

benefits including education, health, and social services (Martin, 1995). Anti-immigrant sentiments in California are targeted primarily against Latino migrants. In Italy, the same can be said of African migrants.

In summary, Rome and Los Angeles offer migrant Filipinos starkly different “contexts of reception.” The starkest difference comes in government policies—migrant Filipina domestic workers in Rome are limited to temporary visas, but in Los Angeles they qualify for permanent residency. In fact, domestic workers qualify for the labor certification program that grants residency to migrants whose skills amend the labor shortage in the United States labor market. The demographic composition of the community is also strikingly different, with the one in Los Angeles occupying diverse sectors of the labor market and the other in Rome concentrated solely in domestic work.

Due to the greater integration of Filipino migrants in the United States, it is not surprising that fewer women enter domestic work in this country than in Italy. For this same reason, I anticipated greater differences between domestic workers in Rome and Los Angeles. For example, I expected to find a greater number of women maintaining complete family units in Los Angeles and a lesser number of educated women in domestic work. The varying degrees of integration in these two countries led me to question why domestic workers in Rome and Los Angeles share some experiences. What structural factors propel two distinct groups of Filipina low-wage workers into parallel trajectories? What does the emergence of similarities between them, in spite of their different contexts, imply about the process of globalization?

### *Why a Cross-National Perspective on Migrant Filipina Domestic Workers?*

Despite their large number and wide dispersal, there is still very little academic discussion on the status of migrant Filipina domestic workers. With the exception of Philippine-based publications, existing works include the book-length studies of Nicole Constable (1997) and Abigail Bakan and Daiva Stasiulis (1997c) and articles by the aforementioned scholars as well as by Giovanna Campani (1993a, 1993b), Dan Gatmaytan (1997), Patricia Licuanan (1994), James Tyner (1994, 1999), and Brenda Yeoh et al. (1999).

In contrast to other studies, I present a comparative study of migrant Filipina domestic workers. The insights contained in other studies, however, allowed me to expand my methodological scope. Anthropologist Nicole Constable's (1997) study *Maid to Order in Hong Kong*, for example, offers an

exemplary reading of the contradictions in the daily lives of migrant Filipina domestic workers in Hong Kong. Using a Foucauldian lens, Constable examines the dialectic relationship between discipline and resistance in the lives of migrant Filipina domestic workers, and she shows that their strategies of resistance at times involve conforming to the disciplining imposed upon them by the state, recruitment agencies, and employers. The collection of essays edited by Abigail Bakan and Daiva Stasiulis (1997c), *Not One of the Family*, reinforces the conclusion that the occupational issues of migrant domestic workers extend to the level of the nation-state. They demonstrate that political and social inequalities structure the incorporation of migrant domestic workers into Canada, where they are subject to restrictive temporary visas that require live-in employment and leave them vulnerable to unregulated employment standards.

A comparative study extends the discussions that have been initiated by these scholars. Heeding the call of Alejandro Portes (1997) for more “cross-national comparisons” in the analysis of international migration, a comparative study of migrant Filipina domestic workers contributes to a broader understanding of the significant variables molding their incorporation as migrant workers into the host society. Moreover, a comparative perspective is a tool for studying how similarities emerge in two different settings.<sup>9</sup> By limiting my comparison to domestic workers, I can achieve a feasible study that draws out similarities and differences in experiences across nations.

Another reason I chose to conduct a comparative study is to underscore the emergence of not just a labor migration outflow but a labor diaspora as the particular result of global restructuring vis-à-vis the Philippines. Migrant Filipina domestic workers are the servants of globalization. If, as Ulf Hannerz reminds us, “the contemporary work of globalization involves the globalization of work” (1996: 99), how is a localized occupation such as domestic work globalized? Global restructuring refers to the economic reconstitution triggered by transnational corporatism and postnational finance capitalism (Reich, 1991; Sassen, 1994, 1996b, 1996c). By resulting in a heightened demand for low-wage service labor in global cities, where there is a concentration of highly specialized professionals (for instance, accountants and business consultants), global restructuring engenders multiple migration flows of female workers entering domestic work and consequently results in the globalization of this occupation.

Calling forth a comparative study of migration, globalization requires a shift from a unilocal to multilocal perspective in the analysis of economic activities. A comparative study ensures that a focus on the local does not over-

look the global (Mufti and Shohat, 1997). With the relocation of production in globalization, the decline in manufacturing activities in Pittsburgh, for example, can no longer be understood without the simultaneous consideration of manufacturing activities in other localities, such as export processing in Mexico and informal manufacturing in New York. Though not constituting a traceable relocation such as production activities, low-wage service labor—such as domestic work—should also be understood in a multilocal perspective to emphasize the expansion of reserve armies of cheap labor with the formation of a (low-wage) labor diaspora and the demands for low-wage service workers by the economic bloc of postindustrial nations.

Hence, by showing the emergence of similarities among migrant Filipina domestic workers in different contexts, this study brings to the forefront the significance of their shared position in the global economy. Despite the differences in the particularities of their destinations, migrant Filipina domestic workers do fulfill a similar economic role in globalization. In both Rome and Los Angeles, they are part of the low-wage service workforce of the economic bloc of postindustrial nations. With this in mind, we can see more clearly that a cross-national perspective allows us to truly situate migration flows in globalization and its corresponding macrostructural trends.

Finally, I conduct a comparative study so as to situate the lives of Filipino Americans in a diasporic instead of a domestic perspective (Wong, 1995).<sup>10</sup> A turn toward a diasporic perspective follows the trajectory established by Lisa Lowe (1996) in *Immigrant Acts* of placing the analysis of Asian American experiences in an “international context,” one that is mindful of the construction of Asian American subjects in the globalization of the economy, the foreign policies of the United States, and the resulting migration of Koreans, Southeast Asians, and Filipinos from the wars and foreign presence of the United States in Asia. Extending Lowe’s contention that post-1965 Asian immigration to the United States is a result of colonization, I wish to point out that United States colonialism in the Philippines resulted not only in a migration flow to the United States but also in a labor diaspora that far transcends this country in its geographic scope. The economic turmoil caused by United States colonialism and the subsequent presence of institutions such as the World Bank in the Philippines have led to a migration flow the world over. Notably, the diaspora in which I categorically situate migrant Filipinos is not based on the notion of an essential allegiance among them but instead is based on their particular position as migrant workers in the global economy.

The large contingent of Filipino labor migrants to the United States is

conceivably part of a larger outflow of a hierarchical labor diaspora from the Philippines. Professionals, semiprofessionals, and low-wage workers make up this diaspora. Moreover, the presence of Filipina domestic workers in the midst of the more visible professional migrants in the United States points to this country’s inclusion in the Filipina domestic worker diaspora. Indeed, a large number of undocumented Filipina women in the United States end up in domestic work (Hogeland and Rosen, 1990). The case of the United States invites an assessment of the larger structural forces and migrant institutions that propel a distinct subgroup of Filipinas into domestic work. Thus, I situate the experiences of Filipina domestic workers in a diasporic terrain, one that cannot be understood without the simultaneous consideration of the experiences of their counterparts in other countries. The Filipino labor diaspora is conceivably composed of one labor force in the global economy. By making this point, I do not mean to imply that migrant Filipina domestic workers or Filipino labor migrants have the same experiences the world over. As I show in Chapter 2, the Filipino labor diaspora is segmented by gender and class. Despite my seemingly contradictory findings, I do maintain that experiences in this diaspora are differentiated by social, political, legal, historical, and economic contexts of incorporation. Yet by drawing out existing similarities in their experiences, I wish to move toward finding a cross-national coalitional ground for the Filipino diasporic subject.

### *Filipinos in Globalization: An Imagined Global Community of Filipina Domestic Workers*

As political economist Saskia Sassen states, “International migrations are produced, they are patterned, and they are embedded in specific historical phases” (1993: 97). The contemporary outmigration of Filipinas and their entrance into domestic work is a product of globalization; it is patterned under the role of the Philippines as an export-based economy in globalization; and it is embedded in the specific historical phase of global restructuring. The global economy is the stage that migrant Filipina domestic workers in Rome and Los Angeles have entered in their pursuit of the accumulation of capital. Considering that they perform the same role on the same stage (but in different places) for the same purpose, the emergence of similarities between them becomes less surprising despite the different contexts of their destinations.

The existence of an “imagined (global) community,” using Benedict An-