Caring for the Future in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Saudi and Filipino Women Making Homes in a World of Movement[1]

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Introduction

This chapter explores the ways in which the care of the elderly in home settings in Saudi Arabia involves ongoing reformulations of home and family, as well as the increasing negotiation of forms of intimate labor between citizens and migrant women in that country. Specifically, we draw together two bodies of recent research: Elyas's (2011) study of the care of the elderly in Saudi Arabia and Johnson's (2010) and his late colleague Alicia Pingol's (2010) study of migrant Filipino Muslims living and working in that country.1 We show how encounters between Saudi and Filipino women in this caregiving situation are concurrently shaped by a number of processes: kinship, gender and generational dynamics in Saudi Arabia and the Philippines, Saudi and Filipino women's mobilities and their changing relational positions across the life course, the different legal and economic status that each woman occupies, and the invocation of Islam in Saudi and Filipino women's talk about and negotiations of intimate labor within the home.

Care creates kinship (Borneman, 1997). The ethical bonds of mutual care are not a natural or exclusive property of familial relations but rather may be found in relations between all sorts of people who are not deemed kin conventionally: understood in this way, family are the people we care for. This insight has been extremely productive in opening up our understanding of the possibilities and limitations of care when conceived heteronormatively in terms of putative "blood" or marital "affinity" (e.g., Roseneil and Budgeon, 2004) thereby further extending feminist critiques concerning the way that care and caregiving have been gendered historically (Hochschild, 1995; Ungerson, 2000). However, it leaves open the question of whether or not and how and under what conditions an ethics of care can create kinship for people involved in paid relationships of caregiving and the circumstances in which an ethics of care may be practiced without entailing as its corollary a sense of affiliation (Constable, 2009). Studies of paid relations of caregiving generally demonstrate that while the use of kin terms provides a useful language for describing the affective exchanges between caregiver and recipient, it does not fundamentally alter the relationship between them or obscure the wider processes that structure those relationships (see, for example, Kay, 2013). Migrant caregivers who work and live in the home of the person or people they are paid to care for further experience the ambivalence of this caregiving relationship that may often be characterized by disaffection and social distance, as well as by affective attachment (Manalansan, 2010).

In this chapter, we attend to Moors and de Regt's (2008) invitation to further explore migrant care and domestic workers' relationships in the home with those they are employed by and care for, a subject that we still know little about in the context of the Middle East and particularly in Saudi Arabia. In doing so, we partially bracket both the sending states' production of their citizens as careful and caregiving labor and the receiving states' involvement in the construal of migrant caregivers as members of the family thereby abdicating responsibility for migrant domestic workers as paid employees working in the home (see Rodriguez, 2010; Johnson and Wilcke, forthcoming).

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[1] Book Chapter in B Fermandez and M de Regt, eds. *Migrant Domestic Workers in the Middle East*. Palgrave MacMillan.

Rather, we explore other processes that structure the relationship between, in this case, migrant women who provide paid care, the elderly women they are paid to care for, and the other women, married daughters-in-law involved in and managing the former's intimate labors. Migrant women and men also care for elderly men but this paper focuses primarily on migrant women who care for elderly women.

The first part of the chapter examines the way in which the care of the elderly in Saudi Arabia is central to and discloses the processes of social change and the retraditionalization of home, kinship, and gender norms in the country. The second part of the chapter focuses on migrant women involved in care and domestic work and explores both employers' and employees' ways of talking about their encounters within the home. In the third section, we recount one Filipino woman's account of her experience while caring for an elderly woman in Saudi Arabia, which draws together some of the ways in which differently situated women's lives intersect as they craft and struggle to achieve their aspirations of home and belonging in a world of both spatial and temporal movement. In the conclusion, we return briefly to consider the way in which the Saudi state, in particular, shapes and intervenes in the processes and relations of intimate labor.

Throughout the chapter, we highlight both Saudi and Filipino women's movements and changing statuses across the life course as sisters, daughters, wives, mothers, and grandmothers (Gardner, 2009). At marriage, Saudi women often move away from the parental home and natal locale into a marital home, which is likely to be in close proximity to, if not the actual residence of, their husband's parents, who they are expected to take on caring responsibilities for as the parents grow older. Migrant Filipinas—and it is migrant Filipino women rather than men that we are concerned with here—leave husbands, children, siblings, and parents temporarily to take on paid caring responsibilities for other people, their children, and/or elderly parents. In this way, the Saudi and Filipino women who encounter each other within the home, whether as kin or as employers/employees, not only have experienced different types of movement away from their home but also are positioned as caregivers in the households that they enter, though the conditions of their entry, their investment in those homes, and the basis on which they are able to establish and maintain their position are clearly different. They are also broadly subject to gender regimes that place them in a relationship of dependency and subordination to men.

The title of this chapter, "Caring for the Future in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia," also refers to the fact that for both Saudi and Filipino women, the future is a significant part of the way in which they talk about the care they take on and provide as wives/daughters-in-law and paid caregivers, respectively. In the case of the latter, work abroad as a caregiver, which is often described as a sacrifice in the present, is tied to future aspirations for themselves and their families—parents, siblings, and children especially. In the case of the former, Saudi women's care of elderly parents—and in this case, elderly mothers-in-law in particular—is linked both to aspirations about the making and reproduction of a good and honorable family and in anticipation of their shared position later in life with the older women that they care for and eventually will come to replace in the home.

The parallels we draw in this chapter between Saudi and Filipino women do not diminish the social differences that structure their encounter in Saudi Arabia. Rather, as Lan (2006) has persuasively argued in her ethnography of migrant domestic work in Taiwan, it is both the continuities and the differences between and among women that can help us better understand the dynamics of the

relationships between them. Both Lan and, nearer to the situation described here, de Regt (2009), writing about migrant domestic worker employers in Yemen, disclose that one of the key issues for the latter is to ensure that their employees are close but not too close. This dynamic of both closeness and distance is best understood, we suggest, by accounting precisely for similarities that, notwithstanding the objective social divisions between employer and employee, not only occasion acts of identification and ethical practices of care across the divide but also enable and engender acts of distinction-making between them. In sum, in talking about Saudi and Filipino women making homes in a world of movement (Rapport and Dawson, 1998), we foreground not only their movements to and caregiving practices across different homes and families but also their struggles for belonging across those homes that are frequently articulated in and through claims to religious beliefs and appeals to a divinely inspired ethics of care (Hooks, 2009).

Saudi Women Caring for Each Other across the Generations

We begin with Elyas's (2011) study of seven elderly women and their families in Madinah that composed part of her research on the care of the elderly in Saudi Arabia. Additionally, Elyas investigated the care of twenty elderly women in a state-run care home. Our focus is on the care provided in a family setting: with little state provision historically and virtually no private or third-sector involvement, the family remains the primary locus of care for the overwhelming majority of elderly people in Saudi Arabia. All but one of the women had been widowed. The families were relatively wealthy, and the women's children were in general well educated and in professional occupations. With the exception of one woman, who lived alone apart from her housemaid, all the elderly women in the family settings lived in some form of multigenerational arrangement—either in the same apartment/villa or adjacent in the same building or its grounds. Of these six, four lived with sons- and daughters-in-law; one lived with a temporarily resident son, as well as their divorced daughter and her children, who had returned to the parental home; and one lived in a home adjacent to her married daughter and family. All the participating families employed one or more domestic workers, a common practice in Saudi Arabia (Al-Tuwaijri, 2001) that we discuss in further detail presently.

Processes of sedentarization, urbanization, and more contentiously, "Westernization" have been associated with the decline of the extended family and its replacement by nuclear family households in Saudi Arabia and the wider region. However, as is evidenced by these seven families, the process is variable and complex: household composition and residential location differ not only according to rural and urban boundaries but both historically and contemporaneously according to class, occupation, religious affiliation, and the like (Abu-Lughod, 1988; Duomato, 2000; Doumani, 2003; Eickelman, 2002). In writing about Riyadh, Al-Haddad (2003) contends that although the number of nuclear families has increased, that does not negate the affiliation of nuclear families to their extended families at both the relational and ideological levels.

In analyzing patterns of care among elderly women living in extended family settings in Saudi Arabia, it is necessary to make two distinctions. The first is the distinction between caregiving relatives (son, daughter, and daughter-in-law, especially) and employees (housemaid, nurse). The second is the division of caring roles (Froggat, 1990). Financial matters and, where necessary, provision of a home were generally the contributions of sons (Altorki, 1986; Qureshi and Walker, 1989). All the women in

Elyas's study had at least one son, who either provided accommodation or handled the elderly woman's financial affairs, ensuring that bills were paid and so on.

Day-to-day personal care was managed and provided by female relatives, predominantly daughters-in-law, with the assistance of migrant workers. In keeping with conventions of partrilineality and patrilocality, coupled with increased mobility and the relative infrequency of parallel cousin marriage practices, married daughters often moved away from the parental home. It is thus as "in-marrying" wives and daughters-in-law in particular that they are most likely to take on caring responsibilities for older parents (see, for example, Lan, 2006, for an analogous situation in Taiwan).

In three cases, a son's responsibility for his elderly mother predated his marriage; after marriage, his wife immediately became a cocaregiver. The fact that marriage would potentially necessitate living with and taking on practical caring responsibilities for the son's parents was reportedly accepted by the women. In fact, two of the women had long-term relationships of coresidence and care with their mothers-in-law, one for 11 years and the other for 26 years. Reflecting on the time spent together and the involvement in day-to-day care, one woman said, "Sometimes, when I see her eyes expressing upset, I ask him, 'What's wrong with your mother?' He says, 'Nothing, she's fine.' After 11 years of staying with her, I've come to know her [better] than her son. While he goes to work, I spend most of the time with her, eat and drink with her, so I know her better than [anyone else]."

While the relationship between mother and daughter-in-law has no doubt been important historically (Altorki, 1986), it has perhaps become even more significant as a site of contest and negotiation as a result of broader social transformations. Eickelman (2002) notes the changing status of women in the home as a corollary of the overall trend in the region toward separate housing for nuclear families, even when living in close proximity or in the same building or compound. The strengthening of the conjugal bond means that wives become more dependent on their husbands in nuclear households but, at the same time, acquire higher status, a greater role in decision making, and more involvement in their husbands' activities.

The contradictory effects of these changes to women's status in the home reflect and are in turn shaped by broader social processes. Silvey (2004, pp. 254–256) contends, for example, that the Saudi state has simultaneously encouraged women's inclusion in higher education and "differential participation" in the work force while, at the same time, reinforcing gender normative ideologies and traditions that restrict women's physical movement and circumscribe their public roles (Duomato, 2000). Those contradictory processes shape not only women's demand for and relations with migrant domestic workers but also their relationships with their mothers-in-law by having increased status and potentially greater decision-making power over care arrangements but still being subject to the intensification of state-sanctioned discourses that position women as primary caregivers in the home. Both are evident in Elyas's observations.

One older woman, who said she saw less of her elder son than of her second son, reported that her eldest son's wife was apparently not on good terms with her in-laws. Similarly, among the reasons given for entry into institutional care was the reported conflict between a woman and her daughter-in-law. One of the elderly residents in Elyas's study had a son who was reportedly willing to give her a home, but his mother rejected his offer because she did not want to be "controlled" by her son's wife. A member of the staff in the care home told Elyas about another case that had attracted her attention:

Her son came to visit her for the first time in seven years…He had [been] married and came to introduce his wife to her. After two months, he came to get her out [of the care home] to stay with him in his house…He brought her back [at her own request] after only two days because she was worried and refused to stay in his house. I asked [her], "Why did [you not] stay in your son's house?" [She] replied, "My son's wife was scared of me. She put the food in front of me without speaking and went away, then my son took [the plate] back to the kitchen. She put me in a separate room when she received her friends. When her family visited her, she left me sitting with dates and coffee, away from them!"

It is significant that in this situation, recounted to Elyas secondhand, the son reportedly visited his mother once in seven years and then only after being married, at which point he considered the possibility that she should live with him in their home. His wife was not entirely amenable to this but in this case, she was only able to contest the care arrangement indirectly. The perceived breakdown in the relationship between herself and her mother-in-law and the violation of bonds of affiliation was deemed, by the mother-in-law, to be the daughter-in-law's fault rather than her son's fault.

The previous accounts disclose the contradictory demands made on women. They also highlight elderly women's changing position during their lifetime and their attempts to assert agency in the face of their altered status in relationships with others, daughters-in-law included. While the role of wife might be ended abruptly by widowhood, the role of mother remained—but in altered form. Children grow up and move away, and mothers may be brought into shared households with their son's wives (or vice versa), and gradually, caregivers become the cared for, with the mother's right to impose parental authority restrained by the reality of her dependence on her son and daughter-in-law (Altorki, 1986). While in some cases older and/or widowed women might still provide care for their offspring directly, their role as caregivers is more often facilitated through relationships with daughters-in-law and grandchildren. One of the women in Elyas's study, for example, had volunteered to care for her grandchildren in order to enable her daughter-in-law to work.

Elderly women were likely to perceive themselves—and to wish to be respected—as the teachers and advisors of less-experienced younger women. Dutiful daughters-in-law would comment appreciatively on an older woman's patience and understanding in teaching them recipes and helping them with chores they found difficult or distasteful. At the same time, comments by some elderly women showed that they expected and appreciated traditional virtues in their daughters-in-law, including a degree of deference toward themselves. In asserting these values, the women reconfirmed their own identity as "good wives" who knew how things should be done and maintained a measure of authority in the household.

Perceived favoritism on the part of the elderly woman, or unequal divisions of care, could cause jealousies and resentments—not necessarily toward the elderly woman herself, but among other family members, especially between daughters and daughters-in-law. In one case, a daughter-in-law described to Elyas a daughter's jealous outburst over the fact that the latter's mother had spent her final days living with and being cared for by the former. In another case, a woman, who as daughter-in-law was the regular "live-in" caregiver for her husband's elderly mother, disclosed to Elyas her jealousy and resentment of the woman's married daughter, who lived some distance away: "I used to feel [that] she [her mother-in-law] treated me like a daughter, but she soon changed…when her

real daughter came to visit her…although I [have dealt] with her throughout her life…[when her real daughter came to visit] I told myself, 'I'm not her real daughter.'"

In general, the care relation between mothers and daughters-in-law creates tension and conflict but also bonds of affection that are in part born out of the recognition of the shared positions that they have passed through or will come to occupy in the process of claiming status and belonging in homes and among people that they must make their own. On the one hand, daughters-in-law recounted especially the forbearance shown to them as new brides and the encouragement they received as new entrants into a family household. One woman tearfully recalled how she had benefitted from the comfort and wisdom of her "big-hearted and broad-minded" mother-in-law, who had died one month earlier. On the other hand, women talked openly about futures in which, as one woman put it, "in the days to come, I will be in her position" and more proverbially in the sense that, as other women put it, "you reap what you sow" or "do as you would be done by." As another elderly woman's daughter-in-law put it, "I have a duty to look after her, she is a trust…Then, if I have sons, if I treat her badly, my daughters-in-law will treat me worse later."

To a great extent, the giving of care was an expression of love and of gratitude for the care previously given by the parent or the parent-in-law. In some cases, this went beyond the apparent and tangible reciprocity of help with childcare and housework to a more intangible sense that an elderly woman's presence was in some way responsible for the general good fortune of the family and that in caring for her, one was caring for not just a future self but also the future of one's home: "God sent us an open-ended blessing on our home, like giving us healthy children, plenty of food, and my husband's success in expanding his business…because of the blessing of an old woman inside our house who…is continuously praying, supplicating for us, there's light in our home."

Migrant Care Workers in Saudi Arabia

The increasing reliance on migrant workers to stand in for and supplement family care for older people, especially women, is by no means unique to Saudi Arabia. However, people who provide paid care for the elderly are generally recruited, employed, and sponsored as domestic workers rather than as caregivers. In practice, women who are recruited as domestic workers may, simultaneously or sequentially, be expected to undertake any number of different jobs in the home, ranging from cooking and cleaning to caring for children and older people. One consequence of this is that it is impossible to determine precisely how many migrants in Saudi Arabia are involved directly or indirectly in providing care for the elderly in home settings.

We should add that migrant men hired as drivers and gardeners may also be involved in this type of care. Elyas recalls precisely such a situation when her mother was taking care of her elderly grandfather. Elyas's grandfather was a trader by profession, so in order to keep him active, Elyas's mother organized a small "shop" in the house. The migrant driver assisted the elderly man and kept a watchful eye over him while Elyas's mother would keep stock and fill the shelves. As his condition deteriorated, both the driver and the housemaid were directly involved in his personal care under the watchful eye of her mother. The relationship Elyas recalls discloses both the ways in which people employed in the home may be drawn gradually into care work and the ways the affective relationships between caregivers and the people and families that they provide care for develop over time. We further discuss some of the dynamics of this relationship presently by drawing both on Elyas's interviews and encounters with older people and migrant domestic workers in home

settings, as well as on Johnson and Pingol's broader ethnographic work and encounters with domestic workers in Saudi Arabia and the Philippines.

"Remember before God That She Is a Human Being"

As indicated previously, all the households in Elyas's study employed at least one and, in some cases, two or three housemaids, while two of the families employed qualified nurses to meet the needs of elderly women for more specialized medical monitoring and care. One of the women worked as a freelancer, having absconded from her previous employer. The women employed in these households were all either Indonesian or Filipina. From what Elyas was able to observe during visits to the elderly women's homes and based on what was reported to her by five migrant domestic workers, as well as one migrant nurse that she interviewed and talked to more informally, the families who participated in her study appeared to be both good and generous employers.

Five of the six migrant women working in these homes were married. Two women were accompanied by their husbands, who were employed as drivers, as well as their children, who lived with them. Others had relatives working in the same household or nearby, and visits between members of the employing families provided opportunities for their employees to socialize, too. In one case, a couple had actually met while in service together and had asked their employer for permission to marry. In this case, asking the employer for permission to marry was an acknowledgment by the migrant woman that her employer had become a surrogate family in the absence of her own parents, who died before she had migrated. Though unacknowledged, it also confirms the position conferred by the state on employers, men in particular, as guardians with authority over and responsibility for the dependents in their household, including wives, children, and migrant domestic workers. The worker told Elyas, "When I wanted to marry our Filipino driver, I told [my employers]. Then the father and mother of this family, who [act] as my parents, arranged our marriage, then they celebrated with a party…a grand wedding, and everyone brought me a special gift. I couldn't believe that it [had happened to me]."

As Johnson (2010) and Pingol (2010) also found for Filipino migrant women in Saudi Arabia, being accompanied by husbands and, where possible, children not only enhances one's status in the eyes of employers and among fellow migrants but also practically facilitates movement in public outside the home/workplace. As for Saudi women, this level of mobility can be extremely difficult to obtain without an accompanying male relative. That does not, of course, mean that an accompanying husband is unequivocally positive for all migrant women. One of the migrant women in Elyas's study, whose employer sponsored her husband to join her in Saudi Arabia to work in their home at her request, disclosed that she had found her husband troublesome; she eventually divorced him, and he subsequently returned home.

While the migrant women Elyas met in her study seemed to have generally experienced good working conditions, the self-confessed "escapee" from another household that worked for one family is a reminder that other workers experience low wages and poor working conditions. As far as migrants are concerned and as they readily acknowledge, attaining a position with a good employer—who pays decent wages on time, limits the number of hours worked daily, provides regular days off, enables and facilitates contact with family at home, and generally treats their employees with respect—is a matter of luck rather than a legally enforced expectation (Johnson and Wilcke, forthcoming; Silvey, 2004; Fernandez and De Regt, Chapter 1, in this book). For the majority

of migrant women in domestic work, even those with relatively good employers, undertaking paid employment as a foreign resident in someone else's home is a relationship that is filled with ambivalence and contradictions.

We noted previously that the elderly women in Elyas's study had to frequently negotiate changing relationships and statuses across their life course. One role asserted by these women that also shifted over the life course was as employer and/or household manager, guiding and directing housemaids in their work. Older women appeared to enjoy being seen to make decisions and commanding obedience, if only in something small such as the clearing of a tray. At the same time, the elderly participants in Elyas's study had grown up and married in the days before the employment of domestic labor became commonplace. They were used to looking after themselves and others and, to the extent that it was possible, wanted to remain active and useful. It was a point of honor for them not to leave all the work to the housemaid. By sharing some responsibilities—"I wash, and she irons," one woman stated—they retained a part of their former identity.

Older women were as likely to refer to their migrant domestic care workers as "companions" as much as "housemaids," and they frequently expressed affection for them. One older woman who lived alone with her housemaid—an Indonesian woman who had worked for the family for 23 years—said of the latter, "She is my daughter, very dear to me" and went on to speak of her absolute trust in the woman concerned, "[I trust her] with my whole house when I travel." Another woman had cared for her driver's wife, who was also a domestic worker in the home, during her pregnancies and had nursed his daughter when the latter had asthma. The values underlying this care were articulated by her as follows: "Good dealing is the key [to] life. This includes the housemaid; you have to respect them and don't [look down on her]—remember [that] before God…she is a human being."

Caregivers also expressed considerable affection for the elderly women in their care. These feelings were clear in their responses concerning their appreciation for the kindness and consideration shown to them on the part of their employers. As one Filipina explained, "I love my job because they are kind and pleasant to me. She [the old lady] speaks to me softly and nicely, which makes me love them and be kind to them." Interviewees commonly referred to their employers in terms such as "our mother" or "Mama," and while this may to some extent be a conventional form of reference to acknowledge the older woman's status in the household, it also appeared in some cases to reflect a sense of identification with the employing family, where the older woman being cared for reminded the caregiver of her own parents left behind; in this way, employers became partial surrogates for the women who take care of them. One of the Filipino caregivers employed as a nurse told Elyas, "Sometimes I wish I could take care of my mother like I do for 'Mama,' and sometimes I cry about it when I talk to my [own] mother, and [I tell her] 'I'm very sorry, mother.'"

The use of familial terms of reference and descriptions of migrant domestic workers as being "part of the family" is widely reported in the broader literature and has also been widely critiqued (Moors, 2003). On an everyday level, Ayalon (2009) describes how Israeli families who employ Filipino home care workers while at one level, treating the migrant as "part of the family," nevertheless simultaneously maintain a certain distance that preserves the status and independence of the care recipient. Thus few migrant workers, she found, develop truly intimate relationships with their employers. Liebelt's (2011) ethnography of Filipina care workers in Israel further complicates routine

claims about care workers being “one of the family” in disclosing how migrant employees reported that bonds of affection did not conceal the power that employers wielded and may in fact pose dangers for them when drawn into or becoming a source of conflict among family members who may be jealous or resentful of a paid caregiver usurping their own position. Moreover, “The warning that one should retain a ‘professional emotional distance’ from employers and their families, which was propagated by many long-term carers, often stemmed from severe disappointments and emotional injuries” (Liebelt, 2011, p. 87).

The social distance between employers and employees reported elsewhere was likewise observed by Elyas in both home and institutional settings and was also reported by Filipino domestic workers to Johnson and Pingol. Boundaries were created and maintained in implicit and explicit, as well as gentle and extreme ways, which reinforced and sometimes challenged the social divisions and hierarchies between employer and employee. One example of the way social distance is reinforced is during Eid celebrations. Eid celebrations following Ramadan distill many of the ambivalences women face as paid domestic workers/caregivers in the home and reveal the parallel but divergent positions occupied by them, as well as the set of demands faced by Saudi and Filipino women that draw them together but also divide them as employers and employees in the home. Eid al-Fitr is not only an important religious occasion but also a key event during which to “display”—that is, not simply to do the things that make families but to be seen doing the things that families are meant to do, i.e publically performing the often stereotyped ideals of affection and solidarity (Finch, 2007; Dermott and Seymour, 2011). In the Saudi context especially, this entails, in Faubion and Hamilton’s terms (2007), performing sumptuary kinship—that is, consumption events that display the material success and solidarity, attributed to divine blessing and providence, of extended families across the generations. These ritual occasions place enormous demands on women as wives, mothers, and daughters-in-law who are responsible for organizing and orchestrating these events, with the behind-the-scenes preparations carried out largely by domestic workers. The migrant workers that Johnson and Pingol spoke to routinely stated that their employers’ demands were the greatest at this time of the year, and they all reported being called upon frequently to work long hours for days at a stretch without a break; migrant advocacy groups report that there is a noticeable increase in the number of absconding domestic workers during Ramadan. Muslim domestic/care workers, however, report that they are more likely to take on the extra work during festivities without complaint both because it confirms their devotion as Muslims and because of their own nostalgic longing for celebrations in their home place among family and friend.

Gatherings and social visitations between Saudi families and friends during religious festivities also provide occasions for domestic workers to leave their employer’s home and enjoy conviviality among other domestic workers who may be coethnics, if not kin, in the homes of their employer’s relations. However, just as Saudi employers’ celebrations are divided spatially in the home by gender—men in one room and women in another—and/or for the host in particular, shuttling back and forth from the kitchen to oversee preparations, so too are employees’ celebrations divided by unwritten and largely unspoken but nonetheless observed boundaries that separated employers and employees in the home, with the latter’s celebrations confined spatially and temporally subject to the requirements of the former.

The boundaries between employers and employees are further implemented and marked in the custom of Eid gift giving. Employers reportedly gave generous gifts to their employees at Eid, but the giving was deemed an act of benevolence or charity toward a subordinate rather than a mutual exchange of gifts and was not reciprocated. As one elderly woman's housemaid told Elyas, "Oh! No…I am [too] poor [a] woman to give her [gifts]. She doesn't need it; she has everything." Migrant domestic workers did have their own obligations to give gifts to their own family and friends at home in the Philippines: for them, as for their Saudi employers, Eid is an important occasion to "do" and "display" family, though at a distance. If social hierarchies and divisions between employer and employee were effectively reestablished at this important event, it was also—in keeping with the structure of rituals in general—an occasion for subordinates to articulate among each other those "hidden transcripts" of disaffection and resistance through gossip about the people they worked for and criticism of what some deemed the material excesses of their employer's festivities, which they compared to their own more modest but no less spiritually blessed celebrations.

Making Home and the Struggle for Belonging: One Woman's Story

In the final part of this chapter, we recount the story of one woman whom Johnson met in Manila in July 2008. The story draws together a number of the themes we have discussed concerning the spatial and temporal movements that shape women's lives variously across the life course. It demonstrates the way that homes and families are literally and metaphorically constructed and lived through regular and repeated sojourns across the world. It speaks to the possibilities and limitations of the affective relations created in a commoditized caregiving situations and is a testament to individual persistence and fortitude, as well as the way in which women's capacity to act is both enabled and constrained by the demands of and their commitments to family, parents, siblings, and children (see also Mahdavi, Chapter 4, in this book). Finally, it demonstrates the way in which religion and Islam, in particular, provide a language for contesting dispossession and asserting ethical claims to care, as well as establishing a sense of belonging and recognition—all of which are significant, especially for people in contexts where they have few legal rights and little or no recourse to formal means of redress.

Hadja Miriam is a Filipino Muslim woman from Basilan in the Southern Philippines. Hadja Miriam and her husband now live in Manila, following her return from several sojourns abroad as a care worker and domestic helper, first in Saudi Arabia and later Qatar, from the mid-1980s to the late 1990s. After an initial three-year period working as caregiver for an elderly woman in Dammam (discussed presently), Hadja Miriam returned to the Philippines to pursue a nursing degree. She subsequently gave this up to look after her own children as well as those of her sister when the latter departed to work in Saudi Arabia as a nurse. Her sister's training as a nurse had been partially paid for by Hadja Miriam's previous work in Dammam. A couple years later, with Hadja Miriam's daughter now in school, she initially returned to Riyadh but absconded from her employer after four months because he had withheld her wages. She then found employment as a domestic worker in a large household in Qatar, where she stayed until her return to the Philippines in 1997. Hadja Miriam conveys a sense of pride in her achievements as a former migrant worker as well as a sense of regret that she was unable to fulfill her ambition to complete her own nursing studies. Hadja Miriam's ambitions were only realized vicariously through her younger sister the nurse and, more recently, through Hadja Miriam's daughter who works as a medical technician in Asir.

Hadja Miriam's first job at the age of 23 was as a care worker for an elderly woman, the widowed mother of a wealthy businessman in Dammam. While her primary responsibility was to provide care for the older woman, she also undertook other work in the home. As she put it, "Kasi [because] you are there to work, you have to [do what you are told], whatever your employers ask." Hadja Miriam traveled with the family to the United States and Europe where they stayed in grand hotels and homes. Though she recalls those travels with nostalgia, her life and work were not without incident, as she disclosed when asked her about her relationship with the woman she cared for:

At first she hated me so much. For one month, two months, she didn't like me. She said I was just a converted Muslim, not a real Muslim. She didn't even want me to touch her clothes. "You are dirty, I don't want you." But I just prayed, "Lord please…Ya Allah! Ya Allah!" Then every time I finished my work, I would sit down on the sofa beside the family. I read my Qur'an. I cried and said, "I want to go back to the Philippines." I asked them, "Why are you like this? Why is your grandparent like this? I came to Saudi…I am a poor Filipino; I wanted to work for you because…you are the…model of Islam. You are Arab people. The Qur'an came down here in Saudi Arabia, and you know the law of Allah very well. So why do you treat your helper like this?" They just laughed at me and said, "You are not a Muslim."

One day, I read Suratul Waqi'ah when the old woman passed, she had woken up, around ten o'clock. I remember, I read that word. She asked me, "What did you say?" I said, "Mama"—By then I had already learned a little Arabic—"Mama, it's a word from…" "The Qur'an?" she asked. I said, "Yes! I am reading from the Qur'an." She didn't speak English, she only spoke Arabic. I said, "Yes! I am a real Muslim. I am not a fake Muslim, I am not a converted Muslim, I am a Muslim. My great, great grandparents were Muslim. I am a Muslim!

She hugged me tightly and said, "You are a Muslim. You are a very good woman, you can read the Qur'an, unlike me, I cannot read the Qur'an." She kissed me, and then she cried. She said, "You are my daughter." Then she invited all her friends, older women to come to a party. She bought me a dress to dress up in. Then when the party started, she called for me to come and meet her friends. She told everybody that I was her second daughter. "She is a Muslim, she is a good Muslim, she can read the Qur'an," she said. From then on, she would not let me sleep in my own room. She wanted me to sleep in the bed beside her, but because I was only a helper, I was not comfortable sleeping in her bed. Instead, once she was asleep, little by little, I would slip down to sleep on the floor. It was not very comfortable. In the morning, she threw money around the room. I gathered all the money together and put it in one place, and when I left the room, I said, "Mama, your money is there." That's my experience [laughs gently].

There are a number of points that can be drawn from Hadja Miriam's moving account of her early experiences. The first is that for migrant Muslim Filipinos like Hadja Miriam, the denial of their faith is felt and experienced as a fundamental challenge and violation of their personhood. The humiliation and righteous indignation occasioned by this denial serves as both a catalyst for and a means of expressing social agency in these diasporic situations where they might otherwise simply comply with and bear the everyday humiliations of subordination.

The second point relates to Hadja Miriam's strategic use of space within the home. The account she gives of her actions and her claims to recognition are not, in Scott's (1990) terms, "hidden transcripts," though that is a regular feature of migrant domestic workers' everyday acts of

resistance (Constable, 2007): rather, her actions and claims are direct and unmistakable. She sits on the sofa beside her employers, cries openly, and expresses her desire to return to the Philippines—that is, a thinly veiled threat to leave the family and walk away from her place of employment. As a guest and a stranger from another country ("I came to Saudi, I am a poor Filipino"), she suggests that there is a not unreasonable expectation that they might treat her accordingly—that is, with both the Arab cultural norms of hospitality and the ethical demands of Islam. In effect, she returns their challenge by indirectly asking them to demonstrate that they are actually genuine Muslims. Though she is at first rebuffed, her repeated recitations from the Qur'an forces recognition: these verses relocate the intimate space of the home within the sacred space of revelation and resituates their encounters and the glaring inequalities of power within a moral universe where Hadja Miriam, no less than others, is entitled to be treated in accordance with Allah's will.

Hadja Miriam clearly enjoyed recounting how the elderly woman finally conceded defeat and publically endorsed Miriam's claims to be a Muslim, in the process, admitting that she herself was unable to read from the Qur'an. Miriam was also moved by the elderly woman's claim to adopt her as a second daughter. Miriam explained that the elderly woman had a son, with whom she lived, and a married daughter who had moved some distance away to her husband's home in Qassim. The older woman missed her daughter very much. Her literal and metaphorical embrace of Miriam, who at the time had been a young woman, the gifts of clothing, as well as the invitation to share her bed/room might reasonably be interpreted as evidence of a nostalgic desire to reenact and again experience some sort of close affective, if not maternal, bond. Miriam's acknowledged discomfort at sleeping in the same bed and her caution about the money suggests more ambivalent effects. For Miriam, the older woman's embrace was significant because it was finally an acknowledgment of Miriam's presence. However, she also subsequently recalled how she traveled with the woman to live in a palace in Paris and the shared pleasures of long summer days spent walking in the gardens together. The older woman, she disclosed, also sheltered her to some extent from the demands of the rest of the household and from her son's first wife in particular; reading between the lines, we might surmise some strained, if not antagonistic, relationship between the older woman and her son's first wife, played out over control of Miriam's labor in the home.

Though the practical protection and delimitation of Miriam's work had no doubt been significant, this was no fairy-tale ending. Becoming an adopted daughter refigured but did not completely transform her situation: she was still, as she contended, an employee. Miriam cared for the woman for a period of three years. She said she left because her employer, the woman's son, reneged on a promise to give her leave to make the pilgrimage to Mecca. Miriam, like the woman she cared for, was in law, as in practice, subordinate to the authority of the woman's son. Miriam recounted how for many years after her departure, the woman still sent gifts to her at Eid. However, she did not regret leaving. Some years later, her employer in Qatar helped her make the hajj and visit her sister who had, in the meantime, begun working as a nurse in Mecca. She returned for good to the Philippines following the death of her mother shortly thereafter.

Conclusion: Divided Futures and the State

In this chapter, we have examined some of the dynamics of caregiving relationships between Saudi and Filipino women in the home, focusing on a particular group of Saudi and Filipino women caregivers. It should be noted that there are others who do not conform to the sort of

heteronormative vision conventionally expected and presented here. Our aim in disclosing the continuities and divisions that separate these Saudi and Filipino women's gendered positioning in caring relations is to account more fully for both connection and care, as well as for boundary marking and distinction-making practices that reinforce and extend hierarchies of nationality, race, and class.

In keeping with the global care chain literature (Hochschild, 2000; Parreñas, 2008; Yeates, 2009), though inflected in socially specific ways, both Saudi and Filipino women share gender normative expectations about women's caregiving roles and, for different reasons, with different resources and different affects, leave one set of familial attachments and responsibilities in order to take on another. Saudi women leave natal families to take on caring responsibilities in their husband's extended family as mothers for their children and as daughters-in-law for elderly parents—work that they in some cases do in addition to paid employment outside of the home. Filipino women leave families in the Philippines —parents and siblings, as well as husbands and children— in order to take on paid care work in another's home in Saudi Arabia.While distanced socially and spatially, especially in the case of Filipinas, neither set of women permanently leave their natal families. Both retain ongoing ties, obligations, and caregiving responsibilities of one sort or another even at a distance; recent work on transnational motherhood among Filipinos has considerably complicated some of the original assumptions in the care chain literature about the impact of separation on migrants' "left-behind" families and has disclosed the rich and varied ways that migrant women do and display family, enabled partly by new forms of media (McKay, 2007; Madianou and Miller, 2012). The latter includes not only monetary and other material remittances but also regular and often daily involvement in children's, partner's, and parent's lives via cell phones and, where accessible, interactions via the Internet.

The crucial difference between Saudi and Filipino women is the spatial and temporal disjuncture between the pasts and the futures that each are invested in and caring for. Migrant domestic/care workers enable Saudi women—as wives, mothers, daughters and daughters-in-law, in particular—to take up their position and care for their own and others' futures in the home, a place that is meant and intended ideally for them and that they can make their own. As we have suggested, while the ambivalence between daughters-in-law and mothers-in-law in this situation is evident, it is precisely the recognition of both their shared pasts and their future positions that creates the conditions for mutuality of care, even if it is not always forthcoming or realized in practice.

Migrant domestic care workers may also partially experience these forms of recognition in employer's homes, though this appears to be more often the case from older women they care for rather than from women who are more proximate to them generationally—that is, older mothers/mothers-in-law/grandmothers rather than Saudi women employers who are wives, daughters, and daughters-in-law. There is some evidence that domestic care workers may identify with older women as a kind of surrogate parent, while older women, as seen for example in a number of the cases described here, may nostalgically embrace their caregivers as surrogate daughters in the physical absence of their own. As we have indicated here and as others have observed, those bonds are always contingent and do not obscure the broader conditions of work under caregivers' labor or under the broader social divisions and prejudices of race and class that in Miriam's case (detailed previously) were only ever partially overcome by recognition, which had been compelled by the force of her convictions, of her shared faith and sense of entitlement to

belonging. Crucially, however, the relations between Saudi and Filipino women are not future oriented; the caregiver-cum-surrogate daughter is never intended to occupy the position of the woman cared for, precisely because her future as a wife, mother, and daughter-in-law is deemed to lie—and indeed, from the perspective of both the citizen women and the state especially, must always lie—elsewhere.

As others have observed (Silvey, 2004), the state has facilitated the entry of domestic/care workers and ensured conditions of employment that are overwhelmingly weighted in favor of employers and against the interests of employees in ways that ensure the ongoing retraditionalization of kinship, family, and gender by means of paid reproductive and affective care. Elsewhere, the gendered consequences of the privatization of care for women in particular have been attributed to the rise of neoliberalism and the rollback of the welfare state (Ungerson, 2000; Misra, Woodring, and Merz, 2006). In Saudi Arabia, where state responsibility for the care of the elderly has only recently been added to the agenda, government discourse that seeks to "strengthen the role of the family in care of the elderly" is less about outsourcing the care of its aging population than, as the Riyadh Declaration (Health Ministers' Council, 2009) puts it, the need to "stir up the family coherence" in the face of perceived threats to the family from globalization, the Internet, and new economic systems.

Likewise, the temporal and spatial disjuncture between Saudi and Filipino caregivers' futures is a specific outcome of state policy. On the one hand, the separations that most migrant caregivers experience from family, husbands, and children in particular (Anderson, 2000; Bakan and Stasiulis, 1997) is the product of migration policies that are class differentiated. On the other hand, relations between employers and employees—even when relatively long term, close, and characterized by an ethics and mutuality of care that may be taken as a condition and hallmark of kinship (Borneman, 1997)—are divided by the temporal delimitation on migrant workers in general in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. To date, no official age limitation has been placed on migration, and migrants can theoretically work for as long as a Saudi sponsor is willing to employ them and sponsor their employee's stay in the country. However, only 1% of non-nationals are aged 65 and over (Gulf Labour Markets and Migration 2013). In a situation where citizenship and, to a large extent, permanent residency continue to remain tied to blood (jus sanguinis) and marriage, migrant caregivers are likely to remain foreign residents, never immigrants, just as they must remain forever fictive daughters, never daughters-in-law, who, through choice and compulsion, look toward a future of growing old and receiving care back in the Philippines in the only place that they are able to call home.

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Chapter 7

1 Elyas’s doctoral investigations are described further presently. Johnson’s and Pingol’s research was part of a larger project titled, “In the Footsteps of Jesus and the Prophet: Sociality, Caring and the Religious Imagination in the Filipino Diaspora” (Johnson and Werbner, 2010). The project was funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, United Kingdom, within the framework of the Diaspora, Migration and Identities Research Programme (grant ref. AH/E508790/1/APPID:123592). As part of the broader research project with migrant Filipinos from all walks of life, Johnson and Pingol met with and talked to more than eighty people in Saudi Arabia and the Philippines who were currently or previously employed as domestic laborers or related professions in private homes in Saudi Arabia.