard of the church, listening to the things they wanted me to know, not sure that I *should* know these things, and understanding that I was now also responsible for Mark's safety, even if that meant very little in practice.

I became one of Mark's main points of contact after Maria left Israel. Mark continually made plans to leave Israel and resolve the problem of his expired visa. Again and again he picked a departure date and talked about his plans, but he never bought a ticket or otherwise made arrangements to leave. He told me once that the Embassy would help him get through security at the airport, but he didn't follow up on their offer of assistance. As he continued to find illegal work as a caregiver and as week after week went by without his arrest, Mark kept putting the final decision off.

Mark took more cautions without Maria's assistance, although he remained very active behind the scenes as the FCO president. I met him in unfamiliar shared apartments or at specific places around The City with other FCO members, and he called me regularly with invitations to events he couldn't attend himself. In October, his decisions around an expired visa came to a sudden head.

October 2011

We talked about the future as we ate *pancit* and *lumpia* and chicken on the bone, sitting around in the living room of Maria's shared apartment. She had been in Europe for months by then, but the apartment was still the heart of the FCO community. Mark wasn't eating. He was directing everyone else per the usual, moving around the room with his characteristic restless energy. He was in an unusually good mood, practically entertaining the rest of us gathered there after the The Worker's Insurance Renewal. This was an event the FCO hosted a few time a year, allowing The City's Filipino caregivers to renew their mandatory insurance. The renewals allowed caregivers to complete the required forms without traveling to Tel Aviv, and the Embassy could boast a higher rate of compliance. The Embassy valued the FCO Renewal Events, making the FCO shine a little brighter in their estimation for organizing, advertising, and hosting the renewals.

The weather was balmy even at night, so the long tables were set up in front of the small grocery store next to the apartment building. Crowds of caregivers gathered around the table for three hours, filling out their paperwork, giving small donations to the FCO, and taking the opportunity to ask the Embassy staff other questions. Attendance was higher than expected, making this event a clear success.

Mark gathered me up along with some of the Embassy staff, who traveled from Tel Aviv to help run the renewal, to go upstairs to eat first. He left the rest of the FCO officers and the other Embassy staff to close the event and clean up. The Embassy workers joked along with Mark as we ate in the living room, impressed with Mark's leadership of the FCO. Mark's spirits grew brighter and brighter as they praised the success of the event. For weeks afterwards, people commented on how strange it was to see Mark so gregarious and lighthearted. He was laughing

and talking loquaciously, sharing his plans to leave Israel in the coming months. He made a performance of planning my highly-improbable but much-mentioned trip to the Philippines that he suggested for the coming March. He interrupted himself again and again to gloat about how well the renewal went. He was on a role, holding court, and enjoying himself, and even Faith who joined us while we were eating seemed to be amused by his antics.

The conversation turned to more sober topics. Faith and Mark told me about the new problems they saw emerging in the FCO's leadership team since Maria's departure. During this conversation, two of the three Embassy staff left to help their colleagues outside. With only one Embassy staff person remaining, Faith and Mark opened up about the FCO's problems. There were people who didn't like Mark's heavy handed, authoritarian leadership style or who he promoted for leadership opportunities inside the organization. These disgruntled members created hard feelings and a tense atmosphere by criticizing Mark publicly and threatening to leave the organization.

Mark and Faith told me that these problems were so bad that Mark had good reason to be worried. Mark told me that he now had four FaceBook accounts (which I was aware of because he "friended" me from all of them) but each account was hacked within a day of its creation. Faith nodded in agreement, declaring that some people were petty and vicious, willing to "attack" Mark because he supported her leadership role in the organization.

"This isn't what the organization is about," Faith complained, shaking her head in disappointment. "We aren't supposed to act like this to each other; we are supposed to help all *Filipinis* in Israel."

"Yes!" Mark agreed adamantly.

He apologized because he decided not to come on the next day's trip to Akko. An immigration office sat next to the old city in Akko right where we would be. He didn't trust the people going on the trip enough to risk arrest. It would be simple for someone to slip away from the group and turn him in.

He literally *just* said those words: There are people in the organization who held a large enough grudge against him that they would tip off immigration, and thus he couldn't risk going to Akko with an immigration office right where we planned to be, out in the open with people he couldn't trust.

We all looked up.

An Israeli man stood in the doorway wearing dark grey cargo pants, Nike running shoes, and a green sweatshirt. I blinked, not recognizing him or knowing why he was there. I waited for someone to introduce him and invite him in, glancing at Mark, Faith, and the Embassy employee. But the room stayed completely hushed.

Then he said in lightly accented English, "Immigration. Show me your passports," and everything changed although no one moved.

The immigration officer looked directly at Mark, and said, "Passport."

"*Ain'li darkon*. I don't have a passport." Mark said, looking around. His eyes fixed on me and then he looked back at the officer. Mark stood up as we all stared at him, and he moved towards the immigration officer standing at the door. The immigration officer nodded and stood aside only enough to let Mark pass.

"Passports." The officer said, looking pointedly at the two other Filipinos, Faith and the Embassy employee, sitting in the room with me.

"It's in my bag, in the other room." The Embassy worker explained sharply, standing up. A second immigration officer appeared in the doorway as if summoned, escorting the Embassy worker out of the room in Mark's wake. We heard them talking softly in the hall out of sight as Faith crossed the room to get her handbag.

I gave the officer my passport first, his expression suggesting that he couldn't make sense of me.

He kept looking at me, taking my passport without glancing at it before asking "What language do you speak?"

"English. I'm American." I nodded at my passport.

Like most Israeli officials outside the airport, he didn't know where the visa page is in an American passport. He finally found my visa after much frustrated flipping of pages, looking between the visa and me.

"You are a student?"

"Yes." I named the Israeli university where I was affiliated (that was listed on my visa), adding, "I'm an independent researcher. I live here in The City."

"Where?" he asked.

I gave him my general address and the neighborhood, and he nodded with an expression of expectations confirmed. I lived where he expected me to live, in the gentrified, primarily middle class Jewish part of The City, not in this diverse, low income neighborhood.¹²⁸

"Yes, wait. I will check this." he stated curtly, going down the hall with my passport.

I looked at Faith who was pale and still, feeling unexpected panic rising in me. Faith said with finality,

"It's over. He's gone. Mark is gone."

"How did they get in?" I asked, in shock. The caregivers who stayed in this apartment were careful: they escorted visitors upstairs, they always locked the door, and the front door to the building automatically locked when it closed.

Faith gave me a sad look that said everything about the basic differences between us in that moment. Instead of answering my question she decided,

"I'm resigning from this organization. I don't want to be a part of this if we treat each other in this way. I give my time and my money to help, not to be like this."

There were tears in her eyes, but she repressed her emotions as "our" immigration officer came into the room with my passport. The Embassy employee accompanied the immigration officer, carrying his shoulder bag. The immigration officer handed back my passport, giving me that long look again before saying, "I'm sorry for the trouble. It's necessary."

Faith gave her passport to the officer. He flipped it open exactly to the visa page without missing a beat, examining it carefully. He also took the Embassy employee's passport and in the

¹²⁸ Ironically, I lived in the gentrified neighborhood because I didn't have an Israeli identification number, and my landlord was the only one I found willing to take a risk renting to me. Landlords renting in the area where caregivers had shared apartments didn't want to rent to me as they didn't think American students should live in the areas where they rented. Additionally, caregivers had to provide their passport numbers and their employer's information before landlords would rent to them, ensuring that if caregivers skipped out on rent (or were deported) that the landlords had someone to call for the money.

same way opened it to the correct page. But this time he said, "Where is the new one?" The Embassy employee shook his head firmly as he said, "What new one? There is no new one," while handing over a plastic card. The immigration officer gave him an odd look, taking Faith's passport and the Embassy employee's passport and card. "No," the Embassy employee said, getting up from the couch, "you can't take my card. I'll go with you."

They left together leaving me alone with Faith again, observing a set of protocols and self-protective actions familiar to everyone involved in this moment, except to me.

"How did they get in?" I asked again. Faith shook her head.

They came back, the immigration officer returning Faith's passport. He didn't apologize to her and she didn't seem to expect him to. The Embassy employee's expression revealed that he was containing his anger as he put his documents back into his bag.

The immigration officer ordered us to move to the back of the room. Three additional immigration officers escorted Mark into the small living room. The original immigration officer continued to watch me closely, joined by the only female immigration agent among the officers. When she turned to speak to another of the officers, I saw the gun and handcuffs that were mostly concealed beneath her sweatshirt. As I looked among the four officers I saw where their guns were holstered underneath their street clothes.

The woman officer watched me instead of Mark as he unlocked a tall metal cabinet in the corner between two couches. Mark took out a green wheeled suitcase, opening it after he lifted it onto the couch. It was already packed. He added a few clean pairs of blue jeans and another shirt that Faith washed for him at her employer's apartment because Mark didn't have reliable access to a washing machine.

"What's your name?" another immigration agent asked Mark.

“Vincent.” He replied evenly, and I wondered if this was his legal name (I knew he was in Israel under a pseudonym) or another name he used.

"Do you speak English?" the woman immigration officer suddenly asked, startling me as she drew the attention off of Mark and redirected it my way. She barely seemed to notice Faith or the Embassy employee standing next to me, but she was watching me very intently.

"Yes. I'm American." I repeated.

"What are you doing in Israel?" She inquired casually, her tone striking me as incongruous with the arrest in progress.

"I'm a researcher. A student." I told her as everyone else in the room watched except Mark who continued arranging the new items in the full suitcase.

The original immigration officer, watching Mark like a hawk, said something in very fast Hebrew that I half understood about how I shouldn't be there. I knew Faith and Mark understood him by the way they both glanced at me and then looked away. The female immigration officer nodded slowly, still smiling at me.

One of the other immigration agents crossed the room to inspect the lock on the balcony door. He leaned over the couch, casually checking the room for other people.

"Do you speak their language?" she asked me.

"Not much at all. It's a new language for me." I shrugged.

I felt Faith breathe out when I gave my answer, indicating that she found the immigration officer's interest in me unsettling, too.

"Well, good luck with it." she told me, still watching me, waiting for me to say something more.

Mark finished, zipping his suitcase as the woman officer said specifically to me, "I'm really sorry for all the trouble" as if no one else in the room had been at all inconvenienced.

Mark turned to us. One of the officers took his suitcase, and pointed out a pair of pants Mark had left on the sofa (maybe because they didn't fit in the suitcase). Mark picked them up, but another of the officers took them.

Mark pointed to a large box and directed Faith, "Mail that to Manila." She nodded, and hugged him while the officers watched from the doorway.

"Laura, I'll see you in the Philippines," he said as I moved forward. Faith hurriedly said too loudly, "She might visit the Philippines as a tourist," but they all stared at me as I hugged Mark, murmuring for him to take care of himself.

He nodded at the immigration officers, but then he remembered something. He turned to Emma who appeared unnoticed just inside the room. Mark took out his phone and told Emma to take down the number of his current employer. Emma entered the number into her phone as immigration tapped their toes.

The immigration officers escorted Mark out, and the front door closed. We were all left standing there.

Except for Mark.

It wasn't clear what we were supposed to do in the direct aftermath when Mark was gone. The Embassy employee shook his head and Faith sat down. The Embassy employee seemed to come back to focus and he was on his phone very quickly. Faith reminded Emma to call Mark's employer. Emma made the call, asking without a greeting if this was the place where Vincent worked. Faith yelled, "Mark, he is Mark." Emma corrected herself, asking if this was where

Mark worked. The woman on the other end asked questions we could all hear in the quiet of the room, but Emma talked over her explaining Mark's arrest. We all heard the woman on the other end yell in Hebrew, "What? When?" Emma said, "Just now." The employer wanted more details, but Emma said goodbye and hung up.

The room filled with people; the explanations, retellings, and speculation started as two Filipino women I didn't know passed plates around. Everyone encouraged everyone else to eat. I listened, piecing together the probable sequence of events. Immigration received a tip that Mark was on the street, overseeing the Workers' Insurance Renewal event. They watched as Mark and I went inside, and lingered near the door to the apartment while the other FCO members cleaned up the tables and left over forms. The FCO members came inside, and the person who provided the tip to the immigration police caught the door before it closed and held it open for the immigration police.

Once they were in the building, the immigration officers followed the FCO members to the apartment. They pushed inside, rounding up everyone from the kitchen (the room closest to the front door) and hallway out into the stairwell. One officer stayed outside the apartment while two others remained in the apartment's hallway. The fourth officer came directly into the living room to the back of the apartment where we were.

In our conversation after Mark's arrest there was another hour of speculation, of talk of premonitions, of confusion over why Mark had been in such a good mood and hadn't been cautious that evening, and of who in the organization would do such a thing (many people were named). They came to consensus that Mark would be put on the eleven o'clock plane to Manila to get him out of the country quickly. I asked, "Can the Embassy do anything to help Mark?" They looked at each other and finally told me gently, "He didn't have a visa, *hamudi*."

Accusations and gossip raged for months when the larger FCO community heard about Mark's arrest. With all these conversations in the background, I struggled to articulate for myself why the form of his arrest bothered me more than other immigration raids I witnessed. I finally admitted to Romeo that I felt guilty for not doing something during Mark's arrest to prevent it or to improve his situation. Romeo just shook his head and said grimly, "Even an Israeli couldn't stop Mark from getting arrested. If someone gets caught, you can't stop it."

I was unsettled by Mark's arrest because I considered him a friend, and I didn't want him to come to harm. The troubling nature of his arrest extended beyond my personal connection to Mark, however. Israel, like other states, relies on a system of violence to police migrant workers. The immigration police made this system evident by walking into Maria's apartment and arresting Mark without drawing their weapons or meeting any resistance. The actions of the immigration police appear restrained and unremarkable compared to the immigration raid at the New Year's Party. I argue that this banal form of immigration raid reveals the larger system of social and political violence exactly because the events appear reasonable. An immigration arrest with this banal veneer is troubling, particularly because the arrest's inability to provoke a strong reaction masks the inherent violence of the arrest and elides the arrest's larger significance.

Migrant workers in Israel interact with the immigration police on a routine basis. Migrant workers' persistent expectation of encountering problems with immigration creates a constant feeling of anxiety and stress. The New Year's raid and Mark's arrest are not disconnected events; rather, they exist on a continuum of state action employed to routinely police migrant workers.

The New Year's raid and Mark's arrest make sense when viewed as two forms of state policing that are meant to discipline migrant workers into docile responses to the Immigration Authority. The state uses multiple strategies to discipline migrant workers and to inculcate expectations of violence from immigration agents, feelings of constant exposure, and the perception of constant surveillance. Aggressively violent raids and seemingly mundane arrests are tools in the state's strategic arsenal. Migrant workers' expectations of violence are confirmed during encounters with aggressive immigration police; the state relies on migrant workers' confirmed expectations of violence to encourage migrant workers to act in conditioned, docile ways when confronted by immigration police. This docility and the examples of aggression by the immigration police reinforce migrant workers' awareness of their tenuously marginal sociolegal status.

The immigration officers simply *walking in* to the living room of Maria's apartment created the startling moment of Mark's arrest. Unlike the New Year's Party raid, the immigration police did not rely on their weapons, they didn't require protective police clothing, they did not threaten or yell, and they did not kick in any doors when arresting Mark. Both types of raids depend on some element of surprise, but the success of the raids relies on the constant *possibility* of violence, even if it is not actualized. Migrant workers' constant yet unpredictable encounters with immigration police establish the perception of unblinking surveillance that operates even beyond the actual encounters.

The immigration police use an array of strategies to create an expectation of surveillance. The most common examples are surprise passport checks and immigration raids. I grew accustomed to witnessing immigration raids and arrests, and various other forms of immigration checks such as the police pulling *moniot sheruit* (shared taxis) over on the highway between

cities to conduct a visual check of who was inside.¹²⁹ Additionally, I was in South Tel Aviv multiple times when the immigration police in riot gear encircled whole neighborhoods, checking passports and making arrests. In these moments, stern police officers speaking in clipped Hebrew demanded to know what I was doing in South Tel Aviv as they escorted me out of the area. They never asked for my identification or even my name.

Caregivers told me about the various forms of surveillance they came to expect within the course of a week or a month, ranging from the seemingly inconsequential to the more explicit. Maria described one type of public passport check to me in detail, meant not only to remind the migrant worker of her marginal status, but also to do so as public performance of policing foreign workers. She explained that an immigration officer in plainclothes would abruptly stop her as she walked down the street, at any time of day or night, on busy or quiet streets. The officer would demand her passport and take a long time inspecting it, sometimes making phone calls as if to check her information. The immigration officer would return her passport and wave her curtly along (she mimicked the gesture with startling accuracy). Maria told me that she would then walk another block or two and before the next plainclothes immigration officer stopped her. She assured me that repetitive passport checks could happen for up to ten blocks.

Maria added that sometimes immigration officers knocked on her apartment door to ask about a particular migrant worker, wanting her to invite (usually him) inside. She never knew how they entered the locked apartment building. This would happen frequently at night causing her to rush with adrenaline, even when she had no cause for concern. She told me of the times she was stopped on the street at night by the immigration police. They escorted her to shadowed side streets to wait while the officer inspected her passport. She felt sure that the immigration

¹²⁹ I saw immigration police checking passports on trains, but this was much less common than on buses or *moniot sheruit*.

officer meant to intimidate her by insisting that she stand in an unsafe place. The immigration police and government claim that these strategies are necessary exercises to apprehend undocumented migrant workers who pose a potential security risk to the state and who break the law by overstaying visas. These actions are also intentional strategies to keep a marginalized population feeling vulnerable in public and in private, reminding migrant workers that they are not meant to feel at home in Israel.

The success of these practices is when the surveillance wears on migrant workers, creating tension, stress, and concern even for those migrant workers who are properly documented.¹³⁰ The perception of always being watched is compounded by the expected use of force by the immigration police in raids and arrests, such as in the New Year's raid. The expectation of encountering the police at any moment, of their plausible use of force and *knowing* that guns could be drawn (and used), that doors could be forcibly opened, and that parties and entire neighborhoods can be locked down works as a disciplining force in a Foucauldian sense. Immigration police evoke fear in migrant workers and guarantee their compliance without drawing their weapons because migrant workers already know that the guns are present and will be used at a moment's notice. Migrant workers are aware from repeated experience that force is the legitimate domain of the police.

The authority that the immigration officer was immediately granted when he walked into the living room to arrest Mark is an example of the docility produced when migrant workers constantly expect encounters with the immigration police. Migrant workers anticipate that the police can use force during these encounters, even if the arrest is relatively non-violent. The

¹³⁰ These immigration strategies are not distinct from the mechanisms of immigration police in many other places around the globe. Israel is not unique in policing of its non-citizens or even entirely in the forms this policing takes. Yet, it still remains that the experience of surveillance and policing has negative consequences for the emotional, psychological, and social health of migrant workers even when they hold legal documentation, which is my point here.

immigration officer could have been any Israeli man. Many Israeli men carry guns visibly on their person in public, so even the hint of his weapon under his shirt wasn't a certain indicator that he was a law enforcement officer. He wore street clothes, and had no indications on his person that he worked for the Oz Unit. He walked into the room and said "Immigration. Show me your passports" with the authority of someone who expected compliance. This performance of an immigration officer didn't rely on an official uniform or protective police gear. His performance relied on the repeated experience of caregivers with the immigration police that convinced them that he was the real thing.

His performance of an immigration officer, his particular use of surprise, and projection of authority situated him in this role, and the Filipinos in the room responded in conditioned patterns. They recognized him as an immigration officer and determined that this was an authentic immigration raid, like the many they had been subjected to before. They understood the threat of violence even without the immigration officer's gun draw or other indicators of aggressive use of force from past experience and from shared community knowledge.

In this sense, the Filipino caregivers were disciplined to the threat of violence, even when it was not implemented immediately. Yet, the violence was present in the room, existing in the realistic expectation that physical violence could occur at any moment. This possibility of violence was more horrific than the loud and chaotic events of the New Year's Party because the possibility of resistance was immediately shut down. In contrast, assertive acts of resistance interrupted the New Year's Party raid: Mark hid in a closet, Maria applied for help, Nurit shouted down the immigration officer, caregivers slipped out the back. Their tactics challenged the immigration officers' authority by holding it off, undermining it, and eluding it. These moments of agency did not belie the disciplining that migrant workers routinely face, but

recognized a weakness in that surveillance and acted upon it. The immigration police couldn't see Mark hiding in the closet or the tactics Maria used to prevent the police from shutting down the party and inevitably finding Mark.

Yet, the immigration police created a feeling of entrapment in the shared apartment the night of Mark's arrest. The conviction that there was no possible action other than compliance acknowledged the possibility of aggressive violence but made it unnecessary. The possibility of resistance to an immigration raid was abnegated by the immediate submission to the immigration officer's performance. Mark initiated the acts of compliance by declaring that he had no passport. From that declaration, the rest of the action unfolded to the point of Romeo assuring me that nothing could have stopped Mark's arrest once immigration cornered him in the living room.

What were the possibilities of resistance? How plausible were those possibilities? If we acted on those possibilities, what were the odds of the desired outcomes occurring? Were there any ways to challenge the immigration officer entering the living room and demanding passports that weren't absolutely ill advised? These questions set the scene: what actions were possible in relation to the physical and symbolic presence of the immigration officer, and what was a *sensible* course of action based on the this man's authority to use of violence granted to him by his occupation? If Mark tried to force his way out of the apartment by rushing the door or trying to get out the window, one of the officers probably would have shot him. If we tried to argue with the immigration officer or otherwise challenge him, he likely would have drawn his gun and called for back up, and all of us might have been arrested. At the very least, though, we could have asked for his identification, proof of who he claimed to be, challenging his authority in a petty and minor act. Yet, we didn't question his authority even to that extent.

The immigration officer *walking in* constituted a violent act by violating private space. Innumerable moments in recent history invalidate the assertion that privacy laws effectively protect the home and the residents within it, the Holocaust providing a particularly symbolic example. The expectation holds, however, that the home (or a trusted resting place for those moving constantly to avoid arrest) provides some protection from the exposure of public space. At a very least, there is usually a closed door with a lock, and walls restricting who can observe the actions within, providing the illusion of control and privacy. Shared apartments for many migrant workers are places of relaxation, social freedom, and familiarity of language, food, and social interaction. Maria's apartment, where Mark was arrested, was especially encoded with a sense of community, trust, and sanctuary. It was a place where Mark felt safe enough to visit on an erratic but frequent enough basis, sometimes only coming for FCO meetings and at other times sleeping there. Mark hid from the immigration police in Maria's apartment and in other shared apartments scattered across The City.

The immigration officer appearing in the living room, surprising all of us mid-conversation about avoiding the risk of arrest, destroyed the illusion of protection and the efficacy of privacy. His appearance perverted Mark's belief that he could avoid the immigration police, and his hope that there were private spaces where he could successfully hide. Having nowhere to hide is an ultimate threat. This threat perpetrates the idea that there is a power (in this case, a state power) that can perform omniscient surveillance, that has access to *any* space, is unchecked in its reach (or there *would* be places protected from its access), and that there is no possible effective resistance to this force. The state's assertion when using this threat is that immigration agents can find undocumented workers in the end, and the undocumented worker becomes subject to the state's punitive actions. The implicit message embedded in this threat is

that once a person is (inevitably) captured then the power of the state continues to operate without limits or challenges. There is no space of the private any longer and the individual has no control over what will occur next.

Clearly, the state's power to discipline is not absolute. Undocumented migrants hide in closets, jump out of windows, rush immigration officers, and escape the immigration police. The power of the state via the police is questioned and challenged by citizens, human rights groups, and other groups concerned with civil protections. The stories of migrants evading the immigration police are circulated freely among caregiving communities in The City, but the ability of the immigration police to access private space creates a pervasive and daunting fear. By walking in, the immigration police exposed the vulnerability of migrant workers at all times, and their constant exposure to risk.

Mark's arrest is a harsh example this risk, but all of us present in the encounter were exposed to a lesser degree of risk. For example, Faith, the Embassy staffer, and I were all legally documented to be in Israel. Because we were present for the raid, however, and in Mark's company, all of our passport information was logged in the immigration system where it becomes part of our security profiles. In the end, gathering our information may have no, or only inconsequential, repercussions. The immigration police collecting that information, however, also constitute a form of surveillance and an implied threat.

Mark's arrest reduced his entire personhood to one defining characteristic – his legal status – that constituted an additional form of violence. The immigration system did not account for his political exile when arresting him, nor his exposure to danger when Israel forcibly returned him to the Philippines. His work caring for older Israelis for over a decade only influenced the immigration officers by verifying that he exceeded the maximum tenure

regulating visa renewals. His arrest didn't take into account his wife and granddaughter in the Philippines who benefited from his remittances, nor did it record the life he made for himself with Israeli friends and the Filipino community in The City. The immigration system did not take notice of his leadership work within the Filipino community, or his strong support of the Zionist system that contributed to his deep attachments to Israel. His undocumented status erased all other aspects of his life and work in Israel, or that he even had a life before coming to Israel.

The state, politicians, conservative social groups, and select citizens easily justify the violence inherent in immigration arrests and deportations, making arrests like Mark's permissible and seemingly banal. These justifications focus on the illegality of overstaying a visa, the necessity of immigration police protecting the whole of society from extortion and illegal behavior, and the fact that migrant workers simply don't have the same rights as do citizens. Many Israelis (and Americans, and Europeans) believe firmly that migrant workers must be policed and placed under surveillance for the good of the nation including protecting limited resources for citizens' use, and to prevent "floods" of migrants entering the nation and posing risks to health and safety. Migrant workers are useful to labor-receiving nations because they do not carry the full compliment of social and legal rights. Their status as temporary and disposable economic pawns is further exposed by their (often) visibility as minorities and their tenuous legal status, marking migrant workers as occupying a weak position in relation to the state and society. Similar to other social and legal minorities, the treatment of migrant workers often hinges on a reductive representation of their identity. This is how Mark's entire personhood and life history were reduced to the label "undocumented migrant worker." Furthermore, by seeing Mark only as an undocumented worker, it is possible to view his arrest as necessary, permissible, and as the logical practice of an immigration system working in the best interests of the nation.

Mark's arrest grew increasingly complicated once he was taken into custody. He became extremely ill and required hospitalization, allowing the Embassy to exert (temporary) influence over his deportation. But, his departure was delayed multiple times by overbooked flights during which time his health stabilized enough for the Embassy to lose the justification for its involvement. Eventually, he was transferred to a detention center until the government could get him on a flight to Manila. He was in detention for over two weeks before he was returned to the Philippines. Mark got sick and lost a lot of weight in the weeks between his arrest and arriving in Manila, compounding his preexisting list of health problems.

At the meeting to elect new officers for the FCO, I learned that many more officers of the organization were without documentation than I originally knew, making the situation with Mark even more intricate. I heard that Samson, another caregiver involved with the FCO's leadership, decided to leave Israel after Mark's arrest as his status wasn't entirely legal and he didn't want to experience possible deportation and detainment. The outcome of Mark's months of dodging the immigration police was enough to convince Samson that it was time to leave, citing a desire to see his family and an opportunity to work in a call center in the Philippines. People gossiped that the real reason he left Israel was because he was accused of turning Mark in (which turned out not to be true), and he didn't want to risk the possible repercussions of that rumor.

Maria, Mark, and Samson exemplify a few of the processes migrants go through in relation to loss of legal status. While individuals formulate their own tactics based on context and circumstance, the simplified rendition of the decision falls into three categories: to stay with

an expired visa, to leave Israel, or to struggle with indecision. Some individuals may decide to leave but then set their departure to a point in the distant future, as Mark did when he set his departure further and further out to always delay the actuality of leaving. Thus, even deciding to leave Israel can be a drawn out process involving intentional delays, avoiding the police, evaluating the trustworthy nature of friends and employers, and assessing risk.

The success of overstaying a visa depends on how well an undocumented person avoids the immigration police, the assertion and efficacy of his or her support network, and to some extent how much luck the individual has. One night while I was walking with Mark on shadowy streets on our way to an event he deemed safe enough to attend, he suddenly ducked into a dark corner of the street. After the traffic light down the street turned green and the cars moved along, Mark pointed at a disappearing motorcycle and said, “my enemy” before explaining that the license plates on immigration vehicles are different. As Mark and with other undocumented migrant workers I knew made apparent, the ability to stay in Israel depended on being hyper aware of the surroundings, but almost more importantly staying on top of the gossip.

Knowing the gossip about which people are corruptible by the immigration police is essential in navigating the landscapes of risk. However, the flip side of this precautionary information gathering is a culture of gossip which seeks to implicate everyone, accusing people who perhaps had no role providing tips to Immigration, such as Emilie, Rose, and Samson in the events of Mark’s arrest. Employers and their families are also a gamble for an undocumented migrant worker: they symbolized either an important resource or a threat. Employers often contribute to the critically necessary social networks caregivers draw on during bureaucratic or legal difficulties.

Israeli employers who hire undocumented workers are breaking the law. They may choose to do this to exploit the worker by demanding excessive amounts of work or illegal services, or to pay less than minimum wage with no benefits. The family may also choose an undocumented worker out of frustration with the opaque and confusing bureaucracy they must traverse to hire a legal caregiver. Some families gave temporary employment to an undocumented worker after their former caregiver no longer worked for them, not yet ready to go through the official hiring process again, or doing a favor for an Israeli friend trying to help a former caregiver of their own. Whatever the rationale, the Israeli employer can pose significant threat or provide support to an undocumented worker.

This practice gained notoriety in 2010 when Nili Pirel, the wife of Ehud Barak,¹³¹ admitted hiring an undocumented Filipina woman as a house cleaner. Pirel knew that the immigration police were searching for her house cleaner, Virginia, for a year before they arrested Virginia in October 2010.¹³² The police arrested Virginia, leading to Pirel's indictment on charges of hiring an illegal worker, not providing health insurance payments or a legal contract.¹³³ Pirel's case and that of Ms. Weinstein are still in court, but these high profile cases raise awareness of the common practice of hiring undocumented migrant workers despite the illegality of the practice.

In Maria's case, while she had disagreements with her employer's family about the best way to care for Sveta— particularly regarding Sveta's drug addiction – for the most part Maria

¹³¹ The Israeli Defense Minister from 2007 to 2013.

¹³² Haaretz Staff. Police arrest foreign worker employed illegally by Barak's wife. *Haaretz*. <http://www.haaretz.com/police-arrest-foreign-worker-employed-illegally-by-barak-s-wife-1.322153> October 31, 2010. [Accessed January 2014]

¹³³ Edelman, Ofra. Ehud Barak's wife indicted for employing foreign worker. *Haaretz*. <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/ehud-barak-s-wife-indicted-for-employing-foreign-worker-1.349025>. March 14, 2011 [Accessed January 2014]

found Sveta and her family to be reasonable and fair. She was sure, though, that they wouldn't be a source of support or intervention when her employer died; instead, she feared that they wouldn't fulfill their financial obligations. In contrast, Mark received a great deal of support from the Israeli families he worked for, including their efforts to employ him under the table and protect him from arrest. When Emma called Mark's employer the night he was arrested to let them know of his situation, his employer wanted more information and to find out what she could do. With the knowledge and support of this Israeli family, Mark spent months moving around the surrounding towns beyond The City's limits, working for one family during the week, another family on *kibbutz* over the weekends, and filling in as a reliever periodically in order to keep moving while still receiving pay.

In some cases, like Mark's, the elderly person's family was an important player in evading the police and staying in Israel beyond the life of the visa. In Maria's case, her employer's family was not an abundant resource but they also didn't constitute any kind of significant threat. The most complicated situations were those where illegal workers found themselves dealing with families willing to hire caretakers without visas. These employers are likely to pay substandard wages, avoid providing health insurance contributions and other benefits, and demand illegal services from the caregiver. This power dynamic also gives employers and their families the ability to threaten the undocumented worker in order to reduce the worker's ability to leave, protest, or negotiate for different conditions.

Deportation symbolizes many larger realities for migrant caregivers. There is a general agreement that deportation is scary and creates serious problems for a migrant worker's future. However, the connections people made in conversation with me suggested that deportation held hidden possibilities. The negative realities of deportation are numerous and most often

acknowledged. Yet, deportation provided a way of saving face when a migrant worker wanted to return home and leave productive, profitable employment that family members were counting on. Deportation ends the pressure from relatives to overstay visas to continue earning despite the risks. It also absolves the migrant worker from having to find another overseas contract immediately or sneak into another country to work illegally. In this way, deportation provided an answer to homesickness and dissatisfaction with Israel or the work of caregiving without having to lose face as a substandard provider and negligent family member.

Many people in the FCO community mentioned to me after Mark's deportation that they thought he had "given up" and purposefully made himself visible to the immigration police that night. They thought he got tired of dodging the police and decided to make them send him home so that he didn't have to face the fear and wait any longer. Many community members thought that Mark knew someone meant to tip the police off, and took matters into his own hands. Whether or not this is true in Mark's case, these discussions open up the tactical decisions that migrant workers make about being illegal and the options they have for ending the game of hiding and waiting.

Labor receiving states expect migrant workers to arrive on a limited work visa, provide necessary but undesirable work for low wages, and then leave when told to go. The flaw in this plan is that migrant workers are more than rational economic agents who follow rules and regulations to a T. Rather, they are complex people who exhibit a multitude of responses to working in another country. In this dissertation, I have explored how migrant workers in Israel agitate for a larger compliment of rights and privileges from the state because of their feelings of

belonging in Israel. These rights and privileges are meant to recognize migrant workers' full personhood and to grant them the protections that citizens enjoy, such as removing deportation risks.

Migrant workers' desire for labor receiving states to recognize their full personhood remains a problem in migrant work scenarios around the globe. The value governments see in international migrant labor is refuted when migrant workers want recognition as people worthy of protection and rights. Governments insist that their first priority must be to their citizens, which includes deporting migrant workers in conservative political climates. Local laws continually work to exclude migrant workers from the social body despite migrant workers' tactics of using human rights language to support claims for greater inclusion. As Arendt (1948) predicts, human rights seem to fail without a strong set of civil rights to protect the non-citizen.

States want to take advantage of the economic opportunities offered by migrant workers without allowing migrant workers to integrate into the body politic. The methods states use to discipline migrant workers and deny their claims for recognition rely on practices of everyday violence that degrade the general well-being of migrant workers. The migrant caregivers in my research challenge the right of the Israeli state to enact this violence on the basis of their health claims, seeking citizenship as a protection from the immigration police and deportation as well as every day acts of exclusion and social closures that denigrate caregivers' health experiences. These migrant workers' insist that their commitment to Israel and their embodied forms of belonging could justify their place within Israeli society without threatening their well-being or goals of the nation. The migrant workers who overstay visas because they don't want to make the decision to leave Israel rely on the same knowledge and integration into Israeli society to avoid the immigration police that created their feelings of belonging in the first place.

There are many ways that migrant workers deal with moments of reluctant leaving, including simply not leaving until they are arrested and deported. Maria and Mark provide two examples of addressing an expired visa, managing their reluctance to leave by means of different logics and priorities. Their stories reinforce the state's claim that there is no place for migrant workers as permanent residents or citizens within Israeli society. Yet, the question of why there is no permanent place for migrant workers, or why Israel can't accommodate non-citizens differently, continues to be asked with growing force.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

Two protests bridged the end of 2013 and the beginning of 2014, two years after I ended my fieldwork¹³⁴: the Refugee Strike, and caregivers' protests over the implementation of the 2011 "Slavery Laws." Additionally, in January 2014, a Filipino caregiver named Rose Fontanes won the popular tv singing competition *XFactor Israel*. These protests and the reactions to Fontanes' win illustrate the continuation of the struggles, contentions, and heated debates that structure my research. I discuss the protests and Fontanes' victory to "wrap up" my research themes, with the understanding that these protests and places of friction will continue to grow, change, evolve, rupture, and quiet in the months and years to come.

It is important to note that over these last two years, and especially in the months bridging 2013 and 2014, immigration issues have exploded again across Europe (e.g. England, France, Switzerland) and the US. Israel, as one irate op-ed columnist stated,¹³⁵ is hardly alone in supporting social closures towards asylum seekers and im/migrants. However, this is precisely my point in a broader sense – Israel is *not* an isolated case study. Israel is a stakeholder in global labor flows and participates in this international economy. It does so as a recognized democracy on the international stage, and yet the blunt assertions about Israeli-Jewish primacy in national

¹³⁴ I returned to the US on December 10, 2011.

¹³⁵ Horovitz, David. Doing the migrants a disservice. *Times of Israel*. <http://www.timesofisrael.com/doing-the-migrants-a-disservice/> January 7, 2014. [Accessed January 17, 2014]

policies and the larger conflicts over identity that migrant workers fit into pose questions about the nature of Israel's democracy.

What is important here is not to single Israel out as particularly monstrous; rather, it is to show how Israel's foreign work program provides economic opportunities while simultaneously marginalizing caregivers and preventing their integration into the body politic, much like migrant work programs other countries. Caregivers in my research claim that these forms of marginalization, and the measures taken by the state to discipline and manage foreign workers to ensure their temporary status, are detrimental to their health. My dissertation considers one set of logics that Israel employs to continue marginalizing foreign workers' and caregivers' efforts to resist, resituate, and redefine these forms of discipline and exclusion.

Non-Citizens and Moral Claims

Israel's democratic identity and participation in international rights communities brings the exclusionary Jewish national ideology in question when these ideological systems of rights disagree about the proper treatment (and recognition) of minorities, migrants, and others outside the prioritized social group. Israel's stance towards non-Jewish applicants to the state emerges from the Zionist commitment to ensuring a Jewish country, but conflicts with other historical narratives about democracy, human rights, and particularly ethical stances towards refugees. As a country legitimized and identified as a sanctuary for refugee Jews escaping from persecution, genocide, stateless status, and racism, Israel takes a controversial position when viewing refugees and asylum seekers as "infiltrators." Yet, as Ruth Margalit writes for the *New Yorker*, "...since its founding in 1948, Israel has awarded refugee status to fewer than two hundred

people, according to statistics from the African Refugee Development Center.”¹³⁶ Additionally, Israeli politicians routinely refer to foreign workers, asylum seekers, and “illegal” migrants as “infiltrators” threatening the health, safety, and the very character of Israel.

Social anxiety about “foreigners” formed the daily backdrop of my research, as discussed in Chapter 5. This concern about “foreigners” infiltrating Israeli society and posing a social threat as well as “stealing” jobs from Israelis (Chapter Three) is not new, but rather is directly tied to the ongoing conflict with Palestinians (as discussed in Chapter 2). Yet, as Margalit implicitly illustrates in her article, there is a moral hierarchy among the supporters of asylum seekers in Israel that positions refugees as having greater moral worth than migrant workers. Margalit quotes Sigal Avivi, identified as an activist, as saying,

The sad reality is that the State of Israel needs [asylum seekers]. Even though some of them were academics and many are educated, they represent a cheap labor force. So instead of bringing in other migrant workers on visas, we are telling the government, ‘Let these people work.’ □ (Margalit Jan 8 2014).

In Avivi’s equation, the cheap labor of asylum seekers, despite their education, trumps the assumed economic need of migrant workers, who also often hold educational and professional degrees and are seeking work. The ability to see foreign workers outside of their economic categorization limits the moral urgency of their claims and furthers the rationale that foreign workers can be dismissed at will with no significant repercussions to society or to the foreign workers themselves. I am not challenging the real danger that refugees flee from when seeking asylum in other countries; instead I am questioning the rhetorical move of erasing any context from the category “migrant worker” in order to elevate the moral force of the category “refugee.”

¹³⁶ Margalit, Ruth. Israel’s African Asylum Seekers Go on Strike. *New Yorker*. <http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/newsdesk/2014/01/israel-illegal-immigration-refugees-african-workers-strike.html> January 8, 2014. [Accessed January 17, 2014]

Despite this moral differentiation, migrant workers and asylum seekers are often collapsed into the generalizing and delegitimizing category “migrant” in political and social discourse before these categories are re-differentiated in order to rank their moral claims to reside legally in Israel. Rabbi Donniel Hartman of Jerusalem’s Shalom Hartman Institute participates in eliding the distinctions between foreign workers and asylum seekers in his op-ed published in *The Times of Israel* in response to the Refugee Strike.¹³⁷ Hartman has assumed the role of a public intellectual, writing frequent op-eds published in Israel newspapers about religious views on current events. His writing is circulated through the media and public discourse, and especially consumed by Jewish Israelis who identify as moderately religious.

In this op-ed Hartman comments on the place of the non-citizen in Israel, initially differentiating between refugee and illegal migrants. The category “non-citizen” presents an entry point relevant to my research to assess the landscape migrant workers are situated within, and the wider political issues that determine the reception migrant workers’ claims of belonging. A quote from Hartman’s op-ed offers a religiously Jewish philosophical construction of the non-citizen, but also reveals the assumed moral hierarchy when discussing foreign workers and asylum seekers in the same breath.

Out of sight and out of mind. That’s the safe and prudent place for the non-citizen to occupy. A society’s primary responsibility is to protect and maximize the well-being of its citizens. By definition, the outsider is of secondary concern at best. To master the art of non-citizenship is to learn how to become important, if not indispensable, to the society and its citizens, while minimizing the burden one places on them. It is for this reason that non-citizens are permitted and tolerated within certain boundaries, for who would not like to benefit at very little cost to oneself? Which society would not tolerate individuals who serve its citizens and do the jobs that they choose not to do, and at the same time, at a fraction of the cost and responsibility? ... What is it to be, however, of those who are neither out of sight nor out of mind? Those who make a claim on us, not by virtue of their service and indispensability to our societal ends, but by virtue of their rights and

¹³⁷ Hartman, Donniel Thank you for Marching. *Times of Israel*: <http://blogs.timesofisrael.com/thank-you-for-marching/>. January 8, 2014. [Accessed January 8, 2014]

needs? Individuals who, in the spirit of Kant, demand to be seen and treated as ends unto themselves, independent of their utilitarian role” (Hartman January 8, 2014).

He continues to address refugees specifically, stating “Refugees make an even stronger claim to be seen [as non-citizens]. They are not claiming their right to prosperity, but their right to life itself” (Hartman January 8, 2014).

Hartman acknowledges the friction between the expected invisibility of marginalized non-citizens, and the harsh reactions when “foreigners” claim a right to a fuller compliment of social benefits. His assessment of refugees as holding morally persuasive claims to inclusion into Israeli society establishes a hierarchy through which to understand the differentiated claims of non-citizens. This claim is based on the moral weight that each category of “non-citizen” can contribute to the claims that individuals within these categories make. However, despite singling out refugees as having a particular moral righteousness, he obscures the remaining group of non-citizens into a large, undifferentiated category. He commits a very common slip in his perspective on non-citizens: he collapses migrant workers into the category of illegal immigrant and then compares this larger category of (documented and undocumented) migrants against those seeking refuge (e.g. asylum seekers or recognized refugees) to sketch out the landscape of non-citizens and their relative claims.

He specifically makes this move by referencing Rose Fontanes (discussed below) in the third paragraph of his article as an example of the non-citizen his article addresses. Fontanes is a documented caregiver in Israel who is by no means “illegal” or even technically an immigrant. The only claim that the media alludes to Fontanes making is having the opportunity to participate in an open-audition singing competition. While these might seem petty points, the blurring of these categories provides an important reflection of the larger social concern with all “non-citizens” grouped into the generalizing category of “infiltrating foreigners” understood to

challenge the Jewish demographic of Israel, while for specific political purposes this category is re-differentiated in order to assert a moral hierarchy of claims.

Hartman goes on to provide his view of the ethical line Israel must walk in regards to “non-citizens.” The assertion Hartman ultimately poses by the end of the op-ed is that “In a Jewish society, there must be no one who is neither seen nor heard” (Hartman January 8, 2014); rather, he asserts that the debate is over how far *tzedakah* (obligatory charity / justice / righteousness) can stretch without harming the well-being of Israeli citizens. Hartman unintentionally exposes a number of assumptions about the combined democratic, theocratic, and also humanitarian nature of Israeli society that directly speak to the friction caused by the migrant workers and asylum seekers demanding their right to greater rights.

These assumptions when interrogated lead to a number of troubling questions despite taking what at first glance appears to be a liberal, tolerant, moral stance. For instance, we are left with an image of Israeli society as purely and wholly “Jewish” without any participation or moral righteousness existing in any other sector of Israeli society. Those who are not seen and who are left without acknowledgement of their rights and needs are the [refugee and migrant] non-citizens. Yet, this leaves “citizenship” as an undifferentiated status, where those who have citizenship are assumed to possess equal access to privileges, protects, obligations, and rights. By not differentiating this category and focusing on the “non-citizen,” Hartman eludes the struggles of Palestinian citizens of Israel to gain their own equal compliment of social and legal rights and general equality *as* citizens. Leaving the question of how far *tzedakah* stretches among citizens?

As Chapter Two summarizes, the political possibility of foreign workers in Israel initially hinged on the exclusion of Palestinian day laborers. Caregivers’ claims for greater rights and the ability to actualize their full personhood in Israel align closely with the demands of Palestinians

in Israel for equal citizenship and Palestinians outside of Israel for recognition of their *right* to citizenship. These assertions may be rhetorically isolated from each other, but the perceived demographic threat exists in all these objections to Israel's closures to non-citizens or de-prioritized sectors of the body politic.

Furthermore, categories of human rights, Jewish religious ethics, a democratic society, and political determinants of citizens' well-being are collapsed in the use of *tzedakah* as the moral principle that is most appropriate for determining the extent that recognition can extend towards non-citizens in Israel. This collapse asserts that the content of non-citizens' claims and the effect of how human rights, democracy, and Jewish religious ethics operate are compatible in practice, and that they produce similar enough outcomes that we can group them together. This causes critical erasures of peoples not included in communities compelled by Jewish ethics; the erasure of the workings of human rights or measures of well-being that may be in direct contradiction to Jewish religious ethics; and the erasure of the different kinds of claims made by the "non-citizen" on the state: asylum seekers' claims predicated upon fleeing a dangerous home are very different than migrant caregivers' claims of identifying as a potential-Israeli and seeking citizenship, which in turn is drastically different from the varied Palestinian claims on the state from within and outside of Israel.

Hartman's op-ed represents one, relatively liberal, view on non-Jewish residents in Israel making claims on the state. Through the lens that he cogently provides, I frame the caregivers' protests about the implementation of the "Slavery Laws" and the Refugee Protests to consider the future reception of caregivers' claims that they deserve a place of their own in Israel.

Migrant caregivers and African asylum seekers are not necessarily allies in Israel. They frequently compete for the limited space allocated to "non-citizens" within Israel, as Hartman

illustrates. The occupants of these categories operate from the margins of Israeli society, but are classified, again as Hartman shows, through distinct moral lens. Yet the measure of moral worth of each category shifts depends on the political goal of the parties making these moral judgments.

Refugee Strike and Protests

On December 10, 2013 the Knesset approved an amendment to the Anti-Infiltration Law allowing the government to detain “illegal” migrants who newly entered the country for up to a year without a trial. This came as a result of the Israeli Supreme Court striking down an earlier law that allowed the government to detain “illegal” migrants for up to three years in a closed facility without a trial¹³⁸; the court also approved the use of an “open” detention center in the Negev known as Holot. Male “illegal” migrants held in Saharonim prison complex can now be transferred to the “open” facility after the amendment to the Anti-Infiltration Law passed. Holot is considered an “open” detention center, as the doors are unlocked during the day, technically not obstructing the detainees from leaving. However, required check-ins during daylight hours limit the distance detainees can go from the facility, and the facility is locked after dark. If a detainee misses the check-ins, he can be returned to Saharonim. Along with the security wall completed in 2012 on the Israeli-Egyptian border, the Israeli government intends the prospect of a year’s detention without trial to deter “illegal” migrants from entering Israel from Africa via

¹³⁸ Blumenthal, Itay. Israeli citizens, African migrants march from south Tel Aviv to city center against State's detention of asylum seekers from Sudan, Eritrea. *YNet*. <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4470485,00.html> December 28, 2013 [Accessed January 17, 2014]

the Egyptian land border. Holot provides migrants with a place to stay, food, necessary health services, and social services although the detainees are not allowed to work.¹³⁹

On December 16, 2013 a large, organized group of African asylum seekers (estimated between 150 and 250 detainees based on the media source) who Israeli security transferred to the Holot facility from Saharonim walked out as a form of protest. They walked from the Negev to Jerusalem to gather in front of the Knesset to refuse the logic that as “illegal” migrants they could reasonably be restricted to a detention center for a year without a trial. The police arrested the protesters, physically forcing many onto the buses^{140, 141}, and returned them to the Holot facility.¹⁴² This walk-out from Holot contributed to the momentum of protests that started January 5, 2014 with 30,000 people gathering in Levinsky Park and marching to Rabin Square, the protests continuing over the next few days in front of the US Embassy in Tel Aviv. On January 8, over 10,000 protesters marched on the Knesset to bring their demands to government itself. The protesters called for the recognition of their rights, a refusal of their treatment as

¹³⁹ Lis, Jonathan. Knesset okays detention of migrants without trial. *Haaretz*. <http://www.haaretz.com/news/national/.premium-1.562666>. December 10, 2013. [Accessed December 20, 2014]

¹⁴⁰ Nachshoni, Kobi. Police force asylum seekers into buses back to detention. *YNet*. <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4466574,00.html> December 17, 2014. [Accessed January 17, 2014]

¹⁴¹ This evokes both specters of the IDF removing Jewish settlers from the Occupied Territories, often physically dragging the Settlers away from their homes, etc; and poignantly of the Holocaust. It should also be asked if police action such as this also resonates with memories of the Nakba in order to acknowledge the rich text of refugee experiences in the Palestinian-Israeli context in response to armed state forces (such as the army and the police).

¹⁴² Times of Israel Staff. 30,000 African migrants hold silent march, rally in Tel Aviv. *Times of Israel*. <http://www.timesofisrael.com/african-migrants-stage-work-strike-silent-march-in-tel-aviv/> January 5, 2014 [Accessed January 17, 2014]

“criminals,” and demanding the right to work while waiting for their asylum applications to be processed.¹⁴³

Categories have political importance, as shown by the insistence that various stakeholders displayed in their characterizations of this group of African men. As Ruth Margalit reminds us, “signatories [to the 1951 Refugee Convention] are forbidden from imposing penalties or restricting the movement of refugees—including those who arrived unlawfully.”¹⁴⁴ Yet, reclassifying these asylum seekers before they are recognized as legitimately seeking asylum and before refugee status is granted is one way to evade these guidelines. Furthermore, the UN has recognized Eritreans as facing political danger in their home country, meaning that Israel, as a signatory to the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees of 1951, cannot deport them back to Eritrea according to International Law. However, Israel is not required to grant these asylum seekers refugee status, and technically Eritreans can be relocated to another country.¹⁴⁵ In this vein, Netanyahu continually referred to the asylum seekers as “infiltrators” stating:

“I would like to clarify that these are not refugees, whom we handle according to international treaties, but rather infiltrators in search of work who are illegal, and we will fully bring them to justice.”¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ Efraim, Omri & Reuters. Migrants abandon Holot 'open' detention facility in protest. *YNet*. <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4466283,00.html>. December 16, 2013 [Accessed January 17, 2014]

¹⁴⁴ Margalit, Ruth. Israel's African Asylum Seekers Go on Strike. *New Yorker*. <http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/newsdesk/2014/01/israel-illegal-immigration-refugees-african-workers-strike.html> January 8, 2014. [Accessed January 17, 2014]

¹⁴⁵ Times of Israel Staff. 30,000 African migrants hold silent march, rally in Tel Aviv. *Times of Israel*. <http://www.timesofisrael.com/african-migrants-stage-work-strike-silent-march-in-tel-aviv/> January 5, 2014 [Accessed January 17, 2014]

¹⁴⁶ Newman, Marissa. As strikes and protests escalate, Israel tries to reclaim narrative on migrants Israel notes it is only developed country with African land border, says tens of millions could head this way if it doesn't stand firm. *Times of Israel*. <http://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-moves-to-reclaim-narrative-on-migrants/>. January 6, 2014. [Accessed January 17, 2014]

Netanyahu also stated in response to the African migrants leaving Holot,

“Just as we are determined to protect our borders, we're determined to enforce the law...The law is the law, and naturally it also applies to illegal workers. The infiltrators who were transferred to the special detainment facility can either stay there or go back to their home countries.”¹⁴⁷

Following this sentiment, Netanyahu refused to recognize the African protesters as refugees, but rather identifying them as “economic migrants.”¹⁴⁸ Eli Yishai also issued statements echoing Netanyahu’s assertion that the African men in question could return to the detention facility or return to the country from which they claim to have fled for reasons of safety. Yishai advocated for “taking advantage” of the protests to arrest all the “infiltrators” and deport them either to their own countries or to a (unnamed) third party country.¹⁴⁹ The symbolic concern articulated in response to migrant workers and migrants seeking asylum in Israel, specifically in Tel Aviv and Eilat which have high concentrations of African migrants, is the “loss” of the Jewish character of the nation. Yishai referenced this fear when he spoke against the African asylum seekers’ protest, stating that in the event of these protests that Tel Aviv, considered the first “Jewish” city in modern Israel, had become “an African city.”¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ Nachshoni, Kobi. Police force asylum seekers into buses back to detention. *YNet*. <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4466574,00.html> December 17, 2014. [Accessed January 17, 2014]

¹⁴⁸ Ho, Spencer. Israel firm in refusing protesters’ demand for refugee status. *Times of Israel*. <http://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-again-rejects-migrant-protesters-demand-for-refugee-status/> January 8, 2014. [Accessed January 17, 2014]

¹⁴⁹ Ho, Spencer. Israel firm in refusing protesters’ demand for refugee status. *Times of Israel*. <http://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-again-rejects-migrant-protesters-demand-for-refugee-status/> January 8, 2014. [Accessed January 17, 2014]

¹⁵⁰ Times of Israel Staff. 30,000 African migrants hold silent march, rally in Tel Aviv. *Times of Israel*. <http://www.timesofisrael.com/african-migrants-stage-work-strike-silent-march-in-tel-aviv/> January 5, 2014 [Accessed January 17, 2014]

This statement by Yishai reflects a harsher version of a government program that aims to rid the country of all illegal migrants, even if it involves paying for these migrants to leave. The Voluntary Return Assistance Unit hosted by the Israeli Population and Immigration Authority (similar to the recent strategies used by the British government) promises illegal migrants help in securing the necessary documentation for travel, plane tickets, and a sum of money: \$3,500 for every adult and \$1,000 per child¹⁵¹. This program is the incentive paired with the immediate increase in immigration police activity after the passing of the amendment to the Anti-Infiltration Bill.

The hike in arrests of illegal migrants also accompanies a decision by the Israeli government to restrict renewals on three-month visas meant to document asylum seekers while their applications are in process and until a decision is made. In many cases, these visas allowed asylum seekers to work in some low-skilled and low-paid occupations. However, as the UN and the African protesters have accused, Israel is not processing asylum requests in a reasonable length of time, meaning that these three-month visas expire long before the government addresses the asylum seeker's application. Thus, as these temporary visas expire, asylum seekers who are still waiting for their applications to be reviewed become illegal and risk arrest and deportation to a situation they claim is violent and from which they fled.¹⁵² Additionally, even should they stay in Israel to wait out the review of their asylum request they lose the ability to legally work.

¹⁵¹ Druzin, Rye. African asylum seekers in Israel denied visas. *YNet*. <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4470908,00.html>. December 29, 2013. Reprinted from *The Media Line*. [Accessed January 17, 2014]

¹⁵² Druzin, Rye. African asylum seekers in Israel denied visas. *YNet*. <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4470908,00.html>. December 29, 2013. Reprinted from *The Media Line*. [Accessed January 17, 2014]

These protests coincided with strikes by refugees who work illegally in restaurants and as janitorial staff in Israeli establishments (e.g. hotels), leaving these businesses without their usual labor. Additionally, 150 illegal migrants who were already being held in the Saharonim detention center in the Negev began a hunger strike as a form of political protest, resonating with the recent hunger strikes by Palestinian political prisoners in Israeli detention. The UN criticized Israel's slow process reviewing asylum requests as well as Israel's relatively low rates of granting refugee status. Since 1948, Israel has granted fewer than 200 asylum seekers have received refugee status. With the construction of the wall on the Egyptian border and the current political climate, Israel is actively deterring potential refugees from being able to access Israel as a place of sanctuary.¹⁵³

The question of work, however, brings interesting inquiries along the moral lines of the non-citizen that Hartman's op-ed raises. Prime Minister Netanyahu referred to these "illegal" migrants as "economic migrants," grouping their rationale for entering Israel with those migrant workers who come to Israel on a work visa (or who come illegally on a tourist visa, seeking employment). Yet, there is a distinction between those migrants who enter Israel via Egypt due to persecution in their own nations who wish to work, and migrant workers who Israel recruits through overseas labor programs mediated by manpower agencies. Knesset Minister Dov Khenin of the Hadash¹⁵⁴ party noted this distinction along the moral lines that Hartman traced by saying

¹⁵³ Druzin, Rye. African asylum seekers in Israel denied visas. *YNet*. <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4470908,00.html>. December 29, 2013. Reprinted from *The Media Line*. [Accessed January 17, 2014]

¹⁵⁴ Hadash identifies itself as a non-Zionist, democratic, socialist political party. It is predominated by Palestinians with Israeli citizenship ("Israeli Arabs") although there is some Jewish Israeli participation. The party's platform includes removing all Israeli citizens from the Occupied Territories, allowing Palestinians the right of return, and supporting a two state plan.

in relation to his support of the refugee protests and his call for the government to change its policies:

“The government insists on continuing to import thousands of foreign workers every year, but prohibits asylum seekers here from working,” he said. “The time has come to stop bringing foreign workers to Israel, to make these jobs open to asylum seekers whom even the Foreign Ministry admits are impossible to deport, and scatter around the country in a way that makes sense.”¹⁵⁵

Khenin’s statements echo Avivi’s assessment (quoted above) about the differentiated moral right of non-citizens to not only reside in Israel, but to legally work in Israel. The message in these statements is that there is only room for certain kinds of non-citizens in Israel, and the moral weight of the “refugee” in Israeli political history has more traction than foreign workers’ moral positions. This is assuming that asylum seekers are recognized as such by the government, much less offered refugee status.

Caregivers’ Protests and the Slavery Laws

In comparison, the caregiver protests occurred in response to a particular set of laws that seek to define caregivers so tightly into the category of “economic migrant” that other critical aspects of personhood become invisible, such as personal safety and self-determination. The caregiver’s protests in January 2014 coincided with the Refugee Strike, but received much less media attention, and the media blitz over Rose Fontanes’ *XFactor* victory eclipsed the news coverage of the implementation of the new laws. In May 2011, the Knesset passed the amendment to Israel’s Citizenship and Entry Laws, but these laws only came into effect in December 2013. As discussed in previous chapters, these laws 1) restrict a caregiver from working outside of her/his designated region in Israel; 2) limit the number of employers that a

¹⁵⁵ Ho, Spencer. Israel firm in refusing protesters’ demand for refugee status. *Times of Israel*. <http://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-again-rejects-migrant-protesters-demand-for-refugee-status/> January 8, 2014. [Accessed January 17, 2014]

caregiver can have in a set number of years; and 3) overlook the vulnerability of migrant caregivers to their employers and the families of the employers, essentially demanding that migrant caregivers choose between their physical and psychological safety and maintaining a valid work visa.

These laws position caregivers as a potential threat to the dependent elderly, not from abuse in this instance, but due to negligent abandonment. Elderly Israelis living in isolated areas distanced from urban hubs where migrant workers tend to gather reportedly experience difficulty retaining caregivers. As opposed to creating incentives for caregivers to work in outlying areas, the government chose to restrict the movement and employment options for caregivers. This is meant to assure elderly Israelis in non-urban areas continual care. However, these new provisions also work to dissuade migrant caregivers from joining caregivers' communities (located in cities where large groups of migrant caregivers are located) and formulating attachment to Israel.

NGOs and migrant advocates argued that these laws only benefit manpower agencies that continue to make large profits including from the collection of illegal fees. Idit Lebovitch, the Coordinator of the Caregiving Field for Kav LaOved, argues in an op-ed:

The regulations published by the Interior Minister don't take into account the basic rights each person is entitled to as a human being. Rights that many Israelis take for granted such as freedom of movement, the right to choose one's employer and place of work, the right to choose the region of work and the basic right to terminate a job without fear of deportation or loss of future income. They also do not address the nature of work with sick patients, which can lead to severe burnout and relatively high turnover of employers, often in circumstances that are not related to the worker. A caregiver who is employed for her third employer in Israel will think twice and even three times before she terminates her work. This, even if she is not paid her full salary, if she barely sleeps at night or enjoys appropriate living conditions and even whether she is suffers [sic] from physical or sexual violence, only because she knows that resigning might lead to deportation.

The timing the Minister chose to publish the new regulations; two weeks after the caregivers rally, while racism and incitement against asylum seekers is rising, and in the

same evening a migrant caregiver wins one of the biggest reality competitions in Israel, illustrates the line of action taken by the Interior Minister – a complete detachment from the Israeli reality, disregard to international trends and a blatant violation of basic human rights.¹⁵⁶

Caregivers protested in January 2014 to contest these laws, and to urge Israel to honor the Domestic Workers Convention (International Labour Organization's Convention 189).¹⁵⁷ The Convention "... asserts that the human rights of domestic workers include equal standing before the law, freedom of association with employers, and the prevention of agency brokerage fees that are expropriated from the worker's remuneration in exchange for employment in a foreign country."¹⁵⁸ In particular, the debt that migrant caregivers incur to secure these work contracts are considered a kind of "debt bondage" that does not allow migrant workers to protect themselves from unfair or abusive work conditions for fear of not being able to pay off what they owe.

Furthermore, the Convention challenges the current exception of migrant caregivers from Israel's Work and Rest Hours Law¹⁵⁹ that prevents migrant caregivers from claiming overtime pay based on the 24-hour nature of their jobs. The exemption of migrant workers from this labor law also sets the maximum hours per day a laborer can work, the number and duration of breaks

¹⁵⁶ Lebovitch, Idit. The Slavery factor. (English) *YNet*. <https://www.facebook.com/notes/kav-laoved-migrant-caregivers/the-slavery-factor-english-translation-of-an-op-ed-from-yonet/597178017029110> January 16, 2014. [Accessed January 16, 2014]

¹⁵⁷ International Labour Organization. C189 - Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:2551460. [Accessed January 20, 2014]

¹⁵⁸ Kav LaOved. Caregivers Call for Ratification of Convention 189. <http://www.kavlaoved.org.il/en/migrant-caregivers-demand-equal-rights-call-ratification-convention-189/> December 30, 2013.

¹⁵⁹ Kav LaOved. Caregivers Call for Ratification of Convention 189. <http://www.kavlaoved.org.il/en/migrant-caregivers-demand-equal-rights-call-ratification-convention-189/> December 30, 2013

required during the work day, a mandatory weekly day of rest, and overtime pay for Shabbat and holidays.¹⁶⁰ The state does set a day off for migrant workers based on their day of religious observance, yet it is a pervasive (and permitted) practice of employers to require caregivers to work on their day off without overtime pay or a compensatory day off. As one news article explains, “this decision [exempting migrant caregivers from the Work and Rest Hours Law], together with the flagrant lack of enforcement by the Economy Ministry in cases of labor rights violations, leaves migrant caregivers with few places to turn to voice their objections to and seek redress for such exploitation and unsustainable work conditions.”¹⁶¹

One politically charged statement by Knesset Minister Miri Regev argued for deporting all illegal [African] migrants while lifting the restrictions on foreign work visas in construction to meet the current affordable housing crisis (see Israel’s version of the Occupy Movement in 2011 resulting in “tent cities” protesting the cost and limited availability of housing). Regev’s promotion of introducing thousands of foreign workers in construction while endorsing the expulsion of a large group of asylum seekers met with sharp criticism, especially as she publicly referred to African migrants as “a cancer in our body.”¹⁶² Her position of playing off foreign workers against African migrants communicates her belief that foreign workers (at least in construction) are easier for the state to control than African migrants seeking asylum in part

¹⁶⁰ Neshet, Talilia. Israel High Court rejects live-in health aide's demand for overtime pay. *Haaretz*. <http://www.haaretz.com/news/national/israel-high-court-rejects-live-in-health-aide-s-demand-for-overtime-pay-premium-1.510569>. March 30, 2013. [Accessed January 31, 2014]

¹⁶¹ Udell, Jacob. Denied basic labor rights, migrant caregivers take to the streets. *972Magazine*. <http://972mag.com/deprived-of-labor-rights-migrant-caregivers-take-to-the-streets/85054/>. January 5, 2014.

¹⁶² Berman, Lazar. MK seeking to expel migrants wants more foreign workers. *Times of Israel*. <http://www.timesofisrael.com/mk-seeking-to-expel-migrants-wants-more-foreign-workers/>. January 22, 2014. [Accessed January 27, 2014]

because of the distinction in their moral claims. She reiterates Netanyahu's statement that the asylum seekers are in actuality economic migrants, and therefore less legitimate than foreign workers who are conscripted and legible only in economic terms by the state with very limited recognition of any other aspect of their personhood.

In Regev's statement, like Khenin's opposite view, there is only room for one kind of non-citizen in Israel, despite their agreement that non-citizens are best tolerated for their cheap labor. In particular, the category of "economic migrant," the category that foreign workers are defined by, is de-politicized and de-contextualized in these arguments, these particular migrants as neutral parties only interested in Israel as a place earn wages. This category is premised on an economic identity that is held separate from social or political assertions, and is characterized as temporary based on economics as the sole rationale for migrating. The assumption is that when migrants have earned enough money that they can attend to other aspects of their lives that they will go "home" where they (presumably) hold citizenship and can access civil rights.

Netanyahu's move to rhetorically transform asylum seekers into economic migrants attempts to make these Africans as temporary, disposable, and deportable as foreign workers who hold an expired visa. The UN and other international rights-based bodies protest the manipulation of asylum seekers into "illegal" economic migrants based on the social and political risk that these individuals presumably fled from. However, the situation of pre-existing economic migrants, their social and political contexts, what is at risk for them in situations of deportation, why the category "economic migrant" restricts their full expression of personhood, and contentions over their access to rights remain unaddressed.

The Slavery Laws seek to ensure that migrant caregivers only conceptualize Israel as a place to earn money to the exclusion of all other imagined possibilities, including access to

general labor rights. Indeed, migrant caregivers are frequently referred to in the Israeli media as “faceless” and anonymous in a sea of foreign workers. This is precisely the assessment of migrant caregivers that the participants in my research fought against, insisting that this loss of social and political identity proved deleterious for the “health,” or overall well-being. Their claims for increased inclusion grounded in assertions of their “Israeli” identity and the care-debt Israel owed them sought to redress this facelessness.

Yet, political assertions made at the same time as the caregivers’ protest in January 2014 continued to assert that the sole value of migrant workers’ presence in Israel lay in their labor premised on their agreement with the government’s control of their labor and their continued compliance with low wages, restricted legal options, and an understanding of themselves as inherently disposable.

XFactor and Emerging from Anonymity

For many, Rose Fostanes’ success on *XFactor* seemed to challenge the reduction of migrant caregivers to labor producing bodies, if even for a moment. At the time of winning *XFactor Israel*, Rose Fostanes (known casually as Osang) was forty-seven years old and working in Tel Aviv caring for a debilitated middle-aged woman. She had a six-year tenure in Israel, but previously she held contracts in Egypt and Lebanon for an estimated twenty years.¹⁶³ Similar to many overseas workers, Osang referred to supporting her family in the Philippines as the reason she decided to work abroad. However, unlike other caregivers, Osang entered into a televised singing competition and gained overnight notice. Almost more symbolically relevant, her face

¹⁶³ Press, Viva Sarah. Fairytale triumph: Filipina caregiver Rose Fostanes wins X Factor Israel. *Israel 21C*. <http://israel21c.org/news/fairytale-triumph-filipina-caregiver-rose-fostanes-wins-x-factor-israel/>. January 15, 2014. [Accessed January 16, 2014]

and life story also became attached with her name, personalizing her identity among other caregivers.

A number of “surprise” wins have marked reality singing competitions in Israel (including the Israel version of *A Star is Born*, *Kokhav Nolad*), including a young Ethiopian Israeli woman and an ultra-orthodox Jewish man, displaying a certain face of social diversity in Israel. But, the fairytale of Osang’s success, both in terms of her singing and Israel’s popular acceptance of social diversity, immediately faltered in the face of reality (not just reality TV). Generally, the winner of *XFactor* goes on tour after the competition concludes as a jump-start to his or her career. As a migrant caregiver, Osang’s visa prohibits her from receiving pay as a performer. It would be illegal for her to accept payment for singing performances unless she goes before the Ministry of the Interior and receives an exception.¹⁶⁴

Osang’s visa status could be adjusted by appealing to the Ministry of the Interior to add an exception to her work visa, or to change her visa type. If the MoI agreed to change her visa type to an entertainment visa, then the question arises as to if Osang would be allowed to continue caring for her employer while beginning a professional singing career, and should that career fail if she would be able to return to caregiving work. This debate (still in progress at the time of writing) again reflects the complications with migrant worker status when the boundaries of these categories are challenged, either by unusual circumstances like winning *XFactor Israel*, or by other more common occurrences that prompt a caregiver to desire citizenship and permanent status. This is where the democratic structures of Israel are put under strain, where exclusions and expectations and demands for greater rights collide.

¹⁶⁴ Boker, Ran. X-Factor winner Rose Fostanes may be in trouble if she sings professionally in Israel 47-year-old Filipina can only work in Israel as a caregiver, her profession for the past six years; tells Ynet: I'm just a caregiver who wants to be a singer. *YNet*. <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4477120,00.html> January 15, 2014. [Accessed January 16, 2014]

Osang's win was of great interest to Filipinos working in Israel as well as within the global OFW community, but it also raised a number of questions. In addition to winning a singing competition, Osang won a great deal of public attention in Israel. Osang talked about her work as an overseas migrant worker, and how she originally thought that she wouldn't receive Israeli support, seeing her only as a foreigner who provided domestic labor.¹⁶⁵ However, the votes submitted via text message clearly favored her as the winner for the multi-round competition. Some of these votes came from other Filipino migrant workers in Israel, but a clear swell of support came from Israeli viewers. Osang articulated her understanding of her image in this competition through her statement that: "I think also they [the other Filipino overseas workers] will be proud of me ... and everybody in the world will know that Filipinos, even working as a cleaner, or ... a foreign worker can also share their talents and they can also be a part of a big event like this."¹⁶⁶

What does public voting from a cell phone in this kind of competition mean? Does popular voting in a singing competition necessarily evidence that viewers are supporting the migrant caregivers' claims for expanded rights when they vote by cell phone for a Filipina caregiver contestant on a reality TV show? Or is it the behavior of media consumers, voting for an underdog or a sympathetic contestant without correlating their text-vote with larger social concerns pertaining to the idea of non-Jewish immigration to Israel? How much symbolic meaning or resonance can we give to this kind of vote, and must we limit the meaning of the vote

¹⁶⁵ ABS-CBN News.com. Pinay caregiver is 'X Factor Israel' winner. *ABS-CBN News*. <http://www.abs-cbnnews.com/global-filipino/01/14/14/pinay-caregiver-x-factor-israel-winner> January 15, 2014. [Accessed January 15, 2014]

¹⁶⁶ ABS-CBN News.com. Pinay caregiver is 'X Factor Israel' winner. *ABS-CBN News*. <http://www.abs-cbnnews.com/global-filipino/01/14/14/pinay-caregiver-x-factor-israel-winner> January 15, 2014. [Accessed January 15, 2014]

to a judgment of singing talent or can we extend it to other struggles caregivers undergo to be socially recognized?

As Lebovitch argues, the elation over Osang's win can't rectify the increasingly restrictive rights that migrant workers experience in Israel. She writes:

What the Israeli public did not know, is that while texting thousands of SMS messages enthusiastically from their homes, the Interior Minister Gideon Sa'ar published, is [sic] an ironic timing, a press release in which he announced the return of the caregivers' bind to their employers.

A *YNet* article summed up the tension between Osang's win and the overall reality that continues in Israel for migrant caregivers. The article states:

Fostanes [sic] has emerged as the newest star of Israeli reality television, putting a human face on the thousands of foreign workers who toil away in menial, back-breaking jobs in Israel. Viewers of the country's myriad of reality shows have grown accustomed to successful candidates from various backgrounds, including black-clad ultra-Orthodox Jews, Ethiopian immigrants and a German convert to Judaism who became a celebrity chef. But they've never seen anyone like Rose Fostanes before. She spends her days caring and cleaning for an ailing woman in her 50s. To save money, Fostanes lives with seven others in a crowded apartment in south Tel Aviv, a downtrodden area inhabited by foreign laborers. Until recently, Fostanes was among the thousands of Filipinos who work in similar positions in Israel. The site [sic] of Filipino workers wheeling elderly Israelis in public places is so common that the word "Filipini" has become synonymous with "caregiver."¹⁶⁷

The article makes a clear distinction between the space in Israeli society for the ultra-Orthodox, Ethiopian migrants, and German converts, but perhaps unintentionally reveals the problems imagining a similar space for caregivers. The work that Israel recruited her to do defines her in Israel, even after winning a highly competitive competition and after media interviews where she discussed multiple aspects of her personal life. Rose Fontanes *is* a migrant caregiver in Israel. It is perhaps coincidental that she can sing.

¹⁶⁷ Boker, Ran. X-Factor winner Rose Fostanes may be in trouble if she sings professionally in Israel 47-year-old Filipina can only work in Israel as a caregiver, her profession for the past six years; tells Ynet: I'm just a caregiver who wants to be a singer. *YNet*. <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4477120,00.html> January 15, 2014. [Accessed January 16, 2014]

My dissertation reflects a set of claims that a particular community of caregivers advanced into Israel's social and political spaces. They seek a place for themselves in Israel where they have access to the full compliment of civil rights afforded to citizens in order to rectify their marginalized position in Israel. They do this by articulating problems with their "health," or well-being, resulting from their low social status, the instability of their employment, the psychological stress of feeling disrespected and undervalued as people as well as laborers, and their very limited degree of self-determination while working in Israel. Their assessments of degraded health align with their inability to embody their full social or political personhood in the Israeli social or legal context.

In order to improve their health status, caregivers construct multiple logics through which to assert their health needs. They identify as "the stranger" in Jewish religious texts, a subject position that entitles them to treatment equal to that of Jewish citizens. They call on human rights and democratic principles to assert their humanity as a site of inalienable rights that Israel does not recognize as valid. Caregivers assert their tenure, emotional attachment, and cultural knowledge of (Jewish) Israel as a form of embodied belonging that transforms them into ideal candidates for immigration. They attempt to illustrate their love of Israel, their naturalized comfort with Israeli cultural practices, and their support of Israel's political goals as proof of their Israeli essence. Last, they call upon Israel's debt to the Philippines and Filipinos for offering multiple forms of care since 1948 that they view as unreciprocated. They make these claims for themselves and for their children born in Israel who are viewed by the state as questionable citizens based on their gentile mothers.

Israel's resistance to migrant caregivers' desire to integrate formally into the nation reflects the demographic project of the state. Caregivers contort Israel's goals to maintain a

certain kind of Jewish majority and political priority. Furthermore, caregivers advocate for the state's recognition in configurations that challenge the exclusion of other communities, namely Palestinians, who assert similar connections between their identity and the land of Israel/Palestine that Israel uses to assert the legitimacy of the Jewish claim to this geopolitical space. Israel also engages with a struggle that is accelerating globally: how to maintain the prioritized character of the body politic in the face of a growing care crisis that citizen-workers have so far proved unwilling or unable to meet?

The lingering question that remains in caregivers' assertions that Israel's current migration system is deleterious to their health is: then why don't they return to the Philippines or migrates elsewhere? The initial answer to this question is that the core aspect of caregivers' health claims is precisely that they are forced to leave Israel when they want to stay *as Israelis*. Returning to the Philippines or finding a new overseas contract would not address this health concern.

More broadly, migrant workers don't freely select their next work location. The kind of contract a migrant worker can secure depends on his or her previous overseas contracts, his or her deportation history, the countries in which she or he worked before, and the extent of his or her social network. Maria proved able to get to Europe from Israel, but she remains undocumented and living in continual risk of deportation. Caregivers in Israel may secure an overseas contract in a country offering good access to rights and protections, but as caregivers revealed in conversations, they expected a higher likelihood of working in Russia, Hong Kong, Saudi Arabia, or Turkey than receiving a visa to work in the US, Australia, or Canada.

Filipino overseas workers need to work in order to maintain their family's economic and social status and to offer children opportunities such as education. Conversely, the world

requires migrant workers to provide cheap labor in unappealing jobs to meet basic social needs. Yet, as nationalist movements continue to exert political pressure on governments and as borders continue to tighten, the question of how migrant workers will fit into these societies continues to require an answer. Claims like the caregivers in my research articulate are not going to evaporate although they may be voiced in different configurations. Even if the caregivers I worked with decided to leave Israel based on their perceptions of degraded health, their concerns and demands will continue to challenge labor-recruiting governments internationally.

Whether or not migrant workers have a stable, legitimized “place” in Israel as more than temporary workers remains a contested issue. Migrant caregivers will almost inevitably depart Israel, despite their attestations of belonging and social integration. The choices they make pertaining to their departure will affect their futures one way or another (as discussed in Chapter Six), but most caregivers will either migrate again to continue earning or return permanently to the Philippines. The relationship that Filipino caregivers forge with Israel through this process remains unclear, and may or may not have bearing on the Philippines’ continued diplomatic relationship with Israel. As Ruel Batista said at the rally for “illegal” migrant children in Tel Aviv, Israel runs the risk of creating a population of Filipinos who hate Israel for their exclusion and forced departures. Whether or not this has political weight in the future remains to be seen.

Epilogue

I left Israel two months after Mark’s deportation, but my departure did not fit into the framework I established in Chapter Six as “reluctant.” I went home without any of the regret and longing that many caregivers I knew felt upon departure and for the months that followed. Yet, I maintained contact with a number of the caregivers and Israelis who participated in my research.

Their stories didn't end at the conclusion of my research, and here I provide a glimpse into where they went after December 2011.

In the end, Mark returned safely to his family in the Philippines; I learned later of the last minute diplomatic interventions that protected him during the flight and until he returned to his family. He hasn't taken another overseas contract, stating that he has "retired" along with his wife. His health continues to suffer, and the fleeting pictures of him that appear on social media show that he has aged rapidly. However, he now has a grandson who he adores as much as his granddaughter. We interact sporadically via social media, particularly when there are weather-related disasters in the Philippines. He still hopes that I'll be able to visit the Philippines, although he periodically will post on FaceBook in transliterated Hebrew as if holding onto a nostalgic past.

Maria and I stay in touch as she continues to work towards her goal of securing legal status in Europe that will allow her to bring her daughter and granddaughter to live with her. She now holds lower status jobs than caregiving, but her pay is much higher and she posts routine pictures of herself traveling around Europe appearing happy and surprisingly carefree. She formed a close community of Filipino OFWs in her new country of employment. She still is very careful with information about where she lives and her status, but there is a hopefulness in her social media participation that is new. However, she routinely posts on FaceBook about missing Israel and her situation of "exile" from The City.

Romeo managed to get a new contract to work in Israel after his employer's death in the nursing home, and seems very happy to be back. Rose's employer, Shoshana, passed away but Rose appears to have secured a new contract, perhaps with the same family, despite her years in Israel exceeding the legal limit for working for a new employer. Her time in Israel appears

uncertain, though. She often posts on FaceBook about her cousin who holds legal residency in an Eastern European country, and other Central and Eastern European countries accepting Filipino caregivers where she has relatives or other social connections.

Alona is still in Israel; she has not yet made her way to join her daughter in California. Arlene, Emilie, Farah and others continue to run the FCO, although Faith faded out of the public involvement with the FCO. Faith pops up periodically on FaceBook or other social media sites, but more and more she distances herself from these virtual communities. There is no indication that she has joined her daughter who is studying in Australia, or that she plans to make that move soon.

Nurit continues to fight for Israel's marginalized populations, occasionally asking me to give advice and guidance to new American or British researchers interested in Israel's foreign workers who have found their way to her. In the US, I continually meet Israelis who coincidentally are good friends with Nurit, reaffirming my understanding that her social network extends globally.

The Filipinos and Israelis I met during fieldwork routinely ask when I plan to return to Israel, knowing that I probably could visit Israel without significant difficulty.¹⁶⁸ At the end of Passover in 2013, one of my Filipino friends, Sammy, who is still working for a family in The City joked over email to me, "Next year in The City, yes Laura? We will all return!" The joke played on the saying at the end of the Passover seders, "Next year in Jerusalem" referencing the

¹⁶⁸ I probably could visit Israel again. It is important to note, however, that I experience a continually increasing degree of security each time I arrive or depart from Ben Gurion airport. As I do not have a Jewish identity and due to having a middle name that is often assumed to be Arabic, I am subjected to a much higher degree of surveillance and suspicion than most Jewish tourists are aware exists. An Israeli friend who works in security mentioned that my presences at multiple immigration raids would probably influence my ability to visit Israel in the future. Yet, my likelihood of gaining admittance into Israel for tourist purposes is much higher than many of the careworkers I met who have since returned to the Philippines.

nostalgic desire for Jewish people to celebrate Passover in Israel. I heard many humorous variants of this saying while I was in Israel from Jewish friends – next year in New York, next year in the Caribbean, next year in Eilat (an Israeli city on the Gulf of Aqaba where many Jewish Israeli families go on vacation to hotels that cater to Passover needs).

Sammy used humor to express a desire to not only see me but many of our mutual acquaintances who departed Israel, and for all of us to be in the place where we met and formed relationships. In a way, he suggested that we all return to the “beginning” in order to re-experience the social context that has since been reorganized and redefined with various departures. But, he also spoke ironically, noting the implausibility of many of the caregivers who formed my research community ever returning to Israel, even as tourists (or perhaps especially as tourists, as the tourist visa is one of the many routes to entering Israel and then overstaying the visa to work illegally).

It is safe to assume that very few Jewish people outside of Israel who end a seder by saying, “Next year in Jerusalem” actually intend to buy plane tickets and celebrate the next Passover in Israel. Nor do I believe that floods of Israelis celebrating Passover outside of Jerusalem (such as in Tel Aviv or Safed) intend to participate in a seder in Jerusalem in the next year if only it can be arranged (which it probably could for many). Implied by this saying is a sense of a larger, global community with a central place that holds particular meaning for forming personal and group identity. It reorients the personal, local ritual towards a holy place, creating binds to the locality of the practitioners (their own family or local Jewish community) as well as to the “homeland” which is distanced from the local. History is called upon to confer meaning, and a sense of time is produced to connect Biblical events to modern day Jewish life.

To assert that The City is a holy location for caregivers ventures into complex territory. However, The City for many of the caregivers who participated in my research represents a new home that they sought and a new life that they imagined for themselves. Their inability to actualize these hopes appeared to cause their “health,” as they termed it, to diminish.

When Sammy suggested “next year in The City” he referenced the connections a dispersed group of people have to a place that many in this social group cannot easily access, pointing to a connection between people across the globe who all share a set of experiences in a particular city in Israel. The City becomes a site of memory and a place to which return is uncertain. It becomes an orienting location to a set of practices, beliefs, community connections, and notions of identity for the people implicated in this group. Sammy asserted that a place connects all of us, and that the symbolic idea of return holds all of us together as the global flows of people continue to rearrange this community over vast distances.

I laughed and joked about my “*aliyah*” although neither of us took my joking seriously. I took notice then of a pattern that developed over the months since the end of my fieldwork: my research participants didn’t ask if I would plan a trip to the Philippines during their visits at home, or meet them in a European country when they traveled (they all know that I have relatives in Europe). They only asked when I would come to be with them in Israel. The question continues to be asked again and again as I stay in touch with my research community, the question that has both a literal answer and a larger symbolic resonance:

“Laura, when will you visit Israel? Come soon, my *ima* is sick again ...”

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