



***Mothering Fathers!***  
**Fathers' "Care" Identity in Mother Absent  
Filipino Transnational Families**

A Research Paper presented by:

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## List of Acronyms

|           |   |
|-----------|---|
| AMMA      | Amang Magaling Mag-aruga ng Anak  |
| CIAC      | Clark International Airport Corporation   |
| ECMI-CBCP | Episcopal Commission for Pastoral Care for Migrant and Itinerant People-<br>Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines |
| GCC       | Global Care Chain   |
| HIV/AIDS  | Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome   |
| NCR       | National Capital Region   |
| OFW       | Overseas Filipino Worker  |
| POEA      | Philippine Overseas Employment Agency   |
| PSA       | Philippine Statistical Authority  |
| PTA       | Parent-Teachers Association   |
| QC        | Quezon City   |
| STD       | Sexually Transmitted Diseases   |
| TESDA     | Technical Education and Skills Development Authority  |

## **Abstract**

This research looks into the implications of the feminization of international labor migration from the perspective of the gaps, crisis, and erosion it creates within the global care chain in the Philippines. It seeks to understand how carers left behind particularly the males define this new “care” or reproductive role amidst the expected conventions of what men and women actually do within the family. In defining this new care role an understanding of whether this has an effect on the father carers’ masculinity is also explored. It was found that the conventions of care that was being done by the fathers left behind is parallel to what is expected to be provided for the maintenance of the home and in raising children. In terms of effect on their masculinity, unlike previous studies that concluded that men re-define their masculinity, it seems from the respondents covered masculinity is redefined as a widening or broadening of their conception of what is masculine opening and connecting it to the “good provider” role that is also expected from them.

## **Relevance to Development Studies**

The social costs of international labor migration have been studied in different angles over the years, its effect on the migrant, the source’s community and families left behind. This paper adds to the literature on the families left behind but focusing on the care capabilities of the fathers left by mothers and the possible impact of this new care work on their masculinity. On a development perspective, ensuring that fathers are actually able to function as main carers is important in ensuring that children continue to thrive and become better citizens in the country. If they are incapable identifying the right support mechanisms should also be identified.

## **Keywords**

Feminization of Labor Migration, Global Care Chain, Care, Masculinity



# **1. Care Erosion? “Real” Effects of having Labor Migrant Mothers in Filipino Families: An Introduction**

## **1.1 Background, Relevance and Justification of the Research**

The influx of Filipino women entering the international labor market began in the 1980s with various “push and pull factors”. The main “pull” factor was the demand for women laborers in both the service and health sectors. When the infrastructure projects in the Middle East, where most Filipinos were, began declining during that period demand for other types of laborers particularly those of the service sector increased, like domestic work that called for women workers. (Battistella and Asis 2013: 35) The entry of Filipina workers did not stop in the Gulf region as East Asian countries, such as Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, etc. began industrializing during the decade. Labor shortages in their economic sectors pushed their local women to participate in their work forces opening more demand for foreign women domestic workers. (Battistella and Asis 2013: 35) By the 1990s, other countries like Malaysia and Thailand have also opened their labor market but shifted needs from domestic services to skilled and highly skilled labor like health professionals. (Battistella and Asis 2013: 36) Although the “pull” factors are stronger some “push” factors also exist. It was revealed that Filipina labor migrants in Singapore move because of economic needs especially to those who have been abandoned voluntarily (walked out) and involuntarily (through death) by husbands for married women. (Arnado 2013: 99) A radical narrative on why married women pursue employment abroad was to actually leave their husbands behind prompted by unhappy marriages brought on by loss of love or domestic violence. (Arnado 2013: 100)

This “feminization” of foreign labor migration proved to have lasting impact even though trends for Filipina labor migration have decreased the past decade with sex ratio of 1:1 last year. (PSA 2013) Highlighting data on the domestic sector, even with the decline of Filipinas abroad they still compose the majority of migrants where-in 34% of foreign new hires were still in the sector in 2012 (POEA 2013). The past and continued trends has created what is called the “global care chain” where “series of personal links between people across the globe interact based on the paid or unpaid work of caring.” (Yeates 2012: 370)

The chain is said to have more impact on married women both in destination and sending countries. Zooming in destination ones like the Philippines, one can see that from census data, women who go out of the country to work were mostly married from 44% in 1990 to 49% in 2007. (Cortes 2011: 22) Although it can be falsely generalized that most of these women are mothers, their migration proves to have created the chain that caused particular adjustments particularly in their family dynamics. Then a “gap or erosion of care” is created. Direct impact of this “care erosion” or “care crisis” in sending countries has been family breakdown (Orozco 2009: 6) including the deterioration on the development of these migrant mothers’ children. This is due to mothers, who are seen and perceived as the traditional “care-givers” at home are gone and families left behind try to fill these reproductive duties that maintain families. (Asis 2008: 91) Proof that care erosion or gap exists were highlighted in investigating the “social costs of migration.” These social costs emphasized effects on children’s education, and health and well-being.

In comparing children of migrants from non-migrants, there were findings that children of migrants performed poorly in school in terms of grades and class ranking compared to those children with non-migrant parents. Narrowing it further comparing those children with absent parents, it was the mother-absent children who performed the least even compared to both parent-absent children. (Battistella and Conaco 1998: 232, Cortes 2011: 18) In terms of health and well-being, it was revealed that younger children suffer loneliness and sadness when mothers are away (Battistella and Conaco 1998: 231) and others have emotional issues because the children longed for their families to be together. (Carandang et al. 2007: 99) In terms of physical health, adolescents who have absent parents were described to have poorer health compared to their peers with both parents living with them. (Smeekens 2010: 29)

These negative impacts seem to be contentious as other researches have provided evidence that although you can’t discount the re-organization of the family, (Orozco 2009: 13) there is not much difference in the academic performance and health stance between children of migrants and non-migrants. It was revealed that children of migrants performed the same or even slightly better in school. (ECMI-CBCP et al. 2004: 41). This seems to suggest the value of the remittances in the family, as they are able to send the children in private schools and be able to participate in extra-curricular activities. (ECMI-CBCP et al.

2004: 41) They were also seen to interact more with their classmates and were more disciplined than other children with non-migrant parents. (Cruz 1987 as cited by Reyes 2008: 4) In terms of attitude, even though younger children were seen to be affected, the adolescents, although feeling the absence of their mothers, have been able to cope by being more independent but not without the help of relatives. (Asis 1995: 340) They also seem to be less anxious and lonely compared to children of non-migrants. (ECMI-CBCP et al. 2004: 50) The misconception that these children whose mothers were away tend to be more troublesome was also invalidated by one study focusing on two children and were observed to be courteous, obedient and shown a high level of cognitive skills. (Parreñas 2005a) The fear that children, who have no parents, particularly mothers, would turn into delinquents also have no basis as there is no empirical evidence. (Asis 2000: 265)

Do these findings undermine the “care erosion” or the social costs of migration affecting the families that were feared to break the Filipino household? Does the prediction of the literature of the chain and its threats invalidated? It was found that Filipino families have different ways to cope for such disruptions. When a mother is abroad, technological innovations allow for them to extend their reproductive duties from wherever they are such as the use of mobile phones (Cabanés and Acedera 2012, Madianou and Miller 2011, Chib et al. 2014) and the internet (Alampay et al. 2013). It can also be that these transnational mothers use external help by hiring a “*yaya*” (nanny) or “*katulong*” (house-helper), usually also female, to do the reproductive role they left behind. (Parreñas 2001b: 370) If a family is not able to afford such help, other family members also step in specifically other female members like grandmothers or aunts. (Asis 2008: 91, ECMI-CBCP et al. 2004: 33) But what if there is no one? What if families can’t afford the paid help and they live far from their extended families? Can the husbands and the fathers of these households be able to fill in?

This paper provides an insight on these families who only have the fathers managing the home whilst their wives are away. The paper contributes to the growing literature on the family lives of these OFWs. It also looks at the predicted care erosion identified in the global care chain literature that happens when mothers leave home. Aside from the effects in the family, “care crisis”, another concept that is in conjunction with care erosion will also be looked at. Care crisis includes the “breakdown of the previous model of providing care on

the nuclear Fordist family model and the classic sexual division of labor” (Orozco 2009: 6). This gender role reversal for fathers and the possibility of acceptance of this new role amidst the perceived traditional expectations of what a father should provide is at the center of this paper. Are care crisis and erosion just assumed because mothers are away, even though specific effects of their departure on children are inconclusive? What if men can provide the care or the type of “mothering” these families need? If so, are the ideals of the dominant masculinity in the creation of these expectations enough to explain the possibility to cope to this new role? Are they able to re-define and negotiate society’s norms of masculinity that can affect doing care work at home and if so, how? If they are able to cope and adjust would it mean that the fear of care erosion and care crisis be a thing of the past?

In terms of policy-making it is important to understand if indeed a care crisis is happening to ensure that the growing number of transnational families and their needs be addressed. Are specific social services needed to answer the crisis? In 2010, there was an attempt by the Philippine Congress to pass House Bill 275 that will establish welfare and social assistance program for left-behind households of OFWs.(Angara 2010) Can this be a solution? What other social policy instruments would be needed to respond to a possible growth in the chain if erosion can be disproved?

## **1.2 Objectives and Research Question**

The objective of this research is to understand and investigate how husbands left behind are able to cope or not cope with the new responsibilities now that their wives work abroad. It also aims to unearth the definitions these men attach to their “new” care role and how it affects their provision of it to their children. The research also seeks to understand if this new care role has direct effect on these men’s masculinity. In the general study of migration the research also aims to provide possible implications this acceptance or non-acceptance of this new male reproductive role to the study of the global care chain (GCC).

With these themes in mind, the following research question will be investigated:

How do husbands of Filipina labor migrants define “care” or caregiving of their children? From this some sub-questions are also formulated:

- a) How do fathers left-behind define their care role for their families and children?
- b) Does this have an effect on their masculinity or on how they perceive themselves in functioning as men within their families?

### **1.3 Scope and Limitations**

This paper will identify the care patterns and definitions of fathers covered in the study. As the ones left behind to be the main carer for the families, they may have varying thoughts and ideas on what and the extent of care that they provide for their families. Since the perception of such care are “reserved” for mothers, the notion of its impact on these fathers masculinity will also be looked into. Has this changed the way they see themselves as men?

Although the research has chosen areas where there is a concentration of OFWs, the scope of the research is only on the three areas that are included. It is also non-generalizable in these specific places as the current number of these husbands of female labor migrants are undocumented thus a representative number is unidentified. The research is also limited only to fathers’ care definitions and will not touch on other social costs of migration like its effects on children’s education, and health and well-being. The research is also limited to the views and ideas of the fathers interviewed on the effects on their own masculinity and although some characterizing factors like local culture will be explored, it may not also be non-generalizable to the locality where they are found. Some others factors will also be used to provide a clearer or bigger picture that includes age of the fathers, employment status and the like.

## 1.4 Organization of the Research Paper

This paper is divided into five chapters and is organized in the following manner: Chapter 1 presents the premise, context and relevance of the research. It also provides the objectives, research questions, scope and limitations and organization of the paper.

Chapter 2 discusses the conceptual framework of the paper. Discussion on definitions of care work, care in conjunction with the global care chain is discussed. Filipino masculinity along with traditional Filipino gender roles and effect of the feminization of international labor migration are also discussed contextualizing differences on the expectations and roles of father left behind. Chapter 3 describes the methodology of this paper. It spells out the sampling and data analysis techniques employed to answer the research questions. It also has descriptions of both the areas covered along with the respondents' profiles. Chapter 4 examines respondent answers, their own care definitions, general feelings on their situation and unearthing if indeed their masculinities are affected in the provision of care.

Finally, Chapter 5 concludes the research paper. How far have fathers left behind come and evolved to an extent that the phenomenon maybe normalized because of their care definitions and possible effect or non-effect to their masculinities. It seeks to understand if the social costs of migration to families may actually diminish with the fathers being able to fill in the care gap in their respective families.

## 2. Understanding the Care Crisis and Possible Effects on Men Left-Behind: Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

### 2.1 Global Care Chain (GCC) and Defining “Care” and Care Work

#### 2.1.1 *Global Care Chain and Limitations and the Global Care Crisis*

The concept of “global care chain” was able to theoretically create a relationship between three concepts that emerged in this modern world: globalization, migration and care. (Hochschild 2000: 131) It is able to capture the importance of the transnational care services and international division of reproductive labor in the modern international economy. (Yeates 2004: 370) The chain refers to a “series of personal links between people across the globe based on the paid or unpaid work of caring.” (Yeates 2004: 369-370) The idea sprung from increasing demand for migrant domestic workers by richer countries and the less rich ones responding to the demand by providing supply. These movements or exchanges are governed by social class, ethnicity and gender. (Parreñas 2001a: 72, Lutz 2002: 101) Hochschild points that the chain is composed of women providing their own care labor while also using, paid or unpaid, other women’s labor. (as cited by Yeates 2004: 372) She then describes it as “an older daughter from a poor family who cares for her siblings while her mother works as a nanny caring for the children of a migrating nanny who, in turn cares for the child of a family in a rich country.” (Hochschild 2000: 131) Primarily, it shows the connections between people’s personal lives and global politics, as said earlier, with women in poor countries responding to international needs that show how unequal access to material resources are that a redistribution of care labor or resource is needed. (Yeates 2004: 373) This is seen as detrimental as care resources are extracted from poor countries to serve the rich countries’ population and leaves the migrant worker and the source countries to bear the costs of these transfers and also removing destination countries’ family conflicts caused by productive work. (Yeates 2012: 137-138) The chain also has wider social impacts, a positive note would be that source countries receive foreign revenue through sent remittances but negatively it allows these rich

countries to delay their provision of public child care and deplete the source country the most important resource for development, which is manpower. (Yeates 2012: 138) The idea of the global care chain is not without its limitations, Yeates brought out two weaknesses of the concept, one is that Hochschild links the chain to the global commodity concept from a global commodity chain analysis but not as articulated and also in underscoring the material and non-material factors in structuring the care chain. (Yeates 2004: 373) Second is the confinement of the chain's application to just one group of female labor migrants, the unskilled domestic servants. (Yeates 2004: 373-374) This is where this research is also drawing from, although as said in the introduction that domestic services remain to be the most popular sector where most concentration of Filipinas are, 51% in 2010<sup>1</sup>, (POEA 2010: 20) this is not the only sector where they are located. Some are also in the medical profession like nursing and caregiving, or in cleaning or housekeeping in hotels. (POEA 2010: 20) These may be seen also as care or domestic work but is not considered to be unskilled or inside private homes. For this paper wives by the husbands left behind are not confined to Hochschild's idea of care workers as only those domestics tending to homes as some of those covered are also professionals like teacher aide or entertainers.

Discussing the global care chain also leads to an analysis of the gap that it created in the source countries. The care-gap that can lead to a care crisis, drain or erosion in the home of these women migrants points to re-organization of the normative and prevailing ideology that the rightful place of women are inside the homes. (Parreñas 2002a: 39-40) This has caused authors like Isaken et. al. to explore the idea of the care crisis as the erosion of Third World Commons particularly the socio-emotional ones. (2008: 419) The market in the North or the richer countries are said to erode solidarities, whether community or family ones, in the south. Mothers are pulled away from their children where they may not understand why they are gone that creates tensions within the families. (Isaksen et al. 2008: 420) Care drain is also said to cause moral harm because they receive inadequate care that can deter their development and not fulfill their emotional needs. (Gheaus 2013: 2) This

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<sup>1</sup> Latest available new hire data that is sex-disaggregated.



is the focus of the paper the effect of care drain in the individual families narrowing it down to fathers who are left behind who may or may not be able to fill in the gap and provide proper care. What is care in the first place and what should be the standard for identifying that a proper one is given?

### 2.1.2 Definitions of Care

In understanding the meaning of care of the fathers left behind, knowledge of previous' scholars and academics definition is needed so that it can be pitted with, in the latter chapters of this research, the care definition of the fathers covered in this study. Yeats has described that “*care*”:

*“covers a range of tasks and activities to promote the personal health and welfare of people who cannot, or who are not inclined to, perform those activities themselves This definition is able to accommodate an incredibly wide range of activities, ranging from highly intimate social, health and sexual care services to less intimate ones such as cooking, cleaning, ironing and general maintenance work.” (2004: 371)*

There have been distinctions to streamline the definition delineating *caring for* which is providing for physical labor and *caring about* that deals with the emotional. (Hooyman and Gonyea 1995 as cited by Yeates 2012, Lynch and McLaughlin 1995) Caring for is characterized by the “performance or supervision of tasks involved in ‘catering for the material and other general well-being of the one receiving care’; such tasks include cooking, cleaning, washing, listening and healing. ‘Caring about’ refers to ‘having affection and concern for the other and working on the relationship between the self and the other to ensure the development of the bond’ (Lynch and McLaughlin 1995: 256-257); it entails a set of perspectives and orientations, often integrated with tasks, such as looking out for, and looking after the other (Lynch and McLaughlin 1995: 258-259).

Parreñas has also identified three forms of care in parenting that delineates the categories even more. These are moral care, emotional care, and material care. She defined the following as follows:

- a) *Moral care*: provision of discipline and socialization to ensure that dependents are raised to be good moral citizens of society;
- b) *Emotional care*: provision of emotional security through the expression of feelings of warmth and affection;
- c) *Material care*: provision of physical needs of dependents (food, clothing, education and skills training) to ensure they become producers for the family. (Parreñas 2001a: 117)

Care arrangements can also be defined especially within the global care chain. These are “(a) fathers left behind; (b) grandmothers; (c) female friends, family members, and caring children; (d) Skype mothering; (e) significant carers.” (Lutz and Palenga-Möllnbeck 2012: 6) These arrangements were observed in the research by Lutz and Palenga-Möllnbeck in both Poland and Ukraine during the outflow of female domestic migrant workers. (Lutz and Palenga-Möllnbeck 2012: 6) For this paper, only the first care arrangement will be delved deeper. Care, for fathers left behind, has patterns including care sharing, care withdrawal and caring as a single father. It was noted in their study that majority of the fathers interviewed mostly shared their care duties with other female members of the family like the grandmothers. Those who withdraw from care provision are mostly due to the father’s employment that makes them absent in their children’s lives. The final pattern, the single father, reveals that their experience had difficulties because they are said to be inadequate in providing emotional support. (Lutz and Palenga-Möllnbeck 2012: 6-7)

These earlier findings albeit from a different location and context is also tested in this research investigating if the same care definitions will match those of the case studies from the three areas and even see if they have the same care arrangements for the father’s left behind.

### 2.1.3 *Care Work and the Labor Market*

After looking at the basics of care, it is also important to look at the caring work and how it is perceived in the labor market. Caring work can be both paid, those done by teachers, nurses, doctors, etc. and unpaid like those done by parents for their children or adults for their disabled relatives. (England 2005: 4) For this paper only the unpaid work is considered but in light of understanding why this work is said to be undervalued we have to take a look at how it is treated in the realm of paid or productive work. The labor market though deemed neutral is said to be gendered or are “bearers of gender.” (Whitehead 1979 as cited by Elson 1999: 611) It allows for certain stereotypes that delineates between what “man’s work” and “woman’s work” is supposed to be thus promoting gender domination and inequality. (Elson 1999: 611-612) Caring work is projected to be disproportionately considered to be women’s work. (England and Folbre 1999: 40) Feminist economists have proved that care work is important that it allows for the productive economy to thrive “since they reproduce on a daily basis, the labor force which works in the productive economy.” Thus, it is also called the reproductive economy (Elson 1999: 612) Aside from being undervalued, care or caring work is also penalized in that “one forgoes potential earnings from working the same hours in a paid job” (England and Folbre 1999: 41) Also, mothers who leave work to rear children will have a tougher time along with less wage as they enter the job market because of those lost years. (England and Folbre 1999: 41)

This connotation of care work has proved to create certain negative bias against it. Since it is considered to be women’s work it shows why Filipinas are still the ones choosing for employment in this sector which is just an extension of their work at home but already earning money for their families. The difference is that the men they leave behind are pushed to do the same work, unpaid, for their families. In the next section one will know the importance of gender roles and how it can explain why there might be an aversion to doing care work dis-incentivized by the issues above and knowing that it is something feminine.

## **2.2 Philippine Traditional Gender Roles, Masculinities and the Effects of the Feminization of International Labor Migration**

### **2.2.1 Philippine Traditional Gender Roles**

Before judging the capacities, competencies and coping styles of the fathers left behind, it is important to see if they can be or are equipped to carry on the new role. Looking at the traditional conventions and gender roles assigned will help explain their possible difficulties and capacities.

In the formulations of “role differentiation” by Parsons and Bales (1955: 353-94) men are seen to be the one in-charge of the family’s interaction to the outside world while the women are organizing and ensuring that the internal needs of the family are met. (as cited by Medina 2001: 141) Men and women are also characterized differently by regarding their “instrumental-expressive roles.” (Bales and Slater 1955: 259-306) Men have the instrumental traits of “competitiveness, self-confidence, logic and non-emotionality” needed to control the outside environment to achieve certain objectives. Women, on the other hand are expressive (as cited by Medina 2001: 141) that can help in managing conflicts and provide emotional support. Such traits include “warmth, sensitivity to the needs of others, and the ability to express tender feelings.” (Lamanna and Reidman 1994: 52) This general view of how men and women should function is echoed in most societies and the Philippines is not any different that there is a definite delineation on role expectations. It starts when children are socialized or reared because mothers and fathers follow the societal prescriptions of what traits are considered feminine or masculine. (Liwag et al. 1998: 3, Medina 2001: 142) For example, girls are assigned to prepare food, wash and iron clothes, clean the house, and take care of their siblings, tasks that are mostly indoors. (Liwag et al. 1998: 3) These can already be seen as care activities from the definitions that were described in the previous section. On the other hand, boys are given tasks that entail strength and usually are found outside the home like fetching water or buying something at the store. (Liwag et al. 1998: 3) Boys are even discouraged to do housework as Mendez and Jocano (1979a) puts it

“household chores are not assigned to them unless there are no girls in the family” (as cited by Liwag et al. 1998: 7) because these tasks are deemed to be “feminine” (Estrada 1983 as cited by Liwag et al. 1998: 8)

As these children grow up this definite delineation guides them to the responsibilities they will have in their respective families and the inverse of these roles and the seemingly ease of transition contradicts the ideals of traditional gender differentiation and socialization process that the males in this research have been exposed to.

Dynamics in the family can also be seen as contrasting with the position of women as having power or not in the home. Many studies have found that Filipino families are actually more egalitarian especially in running the home and raising their children. It was revealed that husbands and wives, from different social classes, make decisions together like in the way they discipline their children, where they go to school and what and where to invest in, with the only exception of household budgeting which is the exclusively the turf of the wife. (Porio, Lynch, and Hollnsteiner [1981] as cited by Aguilar 1989: 542) It is also seen as equal but very differentiated in that women have authority over chores at home, child care and as cited, family finances and the men with livelihood. Thus, it seems that the domestic domain is not solely on the shoulders of women rather shared equally with the husband (Aguilar 1989: 542) Blanc-Saxton (1990: 382) calls this “non-hierarchical complementarity” (as cited Lauer 2001: 18)

In light of moving forward with the discussion of this paper, this egalitarian model of the family might shed light on the capabilities and the ease of fathers in coping with the new care role. Understanding how and where it stems from leads us to discussing the masculinities and femininities that allow for such delineation on the gender roles and expectations. For this paper, masculinities are the ones discussed thoroughly and femininities only in conjunction with the latter.

In understanding why men are said to be unaccountable for maintaining the family through reproductive and care work it is important to see how “masculinity” is created maybe even defined, maintained and reproduced in the context of

Philippine society. Does this conception relieve or allow men, fathers, to be part of the care work?

## 2.2.2 Philippine Masculinities and Effects of International Labor Migration

Filipino masculinity and machismo is characterized by the following traits: a) sense of responsibility – stressed in the idea that a man is accountable for his future and the commitments he make (Liwag, De la Cruz, & Macapagal as cited by Rubio and Green 2009); b) reverent to spouse, women and elders – Filipino households characterized to be more egalitarian than other Asian families giving mothers equal authority in making decisions (Angeles 2001: 16, Karim 1995 as cited by Rubio and Green 2009: 62) and both are considered to be partners within the family (Aguiling-Dalisay, et al. 2000 as cited by Rubio and Green 2009: 62). Although this shows equality there are still findings that men still enjoy some form of higher authority compared to their wives especially if they are the ones who are economically active (Aguiling-Dalisay et al. 2000, Karim 1995: 62, as cited by Rubio and Green 2009: 62); c) have integrity – being honest in every aspect of their lives not that the trait is not expected to both genders but men are more pressured to manifest it (Rubio and Green 2009: 62); d) having intellectual pursuits – men are idealized for intelligence and critical thinking that will allow them to be ready for their future role as economic providers for their families (Bantug 1996, Rubio and Green 2009: 62); e) strong – should be manifested not only physically (Lauer 2001: 97) but also emotionally withstanding pain and being more aggressive and persuasive (Rubio and Green 2009: 62); f) virile sex partners (Pingol 2001: 223) – seen as important as early as when they are teenagers emphasizing the importance of sexual relations with women (Lauer 2001: 96-97); g) having a sense of community – initiate contact with people in the neighborhood and have the spirit of “pakikisama” (being able to get along well with others)(Margold 1995); and lastly the greatest trait that makes men self-actualized in the Philippine society is if they are h) geared towards the family – if a man were to be a father he should be able to provide and protect his immediate and extended family that also solidifies the notion that they are the “*haligi ng tahanan*” (cornerstone of the

home – Rubio and Green / pillar of the family- Yea) (Aguiling-Dalisay et al. 2000, Pingol 2001, Rubio and Green 2009, Tan 1994, Yea 2013)

Stressing the idea that men are supposed to be good providers make one question if any other aspects of “provider-ship” can be explored. In literature, being a good provider has always been assumed as economic and financial (Licuanan 1979 as cited by Liwag et al. 1998: 8, and Alampay and Jocson 2011: 166, ECMI-CBCP et al. 2004: 1, Gresham 2011: 1) In an article by Christiansen and Palkovitz, they contend on why the provider role do not cover paternal involvement in various ways. There are four reasons identified but for this paper, focus is on the inadequate conceptualization of “providing”. (2001: 85) In the article, although it still considers providing role as economic it should not be looked at one dimensionally and acknowledge that fathers in their provider role also demonstrate emotional and psychological connection. (Stearns 1991 as cited by Christiansen and Palkovitz 2001: 91) Looking only at the economic dimension of “providing” or “provision.” “fails to capture the process of providing [entirety of the act] and its centrality to the fathers’ identity”. (Futris and Pasley 1997 as cited by Christiansen and Palkovitz 2001: 91) It makes us question whether the same narrow look at fatherhood is also applied in realizing the capacities of these fathers to do the reproductive work when their wives are away. Since some of the fathers in this research are also employed the assumption of both fatherly and motherly duties justifies and strengthens their provider role.

This can be shown in terms of the earlier studies on the dispositions of the fathers left behind. Although some found that when the mother leaves home to work abroad, the men or husbands do not necessarily perform the roles and tasks that were left by the woman or their wives. (Parreñas 2001a: 144) If they do these tasks it’s because they have no other choice and then therefore affects their masculinity. (Parreñas 2001a: 144) Gresham also studied the direct consequences on the masculinity of these men because their wives are earning more. He found out that there are indeed “signs of lessening machismo... as a result of female migration and their remittances.” (Gresham 2011: 71) The main reason is that the men, fulfilling the “manly role,” place great importance on being the income earner and

breadwinner or “provider father”. (Gresham 2011: 64 & 70) In Pingol’s study, on the other hand, she concludes her research by stating that “masculine identity is redefined as consequence of the changing conditions of the men.”(2001: 246) She notes that having economic difficulties that made their wives work abroad led these men to re-examine themselves that led to psychological adjustments connected to their values and aspirations. (Pingol 2001: 246-247) The masculine image that they re-created to fight the notion of lesser masculinity involves: “a) efficiently managing the remittances; b) remaining strong against temptation; and c) becoming responsive to the needs of children.” (Pingol 1999: 22) Can it be that the transition of men re-defining their masculinity just a step towards an understanding of how limited the idea of how being a provider should be? Does the idea of redefinition explain possible coping strategies for these men?



## 3. Research Methodology

### 3.1 Sampling and Data Collection

#### 3.1.1 *Motivation of Sampling*

Past researches have affirmed that studying fathers left behind is difficult as some see them as a “hidden population”. (Gresham 2011: 54) Hidden populations are characterized by: (a) having no sample frame making it difficult to gauge its magnitude and boundaries; and (b) presence of privacy issues because membership is prohibited or involves stigmatization. (Heckathorn 1997: 174) The main respondents for this research are indeed hard to find as there is no official data available for these fathers and most research in effects of migration focus on migrant mothers and/or their children thus a sampling frame was never really established. (Gresham 2011: 81) Also some may consider the questions about their care for their family and masculinity can cause stigmatization especially if the individuals do not accept their new role. In this case, how can such a hidden population be researched? Heckathorn suggests three methods: 1) snowball or chain referral sampling; 2) key informant sampling; and 3) targeted sampling. (Heckathorn 1997: 174-177) Before doing the field work, snowball sampling or chain sampling was the most logical choice but this entails that one knows where to find the fathers to begin with, so a type of targeted sampling was done. Targeted sampling was done by first mapping out the target population (Watters and Biernacki 1989 as cited by Heckathorn 1997: 175) and since no concrete data was available the use complementary data was employed. The 2013 Survey on Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) provides data on the distribution of OFWs across the different regions and the proportion of male and females in the country. It spells out actual areas where research can be done and have identified the National Capital Region (NCR) – 12.8%, Region IV-A CALABARZON – 13.9% and Region III – Central Luzon – 18.4% as regions with the highest concentration of OFWs and has been for the past decades (PSA). In terms of sex distribution, data show that male and females were almost equally distributed among those that decide to work abroad (50.3% vs 49.7%) (PSA 2013) thus having a higher chance of

selecting an OFW family with a male or female members. In terms of identifying the actual provinces in these regions, the 2013 Country Migration Report provides guidance as it listed down the top provinces that have the highest number of new hires for 2012. (See table 1)

**Table 1. Top Ten Provinces of Origin of New Hires, 2012**

|    | <b>Province</b> | <b>Region Located</b>                | <b>%</b> |
|----|-----------------|--------------------------------------|----------|
| 1  | Metro Manila    | National Capital Region              | 16.4     |
| 2  | Cavite          | Region IV-A                          | 4.7      |
| 3  | Batangas        | Region IV-A                          | 4.6      |
| 4  | Pangasinan      | Region I                             | 4.3      |
| 5  | Cebu            | Region VII                           | 3.8      |
| 6  | Maguindanao     | Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao | 3.7      |
| 7  | Laguna          | Region IV-A                          | 3.7      |
| 8  | Bulacan         | Region IV-A                          | 3.6      |
| 9  | Rizal           | Region IV-A                          | 3.2      |
| 10 | Pampanga        | Region III                           | 3.2      |

Source: (POEA as cited by Battistella and Asis 2013)<sup>2</sup>

Choice was also based on the presence of a program that provides support for these fathers within the said provinces. The main agency found was the Clark International Airport Corporation (CIAC) that established, as their Corporate Social Response, the AMMA (*Ama na Magaling Mag-Aruga sa Anak* – Fathers who are good at taking care of their children) support group for fathers left behind. The program was implemented with the support of the MLAC Psychosocial Services for Well-Being that provides the psychological counseling and workshops on different topics for the fathers. After using targeted sampling, next step was identifying the specific fathers, before the field work chain sampling was planned to be used but during the fieldwork it was deduced the fathers did not know each other that entailed finding another way to identify them. Thus, key informant sampling was done. Key informant sampling is done by “selecting especially knowledgeable respondents and

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<sup>2</sup> Data from the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency that was unpublished but obtained by the authors for the report.

asking them about others' behavior.” (Deaux and Callaghan 1985 as cited by Heckathorn 1997: 175)

Key informants were used in identifying specific areas and respondents for research in Alaminos, Quezon City and Mabalacat found within the regions or provinces identified in Table 1, Laguna, Metro Manila and Pampanga. (Figure 1)

**Figure 1. Research Sites/ Locations (Quezon City, Alaminos, Mabalacat)**



Source: <http://mapsof.net/map/philippines-regions-and-provinces>

Alaminos was chosen because my aunt is an undergraduate professor in Marcelino Fule College and was able to identify some of her students who had mothers abroad and fathers who are left behind. Other respondents in the municipality were chosen by asking around tricycle drivers (form of transportation) in the area. Among the three areas, Alaminos is the only one not considered to be a city and characterized as a fourth class municipality which means that the area is able to earn from Php 25M to Php 35M (approximately \$570,000 to \$798,000 using 43.85 exchange rate average for the month of August 2014) (Based on Department of Finance Department Order No.23-08 Effective July 29, 2008). It is also an agro-

industrial municipality producing coconut, lanzones, rambutan, coffee, and various citrus. Industries included are garments, livestock, fertilizer distribution and manufacturing. (Alaminos Municipal Government 2014)

In Quezon City the main informant was a janitor from one of the offices that I researched in and other respondents were from around the area where I live. Mabalacat, Pampanga was specifically chosen, on the other hand based, based on the areas of CIAC but not all respondents are part of the support group. Some were already part of the AMMA program and the others were only the introductory phase of the program's second round. These last two areas are classified as cities and are both found near the province's or region's center. Mabalacat is a newly converted city in 2012 and classified as a first class city with an estimated average income in 2011 of Php 504.15M (approximately \$11.50 using 43.85 exchange rate average for the month of August 2014) (The Local Government of Mabalacat City. 2014). Quezon City, on the other hand, as reiterated Quezon City is part of the country's National Capital Region (NCR) or Metro Manila. NCR is where the seat of government is found and the most populous region in the country.

Although these specific municipality and cities were chosen and motivated by secondary data it is also out of convenience of the researcher. It is also important to note that the three areas do not keep updated data on employment status of their constituency or anything related on the status of their international labor migrants like where they are, how many are there, etc. For further research, there may be a need to create monitoring instrument to gather this data.

Maximum variation sampling was also considered in this research as it is able to harness the heterogeneity of small samples and identify shared patterns to capture core experiences. (Patton 1990: 172) For example, there will be great differences on the husbands of these left behind female migrants in terms of social classes, employment and even the extent of how they are experiencing being left behind. Some may have more children than others or that they receive support from other relatives or people compared to others that significantly affects the experience of caring or "mothering". Even if this is the case, this sampling method will allow for

findings that are of: “(1) high quality, with detailed descriptions of each case, which are useful in for documenting uniqueness, and (2) important shared patterns that cut across cases derive their significance from having emerged out of heterogeneity.” (Patton 1990: 172) Also this sampling method permit the research to draw out common patterns emergent from respondent answers and will not at all generalize findings because of too much variation among the population. (Patton 1990: 172)

### 3.1.2 Use of Research Techniques

Once specific area and respondents were identified semi-structured one-on-one interviews was used as the main method for data collection. To uncover and answer the research question, the use of interviews will be able to draw out people’s insights, emotions and more importantly their experiences (Denscombe 2011: 174) as the research will draw the definitions and conceptions of care of the fathers covered. Sensitive issues like the effects of wife migration on their masculinities will also be answered. Box 1 provides the specific questions that guided the interviews that aim to answer the main research question and sub-questions identified in Chapter 1.

#### Box 1. Interview Questions used during the Interviews

|  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
| Name:  | Age:                  |
| Occupation:  | No. of Years Married: |
| No. of Years Spouse (Wife) Working Abroad and where:   |                       |
| No. of Children (name and age):  |                       |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Can you describe your usual day or the things that you usually do around the house.<br/>(Probe chores or activities done around the house and/or at his job, if has occupation.)</li> <li>2. What do you do to care for your children? Probe it can be for everyday or occasional tasks.</li> <li>3. They say that doing chores around the house and taking care of children are tasks by mothers, what do think or feel about this? Do you think it diminishes your “pagkalahaki” or manliness/manhood? Probe based on his answer.*</li> <li>4. What other things do you do for your children? How do you respond to their specific needs? Do they go up to you when they have problems, etc?</li> <li>5. Are there any realizations of after being the main carer for the past _____months/years?</li> </ol> |                       |

\* This question was asked during the interview to challenge the fathers in understanding the effects of the so-called “mothering” to them.

There were a total of 14 fathers who were interviewed in the research six were from Alaminos, Laguna, four from Mabalacat, Pampanga and another four fathers from Quezon City in Metro Manila. Actual data collection and interviews were done along various dates. Field work in Alaminos was done on 29 – 30 July 2014 and in Mabalacat 8 and 18 August, and 12 & 20 August 2014 in Q.C. The interviews were based on open-ended questions above which I voice-recorded and fully-transcribed. The language of the interviews was in Filipino or Tagalog and translated in English for this paper.

In terms of specific families to be interviewed it is important for the research that there are families with children in various ages from infant to young children to adolescents and gender since care that will be provided may differ for each age group and gender. Below Table 2 provides an overview of the respondents that were interviewed for the study. It includes the pseudonyms, age, occupation, and number of children for each respondent.

**Table 2. Profile of Respondents covered in this Research**

|    | Name <sup>3</sup> | Location  | Age | Occupation, if any | Employment Status  | No. of Years Wife is Working Abroad | Where Wife is Currently working/ Last worked | Occupation of Wife        | No. of Children and Age Range |                  |
|----|-------------------|-----------|-----|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------|--|---------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|
| 1  | Cesar             | Alaminos  | 51  | Tailor             | Sub-contracted     | 3                                   | Saudi Arabia                                 | Seamstress                | 7                             | 15-24 yrs. old   |
| 2  | Mateo             | Alaminos  | 30  | Forklift Operator  | Full-time          | 2                                   | Kuwait                                       | Domestic Worker           | 1                             | 5 yrs. old       |
| 3  | Bernardo          | Alaminos  | 54  | Bgy. Councilor     | Full-time          | 8                                   | Dubai  | Teacher's Aide            | 3                             | 16-27 yr. old    |
| 4  | Pedro             | Alaminos  | 22  | Unemployed         |                    | 3 mos.                              | South Korea                                  | Singer                    | 1                             | 5 yrs. old       |
| 5  | Andres            | Alaminos  | 28  | Unemployed         |                    | 3 mos.                              | Cyprus                                       | Domestic Worker           | 1                             | 6 yrs. old       |
| 6  | Juan              | Alaminos  | 49  | Welder             | Part-time/ On-call | 14                                  | Milan, Italy                                 | Domestic Worker           | 2                             | 15&18 yrs. old   |
| 7  | Lito              | Mabalacat | 37  | Tricycle Driver    | Part-time          | 2                                   | Macau  | Domestic Worker           | 5                             | 6-17 yrs. old    |
| 8  | Renato            | QC        | 38  | Unemployed         |                    | 1.5                                 | Kuwait                                       | Cook                      | 3                             | 4-16 yrs. old    |
| 9  | Nestor            | Mabalacat | 47  | Entrepreneur       | Full-time          | 6                                   | Canada                                       | Caregiver                 | 3                             | 8-16 yrs. old    |
| 10 | Emilio            | Mabalacat | 48  | Entrepreneur       | Full-time          | 5.5                                 | Saudi Arabia                                 | Chef                      | 2                             | 18 & 23 yrs. old |
| 11 | Conrado           | Mabalacat | 41  | Pipe fitter        | Part-time/ On-call | 5                                   | Morocco                                      | Domestic Worker           | 6                             | 7-15 yrs. old    |
| 12 | Miguel            | QC        | 42  | Gov't Employee     | Full-time          | 10                                  | Kuwait                                       | Waitress and Salon Worker | 2                             | 12 & 13 yrs. old |
| 13 | Francisco         | QC        | 44  | Gov't Employee     | Full-time          | 7                                   | Japan  | Entertainer               | 2                             | 21 & 22 yrs. old |
| 14 | Julio             | QC        | 43  | Driver             | Full-time          | 4                                   | Hong Kong                                    | Caregiver                 | 1                             | 17 yrs. old      |

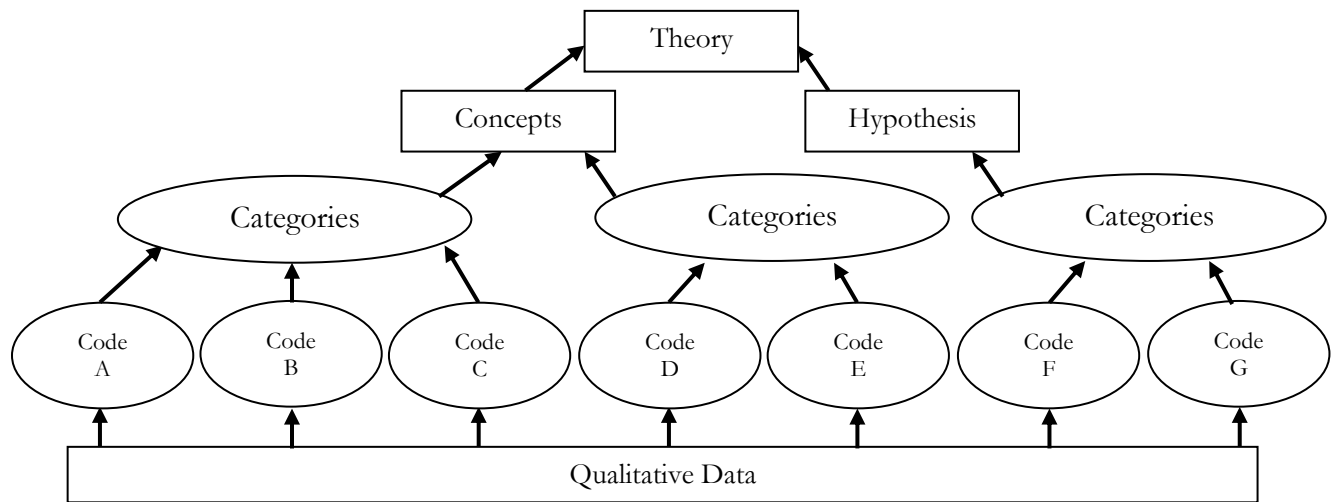
### 3.2 Data Analysis

Preparation for data analysis was done after the interviews by transcribing all the 14 audio recordings. Method for data analysis that used is grounded theory since it draws out definitions of concepts like “care” and “masculinity” from the respondents. Grounded theory is effective for this as its end goal is to “derive concepts and theories that capture the meaning contained within the data.”(Denscombe 2011: 283) Using the steps from Figure 1 data transcriptions were coded based on the similarities and patterns that it presented. For this research it was seen that type of care work was generally split into two: one that is done

<sup>3</sup> Names are changed for confidentiality.

for maintaining the home like (doing laundry, cleaning, grocery shopping, etc.), care work specific to children but there is a sub-division between the two that includes everyday tasks (includes teaching, feeding, etc.), and special tasks for children (health, emotional, psychological coaching, etc.). To assess effects and perceptions of this care work on the respondents, answers were categorized and coded as general feelings, which includes learnings or realizations, and effects on their masculinity. After categorizing answers, concepts and building hypothesis will be done to eventually build a theory. (Refer to the arrows shown in Figure 2)

**Figure 2. The Grounded Theory Approach to the Analysis of Qualitative Data**



Source: (Denscombe 2011: 286)

For this particular research, the grounded theory is used to address theoretical gaps in understanding the global care chain and gender identities. Fathers' roles have always been seen in the productive realm and that their contribution to this ever growing global care chain is not recognized. By using grounded theory, these roles particularly how they understand this new care role is unearthed along with their reflections, feelings and realizations on whether this has an effect on their masculine persona.



### 3.3 Issues in Doing Research

One of the main issues that the research faced was in creating rapport with the respondents. The researcher found that the respondents do not easily share their stories and that issues pertaining to the study are indeed found sensitive. As families may be considered a private and intimate institutions and activities that are done within it were not easily accessible to the researcher or respondents may not allow a certain level of intrusion. (Gelles 1978: 409) Also, as I am female and all respondents were men there were also some challenges faced. Some of the respondents were not as easily open about their experiences and in some cases too open affirming some gender stereotypes as men may see women's role in dialogues as the emphatic listener that may place the men in a position of power (as cited by Pini 2005, Winchester 1996: 203). I have in some instances felt this when I was somewhat called arrogant by one of the respondents for asking some probing questions.

## 4. Re-PROD-uctive Role: "Providing" Care Work by Masculine Fathers

### 4.1 Caring Role of Fathers

#### 4.1.1 *Care roles as seen by Fathers*

What constitutes care for these father respondents? Are these the task they do for their children everyday? What are the chores that they do around the house? From these chore patterns and the experiences of the respondents it is important to understand the factors that affect how, when, and what type of "care" work they do for the children and around the house.

Might have been from the way the question was asked but the patterns of answers of the respondents is like a grocery or shopping list of activities. They wake the children up, feed them, bathe them, cook for them, clean the house, do laundry, do grocery shopping. As Bernardo, who has three children who were then 8, 13, and 19 year old respectively when his wife started working in Dubai eight years ago, said

that he is the one in charge of everything, he cooks, wakes up early and prepare food so that they can eat before school, take them to school and when they are done also fetch them. The answers kept on repeating, everyone does the same thing. Andres, who has a six year old daughter, details the same activities, “*I cook, I feed her, give her a bath, take her to school, wait there till it is dismissal time.*” Miguel, father of two and government office worker, said that this is also what he does for his children, “*I wake up at 4am, cook and prepare them for school and ensure that at around 5:30am I am done so I can get myself ready to go to work.*”

The type of care work that they provide for them is as what Juan who has two boys aged one and four when his wife left for Milan, says “When the children wakes up “*babala na!*, for as long we can get by...” The term *babala na* is a local expression that has various meanings but the origin of the term is derived from the word *Bathala* which is directly translated into God (Bostrom 1968: 401 as cited by Gripaldo 2005: 203) thus, making the term mean leaving something or someone in the care of God. This expression has become ingrained in the country’s culture and the people’s attitude. (Gripaldo 2005: 203) A philosophical study of the term has identified six usual meaning and uses of term. Looking at the particular care work experience of Juan it seems that meaning of *babala na* for him is “come what may” or that “whatever will be will be”. This shows that even though there are uncertainties or whatever outcome, God or fate will intervene. (Gripaldo 2005: 204-205) Why would Juan be so uncertain about how he should provide care for his children? Before his wife left to work in Milan he was an part-time welder doing small jobs around town. He said “*we always used to fight when I was still working, I am always tired when I go home and she’s complaining of the work she’s doing at home.*” After doing it on his own for 14 years now he said it was much harder than he expected. He detailed how hard it was when they were younger, preparing their milk tending to them. He had a hard time keeping up with their other needs. He admitted that after his wife left he stopped taking the children to the health center for their vaccinations but did not gave a reason why he stopped. The children also experienced convulsions from high fever that for him was another *babala na* moment because he did not rush them to a hospital and tried managing it at home. In terms of school work he said “*I didn’t finish*

school so in my mind 'bahala na sila' (it's up to them) that's why I am sending to school, I tried to get them a tutor but they refused." This is not just the time that he retreated, asking him if his boys ever get sad he said "Yes, I know about, sometimes they are playing outside then suddenly, maybe when they remember their mother they would run up to their room crying. I really pity them." During these situations he said shaking his head "It's really hard because they really miss their mom." He didn't talk to them about it because he said he doesn't know what to do. Tending to the feelings and emotions of their children may be part of what these children needed but it seems that because mothers are expected to handle the private life and have expressive roles fathers aren't as sympathetic. Why did he turn a blind eye in this aspect of care? Does this still exemplify the the *bahala na* moments that he spoke of? During the interview he seemed contented of whatever care he has provided for his children. He has reared them and now he is happier because they are older, 15 and 18 years old, and can do things for themselves. They didn't turn up to be so bad, one is still continuing his high school studies and the other is en route to follow his mother in Milan.

Care work is something that the fathers keep on doing in various capacities that they can, Renato said "I do everything, wash clothes, all of the mother's task is also my own." Other fathers seek help from someone outside their immediate family like female relatives, if they live close to them, or third party providers like local domestic workers or service institution like Laundromats. For Miguel, who we said had a cut-off time in terms of care provision for his children as he needs to go to work, he said "After office my brother who live in the same compound as us already have dinner cooked. Sometimes even my sister prepares lunch for the children." His mother was also the one who took his children in the health center for check-ups. Some other fathers also testify how their relatives have helped them. Pedro said "My mother takes care of him, his five year old son, when I am at work and take him when I go home, my niece is also the one taking him to school and my older sister also help out with him, so there are three people taking care of him." Relatives are also enlisted in terms of teaching children on their studies, some fathers are seen to not be equipped like Juan as was in the previous paragraphs or that fathers seek out help from people they deem to be better or have more time. Cesar's 23 year old daughter was the one in-charge of teaching and helping her

siblings with school, when they were younger. Also, Cesar is a sub-contracted tailor that is paid per piece of pants or polo he makes, so the time to more pieces means more for the family. Andres who has cousin, who is a trained teacher, is the one tutoring his six year old daughter.

Laundromats, an external service provider, are enlisted for Miguel's family. *"We take it to the laundry especially the bed sheets because I work till Sunday so there is no time."* Francisco and Julio have full time paid live-in helpers. Francisco, an administrative officer, hired help when his wife worked in Japan for seven years from 1994 to 2001. Even though that is the case, he said *"I am the one doing laundry, I also cook everyday, the nanny is just there to really look out for the children but sometimes she also helps around the house."* Julio, on the other hand, said that he was just the support to the paid helper when it comes to the chores around the house. He admitted that he will just jump in and do some cooking or placing clothes in the washing machine when he feels that he wants to do it.

Care work is also seen as to how and what these fathers see and perceive as needed. This may still underscore the *babala na* nature shared by Juan. Lito who has five children with the last three being girls who are 9, 7, 6 year old respectively, said that he had to learn how to tie his daughters' hair before going to school. Making things presentable and pretty are not expected among men and in detailing the story you can see Lito's sense of achievement on doing a task that he hadn't thought he will ever do. Pedro has an asthmatic son that makes him more vigilant and keeps him awake at nights. From the things that he said he couldn't do like cooking he was sure that he could operate his son's the nebulizer. For Emilio he sees the specific health needs of his sons who are 18 and 23 years old. He says *"I open up the conversation talk to them like their peer, I don't like it that there comes a time when they get a girl pregnant so I teach them sex education. I tell them not to be afraid to ask especially now that they can contract AIDS from any girl."*

Fathers may also whip up concerns that do not even seem to bother their children. Emilio, who has a son in college, ensures that his child even goes home

every day. He says that if he doesn't call, text, or contact him, there is a risk that he will not go home. Renato who also has a teenage son says that he also gets anxious every night when his eldest son, who is 16 years old also in college, is not yet home. There was one incident where he slept on the bus because of fatigue and missed his stop. From this we can see that security and the lives of these children in the public sphere are still the fathers' main concern. As we have seen in the discussion of what is expected on men, this is something that seems to be retained. Other activities that are geared towards the public realm than these families' private lives are also exemplified in the participation of these fathers in the various school activities. Fathers like Lito, Nestor, Renato, and Miguel said that they attend programs like dances and contests, card day or handing out of marks and Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) assemblies in school. There are also times when Lito and Nestor volunteer to make props or fix the stage for the different school programs. Nestor even boasted that "...*they*, pertaining to the other parents, *even wanted me to be president of the PTA but I always decline because I don't have the time.*" Lito is also the same that he also volunteers during school functions and is nominated to be the president of the group. Both refused that positions offered to them because they are busy with their respective businesses. The fact that these fathers highlighted how their peer parents wanted them to hold a certain position in the school also seem to preserve the public realm where men are said to dominate.

Care work can also be seen as something to be ready for, something that not all fathers are equipped at doing at first, thus needing a lot of personal adjustments. Pedro who has no work and who is admittedly a full time father says that the most difficult thing for him in terms of doing all the chores is actually getting up in the morning. At 22 years old, he has a five year old son and for the three months that his wife left for South Korea to be an entertainer, waking up and forcing his body to actually be productive during the earliest part of the day seems to be the biggest challenge. Renato, 38 years old and a former factory worker, with a wife who decided to work in Kuwait as a cook 1.5 years ago, added "... *the thing she does, I can't do it, like doing laundry, I don't do laundry before, I don't cook.*" He could not even allow himself to find work and just hire help because his wife has forbidden it and said to simply

focus on their children. For other fathers, this care work was seen as an extension of what they have done before, Andres, who is 28 years old with a wife who has been gone for three months to be a domestic worker in Cyprus, said that he is used to do chores around the house. *“I am used to it because when my mom went to Milan to work I was like a parent to my two brothers because my father is also gone.”*

Managing the effects of their wives migration is also seen as something that is included in their care work for children. Younger children with no knowledge or understanding of the situation may sometimes ask why their mommies are not there. From some, they say the truth, Pedro, for example, explains to his five year old son that the reason that his mother is away is that she is just saving up for his future. Lito says the same thing to his young daughters and when they cry when they miss their mother and tries to distract them by taking to the mall. There’s a playground there and soon enough they’ll forget why they were sad about in the first place. In some instances when a child is too young, like Renato’s then three year old son, a little white lie was used. He said that he tells his son that his mother just went out to buy something outside. As he grows older he is slowly realizing the situation and even stopped asking why she’s not there. Remembering Juan’s case of his boys running to their rooms crying can also show that not all fathers are adept in explaining the situation to their children. One of the inconclusive findings on the effects of mother migration was seen in one of Francisco’s daughter who may have been negatively affected by it. He said that when she was in kindergarten, she had an outburst and cursed at the teacher and that this “disturbing” behavior continued on when she started cutting classes especially during her secondary school and eventually decided not to pursue college. For Francisco it was some kind of “rebellion” but not in the way other literature have predicted it. He said *“...when her mother finally went home, from a seven year stint as an entertainer in Japan, she started managing the home and the children again and became a ‘nagger’. I think my children were not used to it because I rarely got angry at them.”* Children acting out after their mother has gone home is something different though there are also findings of children finding their parents interfering in their lives when they are home. (Asis 2006: 62) The issue of Francisco branding his wife “nagger” is something that is also off-putting. The idea that the mother handles being an

authoritative figure for the children may mean that she is just ensuring that she is able to guide her children in the right direction. Francisco making his wife the “bad cop” and him the “good” one still shows a certain kind of authority over her. Maybe the kind of rearing style is different but should not be branded as something negative.

For those who have older children, explaining why the mothers are away is easier because they seem to understand the reason. The fathers then create various activities to ensure that they continue to be a close knit family. Miguel ensures that he and his two children, a 13 year old boy and 12 year old girl, have their bonding moments. Although it may be easier to explain to them the situation, a negative implication of having older children when the mother leaves is that it is harder to be affectionate to them as Renato is experiencing with his two older sons. He said that his inability to be affectionate affects his relationship and says *“If there are chores to be done inside the house, I already do it because I know that they are already tired from school”* to win them over.

Care is also about discipline for some of the fathers. Mateo, who has a 5 year old son, said that because his child is always rowdy he sometime scolds him that makes him sulk. The only thing that would win him back was buying him food specifically his favorite, Chuckie, a chocolate milk drink. The use of bribes seems to work to ensure that his son will still like him. For older children a stern hand was seen to be effective by one father, Julio used to use a stern hand to discipline his daughter who was 12 years old when the mother was away. He said that there was an instance where his daughter said something bad to a visitor that he actually clipped her lip using his hand as he hit her. From the interview and some probing, it seemed that he didn’t mind hitting her daughter for as long as it will ensure that another incident like that will never happen again and it indeed never happened again.

From these care meanings and activities that were brought out there are some patterns that are seen that affect the specific type and amount of care of fathers for their children. Fathers who are fully employed like Mateo, Miguel, Francisco and Julio are the ones who enlisted the most help from their relatives and

outside helpers and service providers. The last three fathers cited live in Quezon City, in the country's capital (being part of the National Capital Region) and the demand to do paid work and earn additional income is higher than heeding to the task to stay at home to do all the chores and tend to their children. It can also be said that since these three fathers belong to two-income households they can actually afford exporting or passing this type of care work to an outsider or third party provider. Fathers who work part-time or have their own businesses like Cesar, Lito and Nestor have more wiggle room and that they can actually do it mostly on their own, with little to no support from family around them. They create their own schedules balancing work with important tasks at home. Fathers like Pedro, Andres, and Renato who are unemployed have the most time and degree of involvement in running their households and caring for their children. From the interviews it was also noticed that even though they have the most time, the way they do the "care" work also seem to depend or vary on different factors.

Also, it can also be seen that fathers also decide on the boundaries on the type of care they provide this can be because they can't do it much like how Juan can't teach his children because of his limitations. Some have lived on their own making their care work seem to be routine like Mateo and Nestor who were already used to doing all chores like laundry, ironing while they were in college. Some have gained experience from taking care of their younger siblings like Andres, who took care of his two younger brothers while their mother was working abroad in Milan and Miguel whose parents needed help to care for his other nine siblings, doing this care work is not really a big deal.

Another factor that affects care work would be their children's ages. Specific needs may vary and whatever it is that is needed and expected of them depend on that developmental state the child is in. If children are younger as we saw they are more physically dependent on the father. If they are older, security, reproductive health and discipline are the ones they need the most. Though some of the children were left behind at a very young age between one to five years old, there was no one who was interviewed who had children who are just infants. No direct question dealt



with this matter but it seemed that it would have been more difficult to leave children when they are that age.

#### **4.1.2 Care Role Parallelisms**

From these categorizations of the care work of fathers for the home and the children two things are observed. First the extent to which the fathers actually participate and the provision said care for children is highly dependent on their employment status. Are they fully, semi or un- employed? This affects how much time, effort and number of actual activities they do around the home and for their children. It was observed that if fathers are fully or permanently employed they give less time to doing tasks and activities around the house. Recalling Lutz and Palenga-Möllnbeck's study it affirms father's capacity for care provision is heavily dependent on their employment status. (2012: 6-7) As these fathers engage in more "formal" or everyday work they tend to participate less in the provision of care. They also become more dependent on other people much like the other care arrangements detailed in the same study. Grandmothers, female family members like aunts and nieces and even other children, significant carers like tutors and teachers are called upon by these fathers for support. What is different though as evidenced by one father's story is the involvement of a brother or the children's uncle but because Miguel used to care for him when they were younger and they live in the same compound the brother might have other motivations for doing this. There is an advantage to this too since these fathers have steady incomes and that they can hire someone to cover house and other care work. From the global care chain perspective, this would signify the end of the spectrum. The hiring of females from lower income groups to cover reproductive care tasks of migrant mothers is essentially what was seen to link the chain. The non-expectation of fathers to participate in the care or reproductive role poses as an assumption for this link thus excluding them from the responsibility.

Types of care provided by the fathers are also seen to be parallel to Hooyman and Gonyea's (1995 as cited by Yeates 2012) and Lynch and Mc

Laughlin's (1995) *caring for* and *caring about* tasks or activities and to Parreñas' three typifications of care, the moral, emotional and material care. (2001a: 117) From these experiences the respondents have seen care as "caring for" (physical labor) and in most cases the provision of "material care." This care involves chores that are done at home that eventually trickles down and classified as also something that they do for their children. These tasks are cooking and preparing meals, doing laundry, ironing clothes, and cleaning the house. Tending to school needs of children are also classified as providing material care for this paper. As was defined by Parreñas, providing this material care also involves education and skills training (2001a: 117) but since educational institutions (schools, universities, etc) are employed in educating the children, activities that allows them to succeed in academics will be categorized as such. So giving time for actual tutoring and teaching and hiring of tutors are also seen to be a facet of care.

Moving to other dimensions of care that was described by Parreñas, some form of emotional care are also seen to be provided for by the fathers but only to a limited extent. It only answers the emotional needs of children that are prompted when mothers leave. Fathers don't recall actually helping their children coping with other possible emotional stressors such as love life for those who have older children or bullying that can be experienced in school. This can be classified as the *caring about* discussed by Hooyman and Gonyea, along with Lynch and Mc Laughlin. It also limited in that some fathers are unable to respond to it. Most of the answers are they try or that they don't know how. Their socialization earlier on as men may not have allowed them to perform this more expressive duty. Last aspect of Parreñas' care is the moral care, in reviewing the interviews made there was really no actual question on disciplining children that can be a gap of the research because it is also important in understanding how fathers cope in times when children rebel or have bad behavior but some of the fathers indirectly were able to answer as we have seen in the previous paragraphs.

What can be deduced from these experiences and tasks in understanding what is "care" for these fathers? Evidently literature was able to provide for

categorizations of care that was drawn from the interviews, these are said to be expected in families whether transnational or not. The care role, although not expected from fathers, have been executed by the fathers and from their perspective, it somewhat covers the expectations of society. Activities that ensures that children are functioning as children, going to school and being active and that home is maintained are evidently done by them. Although they may think that this is not their territory or that they don't have enough capacity, the idea that for those who are able to raise their children from very young to their teens and for some even into young adults seem to work or have worked. They may say that it was not easy but by just sheer doing it pushed them to cover the basics. Care would seem to be something that is just expected from them now that their wives are away.

If fathers are actually doing the care and that their definition is not far from what society and the mother expect as proper care, we ask if this this has affected the way fathers see themselves as men. What do they feel about being the main carer? Does it have an effect on their masculinity or their perception of what being a man is? If it does have an effect, is it positive or negative in terms of the dominant form of masculinity? As males are not expected to perform such duties, does doing this care role make them feel emasculated or even feminine? In the "good provider" paradigm, can we say that provision of this normative idea of care be a sign that they are actually fulfilling their "more" fatherly role? In literature it is always assumed that what is provided by the "good provider" father is financial that they are the supposed breadwinners of their families but what if this definition is too constrained and can it be that fathers are broadening this definition?

## 4.2 Care work and Re-invention of Good Provider Fathers as Ensuring Continuing Masculinity

### 4.2.1 Fathers Feelings to Care Work and Coping Strategies vs Their Masculinity

In the middle of my interview with Juan, he blurted that “*I can’t do anything, the children are entrusted to me, I try to do that work*, referring to the care and reproductive work, *even though I don’t like it.*” This led me to think that the fathers seemed to be pressed into a corner, doing something that they never wanted to do in the first place. Why? From the discussion above, fathers are seen to cover the basics of care, that they are actually doing it, however they see fit, but why Juan’s statement? Does doing the reproductive or care work challenge something within these men? Using permutations of the question: They say that doing chores around the house and taking care of children are tasks by mothers, what do think or feel about this? Do you think it diminishes your “*pagkalalake?*” or manliness/manhood? Probe. The research wants to understand if being left behind to be a care provider in the home has an effect on how the fathers see themselves as men. Other permutations of the question include: Does working around the house affect your manliness or manhood? What do you feel on doing all this care work at home without your wives?

It is important to note that since I am a female researcher, there were instances that asking these questions along with some probing ones proved too strenuous as some respondents felt that I could not empathize with them and was even called arrogant by one. Instances like these might have affected the accuracy of the information shared by the male respondents. Especially in that the research entails stories that might affect the way they see themselves or that they might over-emphasize their roles that may not be true.

From Juan’s rant above one can say how hard it must have been for him to be left behind. He had the same feelings as Renato, a former factory worker who is

now unemployed; Lito, former full-time tricycle driver; and Conrado, former company pipe fitter. They never thought that being in-charge of the home and doing all these care work for their children will test them. The remnants of what they did before their wives worked abroad have made them realize how tough one should really be because doing care work is hard. Lito, much like Juan, has always questioned his wife's budgeting before going to Macau and become a cook. As a full time tricycle driver and sole breadwinner, he accounted for every peso his wife spends and always questioned her why it was never enough. Now that the situation has flipped, do the mothers question where the money goes if the fathers are the ones budgeting? This can have an indicative effect on men's masculinity as Gresham have found in his 2011 study. I asked spending patterns of some of the fathers depending if the issue came up and only one respondent, Mateo, currently a forklift driver, had explicitly said that his wife guilts (*sumbat*) him every chance she gets because of the situation they are in and how she is earning more than he is. He said that it does not affect him in any aspect and tries to understand that maybe his wife is just having a hard time or that she misses them. For most of the fathers there was no indication that they are being monitored by their wives. This maybe is something that they did not share but it seems unbalanced because from their stories what matters more to the mothers are the well-being of their children. Recalling Renato's story of how his wife did not allow him to work to focus on their children might shed light on this. Are mothers extending their expressive roles from far away? Miguel said that his wife, who is in Kuwait, calls them two to three times a week. Some use Facebook Messenger and Skype so mothers can be abreast of what is happening at home.

Mothers would keep communication with their children but not always with their husbands. Bernardo felt a fall out in their relationships because of non-communication. He said that the separation from his wife, who has been working in Dubai for eight years, made them distant to each other. He admitted that both he and his wife were always waiting for the other to establish contact first and both are hard headed so now they became estranged. Pingol reveals that husbands in these

situations sometimes may choose not to be submissive to their wives, a traditional masculine code she has observed. (Pingol 2001: 151) As was described in 2.2 although men are seen to be reverent to their spouse they may still enjoy higher authority if they are economically active. Bernardo is economically active and holds a post that demands respect in the community. He is currently a *barangay* or small town councilor. The refusal to communicate first seems to be a form of non-submissiveness and from the interview it was observed how proud he is that he is holding up but at the same time sad because of the estrangement.

Changes in how the individual and the people surrounding these fathers are also pivotal in locating themselves as men and its expectations on their provision of care. Pedro, who is only 22 years old, doing all the work on his own made him realize that women's work, pertaining to the reproductive work, is difficult. He explained that women or mothers do more things in general whether around the house or for the children. Before he occasionally volunteers to do laundry but other than that he was confined to looking for work and hanging out with his friends. Since he is still young I probed as to what his friends thought of him raising his five year old son alone. He said that his friends sometimes tease him of how he turned from a bad boy to a good boy and how he has become a "tigasin." *Tigas* a Filipino term describing toughness and because men are expected embody such qualities and not do activities around the house they are often called the term *tigasim* and conjuncts it with the specific chores like *tiga-saing*, *tiga-luto*, *tiga-linis*, etc. (the one who cooks rice, prepares meals, cleans, etc.) The idea of turning from a bad boy to a good boy is interesting to note. What does it mean that he is now considered to be a good boy or in another sense a good man? Recalling the idea of what being a Filipino man is, described in 2.2.2, being responsible for his son and being geared towards the family seem to help in his friends labeling him as a good boy maintaining the norm of the masculine. I asked him if he felt that he matured in the process of being the main carer. He said that he somewhat think he did. From his perspective being mature means not being far away from his child because before he used to go to computer shops and play games all night but now he feels that he should always be there for his child. It would have been interesting if I could have had another father who was also less than 25 to

compare this finding with but across other fathers, for Pedro, the realization that women are doing a lot can be comparable to how fathers, who have just been working before taking over the home and children, must have felt.

When confronting men directly if their masculinity is affected by the situation, all of them responded with a resounding NO. This may be supported by a research that revealed that Filipino men domestic worker in the Netherlands's masculinity is not affected by the sector they work but from other factors like their citizenship in destination country. (Haile 2011: 34) Fathers surviving or triumphing over the situation can also satisfy the assumption that care work can fall into the category of being a "good provider" for these fathers.

Deducing answers from the fathers, these men did not really feel that they felt feminine doing this care work rather for some they said that the activities actually reinforced their masculinity. For Emilio, doing laundry is actually gaining him some "pogi points" (brownie points) with women. He pointed as to how he is even better laundering clothes than his wife and noted that the women in their town will admire him for that. Lito also said that doing this work makes him more "macho" comparing himself to other fathers in the area who don't even have wives who work abroad but leave their children or hurt them. Both Emilio and Lito are "*Kapampangan*", term used to call people from Pampanga, from Emilio's point of view the idea that men are more lauded when they know housework needs to be validated. There have only been a few cultural studies particularly on the masculinity of the men found in the province. (Zamora-Morales 2011: 4) Though like the general findings, it was found out that Kapampangans place great value on men who can provide and protect the family and label them to be real "macho" men. (Zamora-Morales 2011: 4) Kapampangan males, who are the breadwinners in the family, are also said to be pampered by their wives in terms of preparing dinner, etc. (Zamora-Morales 2011: 4) Somehow this was confirmed by another Kapampangan father who was interviewed, Conrado, because he said the reason why he had a hard time coping to his new care role was that he was so used to his wife preparing meals and doing everything before she left to work in Morocco as a domestic helper. This kind of

contradicts the answer of Emilio and Lito but we have to understand that Kapampangans also have a strong tendency to show off their capacities, etc. (Andres 2003 as cited by Zamora-Morales 2011: 4) Emilio and Lito addressing and vocalizing how they are better than other men and sometimes of women may actually be some form of showing off. During the interviews I saw how proud they are in telling their stories and experiences and from it I can't help but laud them for what seems to be a "sacrifice" that they are doing.

How some of these fathers unwind to cope with the stresses of becoming the family's main carer shows what may be perceived as "manly" activities. For example, Juan, engages in gambling by placing small bets in local cockfighting rings. He says that he usually does this when the children are away in school. Bernardo and Francisco enjoy occasional drinking sessions with some of their friends and Miguel go on motorcycle expeditions with his buddies. Looking at these activities closely it is important to deduce if these activities are done to regain masculinity that may have been stripped by the care work they do at home. In Juan's case betting in cockfights is just something to do to kill time or out of boredom. Although sometimes he admits he enjoys it as it makes him forget how hard the chores are, ensuring that he is at home and everything is prepared for his sons when they go home does not seem escapist of the duties at home. It also does not make him manlier. Bernardo and Francisco, on the other hand, don't drink to avoid care work but more to forget or relieve loneliness they feel from having migrant wives. Miguel's motorcycle riding with his buddies is something he does for fun and that sometimes if he knows they are going to be fishing and be near a river or lake, he would also bring laundry with him so he can already check that on the list of things he had to do at home.

Gambling, drinking, and motorcycle riding may be considered manly activities but does not reveal that these activities eclipse the care work they do or escape it for a brief time. These coping strategies may also point to another of Pingol's findings on the earlier research on these men. She noted that if these men aren't able to receive emotional support from their wives, they turn other people for



it: their children, their parents or in bonding with other men, not necessarily like them. (Pingol 2001: 220) These activities do allow for some bonding time with their peers and relieve them of any other stress they have. Other fathers who have businesses like Nestor and Emilio say that they relax from care work when they lose themselves on their productive work. This shows how their masculinity is preserved as they are also able to continue to still do some productive work. Cesar, on the other hand, have a different coping mechanism for the situation as he admitted to having a “*side line*” and have been communicating with a lady friend for some months. His daughter, who was also present during the interview, narrated the instance where they caught their father texting and calling another woman. When asked if their mother knew about it or if they told their mother, she replied that they want to ensure that she will never know and has kept it from her. She said that she and her siblings didn’t want their parents to split up and for them to be a “broken” home much like other migrant families. Sex can be a primal force in the marital relationships when the wife is away and as Pingol saw in her study women tend to allow their husband’s sexual dominance to preserve their masculinity. (2001: 232-233) There can be no proof if Cesar’s wife has an inkling of her husband’s sideline but from the way their daughter described the situation, their mother never called their father’s attention nor questioned him on the matter.

Some also pointed out that if they had had the choice they would really want to be the one to go out abroad and work. Mateo, the company forklift operator is currently getting a technical-vocational degree from TESDA (Technical Education and Skills Development Authority)<sup>4</sup> to become an electrician. He said that after that he plans on taking his chances and also apply abroad. When he gets a job his wife will go home and take over the main caregiver role for their now five year old son. It seems that he needs to find employment outside the country to avoid the constant conflict he sometimes gets into with his wife and earn more than he does now. Andres would also want to do the same, since his mother is already in Milan, and has been doing everything to find work there but so far every petition made for him to

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<sup>4</sup> TESDA is the government agency tasked to manage and supervise technical education and skills development (TESD) in the Philippines. (TESDA, 2014)

go to Italy was denied along with any work applications that he has had. Same sentiments were aired by Cesar, Lito and Renato but since they don't have the means, financially and having the right skills to match overseas work demand, they are stuck into just wishing that they could exchange roles with their wives. It seems that it is easier for Mateo and Andres to have the option with both only having one child and being younger than the other fathers interviewed, they are 30 and 28 years old respectively, than the last three Cesar, Lito, and Renato, who are all more than 35 years old and have three or more children. In terms of motivation however, these five men vary differently, Mateo, Andres and Lito want to work abroad because of the idea that their wives should be the one at home but for Cesar and Lito, they want to work abroad because of how hard doing the care work actually is. These two things might seem the same but looking at it closely it's the socialization that men should be the one working and the women tending the home that makes is different. It is underscored by Mateo, stating that mothers provide a different type of care, care that fathers can't provide because mother's have a natural instinct of knowing what children need and when they need it. For him mothers are more perceptive and are more attuned to what a child needs. Thus, highlighting how mothers and generally women are more sensitive to the needs of others. But are mothers really the only one to have this seemingly natural instinct for the ensuring quality lives for their children? There are studies that contradict each other on whether or not a mother's instinct is natural for all women. Perrier supported the idea of women as natural mothers as true from the observations of the animal kingdom but Fabre and Giard provides a different view and stated that "within the same species one could find classic behaviors associated with maternal instinct and their complete opposite." (as cited by Thomas 2014: 298)

Fathers may feel a little bit fazed if their capacities are questioned. Renato says that his up to the task of teaching his children but it's his sister who does it. He admits that he is not happy with the situation and feels hurt because his two school-age boys prefer to go to their aunt for projects and other school work. Why do the children think that their aunt is more equipped? Children also have biases on their own and in some cases if given the choice they would still prefer fathers to leave and

mothers to stay because they are still seen by the children as better caregivers. (Asis 2006: 62) Other female members of the family, like an aunt, may act as surrogate for the mother.

#### ***4.2.2 Doing Care Work = Becoming Good Providers thus Maintaining Masculinity***

Pingol from her 2001 study revealed that men are re-defining their masculinity in the face of this new situation. From the findings gathered, men are doing this through a broadening of the concept of what is entailed to be masculine as dictated by their socialization as children and the conventions laid out by Philippine cultural norms. The good provider paradigm and becoming a family man allows for such a transition along with certain activities and ideals these fathers still held. What is provided may have been extended now more than to the normative idea of financial support through the fulfillment of their supposed new reproductive role. Also from the findings, fathers still aspire to the expected ideals of still wanting to have a more productive role. Fathers who were unemployed while their wives are away still want to be the breadwinner or at least be able to earn their own money as what was discussed above. The three respondents who are unemployed, Pedro, Andres and Renato, did not want to be employed explicitly to regain masculinity but would want to have a more productive role for their families and be able to have more income for the future. Renato, from the three would have a harder time getting employed because his wife forbade him, he was also seen to be the most anxious father interviewed because of his lack of experience with what he is doing and not having any control of what he can do for the family in the productive sense. For those who are employed they have the delicate task of balancing their time to keep on work and maintain their business whilst not letting the family down by not tending to its needs. This becomes a source of pride for them that they can pull it off, having time for both. The way they cope or unwind is also indicative of how they somewhat escape or ensure that their masculinity remains intact. The dominant idea of what masculine is didn't actually change rather extended and welcomed new ideas of care and how it should be provided. Fathers repeat that these tasks are done because

there is no choice, and throw back the question on who will do the work if they won't. One of the respondents said that taking over the home and children is the natural and expected thing to do and another reiterated that it is indeed part of being a father. It is an obligation, a duty seemingly part of the original role of being a "good father" thus the ease to jump in or participate in this care and reproductive role. The idea of the Filipino egalitarian family also is highlighted when the fathers said that they already shared these responsibilities with their wives even before they left.

The idea that the fathers' definition of the care role coincides with the normative idea of care coupled with how fathers feel of how this care role, that it was more expected than forced suggesting their masculinity is negatively affected. It is rather seen in some ways as reinforced especially that they are "caring for and about" for their homes and children. There might have been some pains in the start but adaptation has happened.

## 5. Mothering Father! Established Male “Care” Identity? A Conclusion

Ever since a significant number of women, who more often than not are mothers, left to work abroad that started in the 1980s, the country has been questioning its possible effects on the Filipino families. With mothers gone the fear of dissolution or breakdown of the family along with the negative impacts on children’s academics and health are fully documented but presented varied results. In this sense it is important to understand if the type of care that they receive be a factor in any of the two situations. From this, the move to analyze the care chain within these families is important. The idea of the chain was brought up by Hochschild in the analysis of the global care chain but there is a lack of extensive findings on the “carers” that are left at home to fill in the care gap or care erosion created. This paper focuses on this further investigating fathers’ contribution to fill in this gap. The possibility of fathers exclusively covering this reproductive role was asked and if they can do a “good” job. This is not without the consideration of the apparent role expectations between genders that have been imbibed in society’s socialization on them.

In answering the research questions posited, we use the model of the grounded theory in Figure 2, to understand fathers’ care definitions and its impacts on their masculinity. The chores and activities that fathers did for their children and in the maintenance of their homes are what they think they needed. Some showed no desire to do it, the pattern of provision fall on the same general categorizations as provided by Hooyman and Gonyea, and Lynch and McLaughlin on the conventions of *caring for* and *caring about* along with Parreñas’ three general classifications of care: material, emotional and moral. From this we can see that fathers’ activities are already in the realm of what is actually expected to be provided for the children. Although there can’t be a generalization on this study’s findings, the idea that fathers are actually doing “it” or the care role may have contributed to how they are affected in terms of their masculinity. The fulfilment of such expectations as Pingol pointed out satisfies the new masculine image and that their care work responds to their children’s needs. There are indeed findings that the men covered want the situation altered so that they are the ones working abroad and the wives at home because the task is too much or too hard. They proved on their part that they are actually doing the care work, some even taking pride that they are good at it. Others have pointed to this as already being part of being a father and in becoming a “good provider.” The idea here is that the

definition of good provider from both the international and national context is too limited and that fathers have expanded the meaning that actually makes them re-define and widen their perception of manhood and continue to reinforce it. From a bigger picture, how does this newly created care identity of men affect the global care chain? If fathers are actually covering the basics of care, becoming resilient and adaptable during this situation with their masculinities intact, can this mean that the care gap or erosion as feared by the literature be closed or bridged? This may also raise the question of whether the idea of the chain is legitimized. This is not to generalize as women are also in other labor sectors but because the trends on the demand for domestic services or workers continue to be of high all over the globe this adaptability and acceptance can prove to be another push factor. Can we say that the chain may never be broken and continue to be longer? Not that its only local women who are domestic workers at the end of it but now also including the men in the picture. Factoring in improvements in technology and communication, absentee mothers can still virtually be there for their children to provide some emotional and moral care this push factor can also be greatly heightened.

The care gap and the social costs of mother labor migration maybe in a few years be a thing of the past due to the evolving roles of each family members in the Filipino home. The fathers and their masculinity question seem to be unfazed and that they the men are able to recognize that both genders are able to provide the reproductive work for the home and children. What then can this mean for social policy? For years the Philippine government and society has been stressing these social costs or burden in families and to some extent conducted support programs for these families from loan assistance to computer literacy to connect love ones. (Edillon 2008: 47-51) These programs are said to have low utilization rates because of lack of awareness or that it is disconnected with the families' needs. (Edillon 2008: ii) Through this research it was found that for families with fathers left behind, the adaptation and the broadening of the concept of care and masculinity for men may mean different set of support. If this allows for mothers to go and work abroad it may be necessary to increase protection for them, not just in the domestic sector but all labor sectors where women are found. More regulations to ensure their security may be needed along with monitoring tools that safeguards their rights. Also, policies for families left behind might be expanded but should start with proper monitoring to gauge the extent of need. The lack of data on the number of mother

absent families is non-existent and tallying their number might be necessary to know what they actually need.

The title for this research is Mothering Fathers! but if fathers are able to expand their capacity for care “fathering” and even “mothering” can have an even more expanded meaning maybe even the same in the future. Care work and its importance is slowly being recognized in the labor market thus any delineation to whoever does it whether in transnational or “normal” families should also be out of the question.

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