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Book review: Multinational maids: Stepwise migration in a global labor market by Anju Mary Paul

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gender. For feminist scholars and students generally, its interdisciplinary and methodological diversity offers a master class on addressing a single question from a variety of perspectives and angles. For those of us who are interested in Georgia, this a necessary work that not only highlights the challenges faced by women and LGBT communities there, but also is a testament to the resilience and strength of those who find paths forward.

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Multinational Maids: Stepwise Migration in a Global Labor Market. By Anju Mary Paul. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2017, 410 pp., \$118 (cloth).

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From Singapore and Tel Aviv to Rome and Vancouver, Filipina domestic workers have captured the hearts of international employers, thanks to their English proficiency, educational attainment, and cosmopolitan outlook. Though confined to indentured servitude in nearly every country, Filipinas trot the world scouring for higher salaries, job security, and even pathways to citizenship. Their Indonesian counterparts likewise undertake multinational journeys, beginning in neighboring Malaysia and concluding in high-wage economies like Taiwan. But while Filipinas view employment in newly industrial economies as a springboard for the West, Indonesians display limited interest in settlement outside origin communities, content as they are with circular migration within Asia. How Filipina and Indonesian domestics attain material welfare through incremental migration projects forms the subject of Anju Paul's *Multinational Maids: Stepwise Migration in a Global Labor Market*. Juxtaposing the constraints and opportunities created by the global demand for reproductive labor, and tracing women's spatial mobility across variegated national landscapes, this book is a refreshing rejoinder to scholarship that overemphasizes the structural forces that disempower migrant agency.

For Paul, stringent immigration barriers have rendered a one-step move to advanced industrialized countries beyond the means of most women from the Global South. Nevertheless, those with the requisite resources and credentials may avail of the myriad migration schemes designed to fill labor shortages in domestic service. Refuting the notion that labor migration universally produces exploitation, in chapter four, Paul painstakingly

evaluates guest worker programs in North America, Asia, and the Middle East to highlight cross-national variations in work conditions. Notably, while Canada's Live-in Caregiver Program imposes stringent service requirements, it provides avenues for permanent settlement, family reunification, as well as a base salary and labor regulations that are generous by global standards. And though Saudi Arabia ranks low in labor compensation and protection, it grants labor-market access to migrant women with little education and income, serving as a stepping stone for those aiming for onward destinations. Hong Kong falls somewhere in between Canada and the Middle East in terms of salary scales, labor protection, and entry barriers, and is a popular transit and final destination for Filipina and Indonesian women. By tethering the right to residence to the employment contract, however, temporary migration induces occupational immobility, encouraging the adoption of what Paul calls "stepwise migration"—a pattern of piecemeal migration by which women toil in multiple societies to accumulate the capital for placement in countries higher up in the destination hierarchy.

Drawing on interviews with 160 Filipina domestic workers in five countries and nonrandom surveys with 1,266 Indonesian and Filipina respondents in Hong Kong and Singapore, Paul breaks new ground by elucidating the role of private agents and human capital in manufacturing "multinational maids." Paul documents how brokers mobilize women's border crossings in the context of sending and host governments' outsourcing of labor management to commercial entities. These intermediaries necessitate and facilitate stepwise migration by requiring women to have prior migration experiences, by marketing workers in transit destinations to third-country employers, and by inculcating migrant ambitions to reach their dream destinations. At the same time, these "traffic wardens" often erect financial and skill prerequisites more demanding than those enacted by host states, rendering stepwise migration a costly and time-consuming affair. Paul points out, for example, that it may cost \$4,200 to secure legal access to the Canadian labor market for Filipinas in Hong Kong, while those departing straight from Manila may have to shoulder \$8,000 in upfront fees, undergo pre-departure training, and wait more than a year for visa processing. Paul also highlights the manner in which migrant human capital—the "institutionally recognized, embodied capabilities and skills such as an aspiring migrant's work experience, foreign language competencies and educational qualifications" (p. 45)—enables women with few financial resources and social networks to overcome the mobility restrictions imposed by states and brokers.

While the book underlines Filipinas' and Indonesians' divergent step-wise trajectories, more comparative insights might be gained through clarifying the structural features of sending country institutions. Although Filipinas' expressed motives for working in destinations as diverse as Canada and Hong Kong are richly layered and compelling, explanation as to why Indonesians' decision making is more circumscribed could be explored in greater depth beyond their religion, education, and other demographic differences. The unparalleled global scale of female emigration from the Philippines might also arise from the exceptional character of the sending state in nurturing its overseas workers' aspirations and human capital—a factor that is considered in chapter three but could be integrated into the overall comparison. Nevertheless, in both its ambitious scope and empirical richness, *Multinational Maids* offers fascinating insights into migrant women's poignant struggles for upward mobility. Students of gender, migration, and labor will find the book provocative and valuable.

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