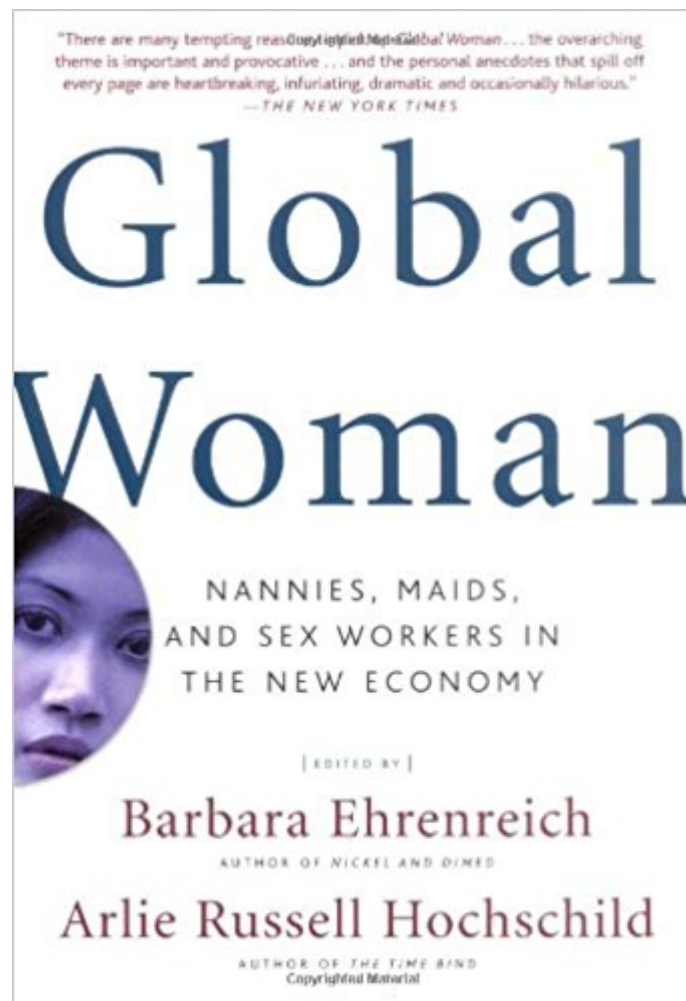


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# Global Woman: Nannies, Maids, And Sex Workers In The New Economy



## Synopsis

"Important and provocative . . . There are many tempting reasons to pick up *Global Woman*."

—The New York Times Women are moving around the globe as never before. But for every female executive racking up frequent flier miles, there are multitudes of women whose journeys go unnoticed. Each year, millions leave third world countries to work in the homes, nurseries, and brothels of the first world. This broad-scale transfer of labor results in an odd displacement, in which the female energy that flows to wealthy countries is subtracted from poor ones—ceasing a "care deficit" in rich countries, while creating one back home. Confronting a range of topics from the fate of Vietnamese mail-order brides to the importation of Mexican nannies in Los Angeles, *Global Woman* offers an original look at a world increasingly shaped by mass migration and economic exchange. Collected and with an Introduction by bestselling social critics Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Russell Hochschild, this groundbreaking anthology reveals a new era in which the main resource extracted from developing nations is no longer gold or silver, but love.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The current discourse on globalization, according to the authors, has little to say about the "migration of maids, nannies, nurses, sex workers, and contract brides," since, to most economists, these women "are just individuals making a go of it." The positive effects of their labor are sometimes noted: the money they remit to home countries is a major source of foreign exchange, and the work they do in the host country enables a large pool of upwardly mobile First World women

to pursue productive careers. The negative consequences, which can include emotional hardships caused by leaving children behind as well as physical strains, are rarely acknowledged. Social critics Ehrenreich (Nickel and Dimed) and Hochschild (The Time Bind) point out that in previous centuries the developed world imported natural resources, and now the import du jour is women, ideally, "happy peasant" women who can care for the elderly and disabled, lovingly raise children and provide sexual services for men. The editors have gathered some 15 essays on aspects of "the female underside of globalization"-e.g., Filipina housekeepers in Hong Kong, Latina domestic workers in Los Angeles, sexual slaves in Thailand, Vietnamese contract brides-mostly written by academics working in the field, but largely jargon-free. While one small book can't say everything about a major global phenomenon, Ehrenreich and Hochschild have at least brought attention to these women's plight. Maps not seen by PW. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The editors present a series of articles on the consequences of globalization on the lives of millions of women (now greatly outnumbering men) as they leave the poverty of Third World countries to seek employment in domestic services for affluent women in First World countries. Ehrenreich and Hochschild report that in the post-Communist world, career-oriented, upper-middle-class women of wealthy nations and striving, adventurous women from crumbling poverty come together as mistress and maid. Focusing on more than the traditional movement of labor on the basis of supply and demand, the articles in this anthology explore the ramifications of this transfer of caring skills as it affects the culture in both poor and wealthy countries. Also considered is the enormous rise in the sex trade, both voluntary and coerced. While immigrant domestic labor is nothing new, the various authors from academia and some with personal experience shed new light on this reality. Mary Whaley Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers: Their Common Element by Rhonda Ragsdale In Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Russell Hochschild's collection of essays, *Global Woman: Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers in the New Economy*, several scholars address the issues of modern domestic workers. While some may wonder what nannies, maids, and sex workers actually have in common, many global feminists find that their connection is obvious. In *"Love and Gold"* by Hochschild and *"Maid to Order"* by Ehrenreich, the authors address the issues of migration as they relate to

the housekeepers and nannies who care for the children of middle and upper class (and mostly white) women. Denise Brennan considers the complexities of women's agency in

“Among Women: Sex Tourism as a Stepping-stone to International Migration.”

• Hung Cam Thai

“Clashing Dreams: Highly Educated Overseas Brides and Low-Wage U.S. Husbands”

• poignantly describes the difficulties feminists and other progressive women face in Vietnam when they want to pursue career goals in lieu of the traditional position of domestic wife and mother. In all of these investigations, women are found using migration and international relationships as an avenue to escape the oppressive nature of their own cultures and economies. It should be of no surprise to social scientists that women are using international migration in the current global world. When faced with adversity, we only have a few options. We can run, fight, or give in. For centuries, women have accepted the status quo or given in to their surroundings for lack of other reasonable options. However, in this modern era, women hear stories and see examples of small and large victories that cause them to reevaluate their options. In the countries of origin considered in the previously mentioned articles, fighting the system was not a realistic choice for most of the women who desired an alternative lifestyle. In light of these factors, migration is a logical result. Since little can be done to change the culture in their own countries, at least in their lifetimes, women hope to use international work or connections to pull them from poverty, violence, and solitude. While nannies, maids, and sex workers have located a way to escape difficult conditions, they are often conflicted over this way out. While working in another country may provide a way to earn money for themselves or their families, many women quickly realize that this kind of work is grueling and degrading. In the case of sex workers, their work often causes them serious threat of disease and death. In addition to usually receiving poor wages and treatment, such as the exploited housekeepers described in

“Maid to Order,”

• women workers are saddened by long separations from their children and other family members. In

“Love and Gold,”

• Hochschild describes the “care drain” that results in the First World's consumption of Third World love. (29) In most cases, women who find the need to work in foreign countries are often compelled by the needs of their own children. Mothers who long to care for their children must often look after, snuggle, and play with others' children to provide basic living for their families at home. While the terms of First World and Third World are general (and can appear monolithic), they explain how the development of some countries results in the underdevelopment of many others in spite of the apparent opportunities for migrant workers. While families in the United States, Europe,

and other places are enjoying the incomes of working mothers, this often leaves a void in the areas of home and child care. Migrant workers must leave their own families to handle the family matters of others, often resulting in the loss of their presence and contributions to their children. (Further study is needed to determine how the children of migrant mothers fare in the global exchange, but indications reveal that their status is not good.) In this way, families from wealthier countries ensure that less advantaged families feel the deficit of care instead of their own. Unfortunately, separation from families and children and exploitive nature of migrant work are not the only issues troubling global women. For example, Brennan explores the limited success of sex tourism workers in

“Selling Sex for Visas.” Brennan explains that while Dominican women are objectified by the sex industry, “sex workers often see the men, too, as readily exploitable potential dupes, walking visas, means by which the women might leave the island, and poverty, behind.” (156) Despite the potential that these men hold, however, few of the women are able to actually marry foreign men. And when they do, they find that the new conditions of living with these men who have already commodified them are often not much better than those they left. While Dominican women engaged in sex tourism hope to find a more egalitarian style of partnership with men, the men they are exposed to are often seeking submissive and subservient women. While the efforts of the women are noble, the pay-offs are limited in terms of income they actually earn and opportunities to leave their country. While many Dominican women use marriage as an attempt to facilitate migration, Hung Cam Thai discusses a group of women who use migration to find marriage in

“Clashing Dreams.” Because highly educated women in Vietnam are often regarded as unfeminine or too old to many, they must seek marriage partners outside their country of origin. While they could be viewed as more eligible marriage partners, persistent patriarchy and paternalism make them undesirable. As a result, Thai investigates the compromising that these educated women must do in order to marry, retain some autonomy, and please their families. Because Vietnamese men do not value their assets, they are forced to look to countries where men will find them acceptable. In the United States and other places, these men may find educated women more suitable than their male counterparts in Vietnam, but they often do not earn enough money to help much in supporting a family or the financial goals of their potential educated spouses. Thai revealed that in most cases, the educated women were forced to accept more submissive positions within the family if they wanted to marry a Vietnamese man at all. All of the situations point to more than a global trend of women using migration to answer issues in their country of origin. Nannies and maids seek domestic work to alleviate the strain of social and economic conditions at

home; sex workers are affected by the same problems. It appears that even educated women cannot break through the powers of sexism and, in fact, their educations may be socially harmful although financially beneficial. These push factors, however, are compounded by strong pull factors in the First World countries. The care drain described by Hochschild is noticeable in occupations that fulfill the roles traditionally held by women in First World nations. Because more women in these areas are working outside the home and outsourcing jobs such as housekeeping and child care, others are needed to take care of these continuing obligations. In addition, men are experiencing less domestic, sexual, and emotional servitude as women in these countries continue to adopt feminist ways. As a result, they too look for others to fill the vacancies. What is at the root of this drain? Is feminism to blame? Should globalization be evaluated for its role? How should we proceed from here? While these questions are complex, some of the answers are actually quite simple. It seems that the same old culprits are mostly men. Although women are often the people hiring housekeepers and nannies, they often feel that they must do this because they do not have enough support from their partners or their children's fathers. If more men would participate fully in the maintenance of their homes and the rearing of children, many of these duties would not be so burdensome. While globalism and feminism have played parts in the trend toward female migration and continued exploitation, these are indirect roles. Although feminists are not directly involved in the misuse of migrant women's labor, they can participate in problem solving. First and foremost, feminists can respond to these trends by becoming aware of them. Women who use international and minority workers as domestic laborers should be very careful of how their money is being spent. We can make sure we understand how women are paid, particularly if using a corporate cleaning or child care service. In light of Ehrenreich's *Maid to Order*, feminists may also want to boycott certain companies who keep most of the money for themselves and pay domestic employees poor wages. Ultimately, Hochschild articulates what we must do. Considering the factors aggravating and feeding the trends discussed in *Global Woman*, "we need to value care as our most precious resource, and to notice where it comes from and ends up." She concludes that, "For these days, the personal is global." (30) Link: [...] Full Citation: Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie R. Hochschild, *Global Woman: Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers in the New Economy* (New York 2003).

This is an absolutely fantastic book that details all of the horrific struggles within the nanny, maid, and sex worker industries. Eye-opening and unforgettable, it is a book that should be read by

everyone. The content is difficult and often times revolting. It is hard to believe that we, as a society, have turned almost a blind eye to some of the issues that are occurring right in front of our eyes. Note: This is a book that you'll only read once. While it is fantastic, it is not something that you'll want to experience over and over again.

The women described in Ehrenreich & Hochschild's book usually live in the shadow of our society. We do not see them very often. They live in fear and are too afraid for letting anyone hear their voice. Human rights activists try hard to help those women in miserable situations. The women are stigmatized as part the lower/lowest social class, while their exploiters do not seem to care about their subject's human rights. The authors give rich descriptions about the circumstances in which those women live, which should be an eyeopener for all concerned with equal rights for women.

Global Woman presents a nice mix of essays that all discuss issues of the global movement of women, particularly from the Third World to First World. In attempts to gain an income for their families, these women face many struggles. From leaving their families in their native countries to submitting to harsh rules by their employers, these women are always under some constant force or pressure. Globalization has been a topic of much study for the last twenty plus years and many books have focused on the politics and economic effects. More and more studies are now demonstrating the human element and how the global movement of people is one result of globalization, one that has many different affects on other aspects of society. Furthermore, these issues of globalization are not isolated to one segment of the population, we as a whole can benefit from certain global processes, but these same practices can also detriment others as well. If we can begin to understand how issues of globalization affect us and out culture, politics, economies, and society, we can begin to offer solutions. Each essay, whether recounting the tale of a nanny, maid, or sex worker, paints and intimate picture of the daily lives of these women, their struggles, their successes, and the reasons they continue such work. Most importantly, these narratives aren't solely written in third person, but on the contrary, the authors allow the reader to hear first hand from the women: the nannies who care for children while their own are thousands of miles away; the maids who work under tight restrictions to both their professional and personal lives; and the sex workers who may or may not be exploiting themselves or who may or may not be trafficked. In each account, the women have various reasons for getting into a certain line of work and each job presents positives and negatives. Another important point is that these women are not always treated well and they are not always treated bad, they don't always get to exercise free will and they

are not always restrained. The women portrayed are both able to make their own decisions yet are products of the decisions others have made. Unlike the reviewer who claims the author is extremely feminist and that "all women subject to these conditions are victims of globalization and capitalization," I would argue that these essays illustrate that globalization brings with it many interesting side effects, one in particular the movement of women away from their homes and to other countries where they are tied to a certain work structure. Are these situations ideal? No, of course not, but the point isn't to lecture about the ills of globalization, but just to demonstrate some other aspects of the phenomenon. I agree somewhat with the reviewer that says no solutions are offered to deal with the problems explored. To an extent there aren't many options presented. On the other side, this book seems to be presenting the issues so that others may find solutions and it never pretends that these essays and authors have all the answers. As the editors note in the introduction, "we hope to make the invisible visible again," (pg.12), to present the issues that immigrant women face and figure out how to "improve the lives and opportunities of migrant women engaged in legal occupations...and prevent trafficking and enslavement" (pg. 13). While I agree with the review about "the topics are clearly delineated between domestic workers, cheap labor and the sex trade" and that the book is "excellent for libraries, research and the well-read individual," I disagree on the careful, fact-filled study. While there are tons of facts and figures, I'm not clear on where they all come from. I see some in the endnotes, but in many places, figures are provided without citation. Additionally, as one review stated, "there are some gaps here, such as the lack of first-person narratives and the views of Eastern European women working in Western Europe," but as the same person states, "no anthology can be all-inclusive." Indeed, this volume seems more dedicated to issues involving women from the Global South who migrate to northern countries and the editors and authors make no secret of that fact. Overall, so far, I think *Global Women* is a decent overview of the issues surrounding globalization and the global movement of women. I think that often, some of the every day, mundane issues are overlooked with a focus on the broader themes. The best part of the book is the narratives of the women themselves, they talk about their situations, their emotions, and it is plain to see how much of a sacrifice they make. Lastly, I think that this collection of essays is a great start for anyone who either wants to know a little about this topic or those who plan to devote their time to future studies of globalization.

This book really gives a full cross-section examination of the 'silent' workforce: live-ins, nannies, etc., that hail from countries outside of the U.S: the social mores, the cultural prejudices (not only racial), the effect of women being the main breadwinner in male-dominant societies. Excellent book.

This book tells you how poor women from Asia specially indonesians and Philippines leave their family kids for a better salary. Lots of facts and stories . Highly recommend!

Very informative and interesting book detailing the role of working women. I loved how this book breaks down cultural ideas about what work it and which jobs are considered important to useful.

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