Global Care Chains, Commodity Chains, and the Valuation of Care: A Theoretical Discussion

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Abstract

While the literature on global care chains is vast and diverse, the theoretical underpinnings of global care chains still require development. One pioneering project to develop such theory can be found in the work of Nicola Yeates. This paper argues that Yeates' work is instructive for both its achievements and its failures. On the one hand, this paper contends that Yeates has contributed to the development of a robust theory which facilitates a feminist reading of global care chains and the many identities that comprise such chains. On the other hand, this paper critiques Yeates' call to apply global commodity chain analyses to global care chains. Specifically, this paper argues that the use of global commodity chain analysis obfuscates the social relations involved in global care chains, and contributes to the devaluation of care and the care relations which comprise care giving and care receiving.

Keywords: Global care chains, commodity chains, value, care

1. Introduction

Global care chains are a theoretical concept established by Hochschild (2000) to describe the growing trend of women migrating to perform care and socially reproductive work. Hochschild's original work on global care chains focuses on care work, particularly in the form of nannies and live-in caregivers, and explores how the women who migrate to perform such work are often part of a 'global chain.' As Yeates (2004a) writes:

> A common care chain typically entails "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." (p. 80, citing Hochschild, 2000, p. 132).

Within such chains, Hochschild argues that surplus value is siphoned from the home countries of migrant workers (usually called periphery countries, in accordance with world systems theory) to the richer countries in the West (called core countries), as women leave behind their own families and care for others. A quote from Wong summarizes this concept: "Time and energy available for mothers are diverted from those who, by kinship or communal ties, are their more rightful recipients" (1997, p. 69, also quoted in Hochschild, 2000, p. 135).

Since Hochschild's original work, many scholars have undertaken research to expand this analysis. For instance, Barber (2011), Barber and Bryan (in press), Hondagneu-Sotelo (2001), Pratt (2009, 2012), Salazar Parreñas (2001, 2002), and Zarembka (2000) provide accounts of women's stories who are involved in global care chains. Sassen (2002) shows how global care chains are linked to feminized circuits of survival, while Fudge (in press) discusses the relation between global care chains and the feminization of migration. Kilkey (2010) incorporates men into global care chain analysis and Manalansan IV (2008) works toward queering this concept. Kofman and Raghuram (2006) and Yeates (2004a) expand the global care chain literature by including skilled workers. Yeates, in particular, has been instrumental in expanding the theoretical scope of this concept (2004a, 2004b, 2005, 2009); exploring her work is the purpose of this paper.

To begin this exploration, I highlight Yeates' achievements in broadening the global care chain concept in sections two and three. In section four, I critique one of Yeates contributions: her call to apply orthodox global commodity chain analysis to global care chains. In particular, I examine the ways in which the application of global commodity chain analysis to global care chains obfuscates and devalues the social relations of caring and care work involved in global care chains.

Such devaluation of care, I argue, is antithetical to Yeates' global care chain work in general, as it fails to capture the complex gendered networks, affects, and relations that take place at the interstices of the local/global, private/public, and political/social/cultural/economic (Marchand & Sisson Runyan, 2011, p. 21) that so characterize global care chains.

2. Global Care Chains: Key Issues

Yeates highlights three main issues related to global care chain concepts: "the presentation of global care chains as being driven by labor markets in the 'core' countries; the portrayal of global care chains being supplied by immiserated women; and the emphasis on the transfer of care rather than its transformation" (2009, p. 48). Each of these issues are aptly demonstrated in much of the global care chain literature, and, as Yeates argues, are highly limiting for this analytical tool.

The first issue discussed by Yeates is the perception that global care chains are driven by a labor shortage in core countries. This viewpoint is demonstrated by Hochschild and Ehrenreich's description of the 'pull factors' of global care chains:

> Thanks to the process we loosely call 'globalization,' women are on the move as never before in history… But we hear much less about a far more prodigious flow of female labor and energy: the increasing migration of millions of women from poor countries to rich ones, where they serve as nannies, maids, and sometimes sex workers. In the absence of help from male partners, many women have succeeded in tough 'male world' careers only by turning over the care of their children, elderly parents, and homes to women from the Third World. This is the female underside of globalization, whereby millions of [women] from poor countries in the south migrate to do the 'women's work' of the north-work that affluent women are no longer able or willing to do. (2002, pp. 2-3)

Such description, while certainly accurate in some contexts, is overly simplistic. Rather, as Yeates argues, there are a multitude of market and non-market factors that drive global care chains (2009, p. 49). For instance, Barber warns against viewing "migrant sending cultures" as unchanging or static (2011, p. 145), and demonstrates this changing nature through a discussion of how governmental and educational changes in the Philippines are an important component in the (re)creation of migration outflows from that country. Salazar Parreñas, citing migration systems theory, asserts that "migration streams are not randomly selected but instead emerge from prior links established through colonialism or pre-existing cultural and economic ties" (2001, p. 2). Finally, Yeates provides the example of the Arab-Gulf countries, which have become prominent 'receiving countries' in global care chains, but whose female citizens do not have high levels of labor participation (2009, p. 49). Thus, despite the fact that much of the literature presents global care chains as responding to the decline of the male-breadwinner model in core countries, ethnographic research often suggests that global care chains are constantly changing and involve a variety of reasons which 'pull' workers from one location to another.

Secondly, Yeates challenges the portrayal of migrant women in global care chains as "immiserated women migrating to ensure the economic survival of their families" (2009, p. 49). This one-dimensional 'immiserated woman' plagues much of the literature on global care chains, which often focuses on desolate women who are forced to leave their family and pursue sex work, jobs as nannies, and maid positions in other countries as their only option to survive. While in certain situations this description is accurate, the women involved in global care chains also come from a variety of backgrounds and privileges. Viewing migrants from one perspective only renders invisible groups who do not fall into this 'immiserated' category. For example, many migrant women in global care chains have advanced education, including medical and nursing degrees (Barber, 2011, p. 149). As Yeates (2004a, 2009) and Kofman and Raghuram (2006) argue, the women who comprise global care chains have a wide range of skills, including high-skilled workers who pursue migration as a way to enhance their local-socio-economic status.

Finally, Yeates notes that the global care chain concept "presents the redistribution of care labor as one-way traffic, involving the transfer of emotional care labor away from the migrant mother's child(ren)… to the child(ren) whom she is paid to care for in the West" (2009, p. 49). For instance, Hochschild asserts that immigrant nannies and care givers often divert feelings originally directed toward their own children toward their young charges and that "…elements in this emotion might be borrowed, so to speak, from somewhere and someone else. Is time spent with the First World child in some sense 'taken from' a child further down the care chain?

Is the Beverly Hills child getting 'surplus' love?" (2000, p. 135-6). Such statements, I suggest, are problematic: while it may be possible to talk about time in a finite sense, is it possible to discuss love in such a way? In other words, can we assert that because women migrant care workers are, perhaps, 'loving' the people they care for, they are necessarily taking love away from their own kin?

Interviews with migrant care workers are illuminating on this point. For instance, in their research on Latina transnational motherhood, Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila (1997) interview Latina care workers who are also mothers separated geographically from their child(ren). These women "distinguish their version of motherhood from estrangement, child abandonment, or disowning" (p. 557), and instead assert that they are good mothers because they are working to provide for their families (even though the work involves caring for other children and often being separated from their offspring). Similarly, Parreñas work illustrates that mothers often remain involved in the care of their child(ren) despite migrating for work (2001). Thus, as Yeates claims, "it may be less that care labor is transferred from one's own child to another child than that a transformation has occurred in the ways in which care labor is provided" (2009, p. 49-50). By challenging the idea that emotional surplus value is transferred solely from periphery countries to core countries, and by arguing for a conceptualization in which there is a value transformation in the types of care provided in both core and periphery countries, Yeates moves global care chain analyses away from focusing on the negative effects of migratory work on care giving, although these too are important and worthy of much attention.

3. Broadening the Global Care Chain Concept

Attempting to remedy the issues mentioned above, Yeates argues that global care chain theory must be expanded in five ways. Firstly, Yeates posits that "the focus on unskilled migrant care labor (nannies and maids) needs to be supplemented by attention to migrant care workers of different skill and occupational levels to reflect the increase in skilled labor migration that has been a feature of contemporary migration" (2004a, p. 81). This suggestion is meant to directly address the second issue identified previously. By expanding the focus of global care chains to encompass a variety of work across all skill levels, not only will global care chains more accurately reflect the diverse range of workers that comprise migratory networks, but it will also help to counter the one-dimensional view of women migrant care workers as desperate.

Yeates further argues that global care chain literature must not only expand its conceptualization of the workers in the chain, but must further expand to "capture the range of family roles that migrant women occupy" (2009, p. 50). Broadening the focus in this way creates space to better understand how migratory care work mediates familial care giving, and the social identities which influence this familial care giving (2009, p. 51). Furthermore, by challenging the assumption that migrant women caregivers are all mothers in heteronormative families, her analysis directly challenges the heteronormative assumptions that often underlie global care chain scholarship. Such a reconceptualization creates space to examine the many positionalities that women occupy, as well as the many familial constructs that exist. In this way, Yeates' contribution facilitates a gendered reading of global care chains that extends beyond heteronormative families and relations.

As a third suggestion, Yeates posits that "while the original global care chain focus lay with the provision of social care, the scope of analysis needs to also encompass the provision of other types of care - health, educational, sexual and religious" (2009, p. 53). This relates to her fourth suggestion of widening the scope of work settings in which global care chain work takes place (2004a, p. 81). Expanding the theoretical framework to include a variety of care work across different settings corresponds to Yeates' view of workers in global care chains- workers have a wide range of skills and often work in a variety of settings and conduct a variety of tasks/types of care giving. Finally, Yeates also rejects the notion that the type of work captured by global care chains is a new phenomenon and insists that global care chain work must be historicized and contextualized (2004a, p. 81, 2009, p. 53).

Thus, building on global care chain theory in these five ways, Yeates provides a more expansive theoretical background from which to understand migratory care work. She moves away from a simplistic reading of the women (and men) who make up global care chains, and allows scholarly work to better capture the many identities, roles, and types of work that occur in global care chains. These reconceptualizations also facilitate a gendered and intersectional analysis of global care chains. The individuals who work in global care chains are understood to be women who occupy numerous positionalities that make up a variety of familial structures and provide a variety of care across different settings. These contributions, I suggest, are a pioneering feminist project that strives to move the research on global care chains toward a gendered perspective.

4. Commodity Chains and Global Care Chains: An Unhappy Meeting?

While I believe that Yeates' achievements are critically important in establishing a more robust theoretical framework from which to explore global care chains, I also contend that one of Yeates' contributions is less helpful. This point is related to Yeates' call to apply orthodox global commodity chain analysis to global care chains (2004b, 2005, 2009). While Yeates is cautious here, noting that a successful application of global commodity chain analysis to global care chains will involve some careful theoretical re-workings, she seems confident that a more thorough application of the tenets of global commodity chain analysis will strengthen global care chain research (2004b, p. 386). In this section, I seek to show that even with theoretical re-working, the application of commodity chain analysis to global care chains is a deeply flawed endeavor, and I argue that such an application will obfuscate the important social relations involved in care work that Yeates has done so much to highlight.

4.1 A Brief Background on Commodity Chains

Commodity chain analysis is a theoretical framework originating in world systems theory (Dunaway, 2014, p. 2; Gereffi, Korzeniewicz, & Korzeniewicz, 1994, p. 1; Yeates, 2004b p. 374; see Wallerstein, 2007, for an overview of world systems analysis). Hopkins and Wallerstein define commodity chains as "network[s] of labor and production processes whose end result is a finished commodity" (1986, p. 159). Each 'step' in the process can be represented by a node, each of which can involve inputs, labor power, transportation, distribution and/or consumption (Gereffi, Korzeniewicz, & Korzeniewicz, 1994, p. 2). Furthermore, "these networks are situationally specific, socially constructed, and locally integrated, [thus] underscoring the social embeddedness of economic organization" (Gereffi, Korzeniewicz, & Korzeniewicz, 1994, p. 2).

Over time, the scholarship on commodity chains has diverged into three main strains, the world systems approach, whose scholars originally coined the term, the mainstream approach developed most fully by Gereffi (1994) and the global value chain framework (Bair, 2005). While similar in many regards, these bodies of work differ in some significant ways, particularly in their conceptualization of surplus value and value added.

Like world systems theory, the original commodity chain analysis framework is highly concerned with understanding the movement of commodities, and thereby profitability, from periphery countries to core countries. From this perspective, the central question is:

> If one thinks of the entire chain as having a total amount of surplus value that has been appropriated, what is the division of this surplus value among the boxes of the chain? (Hopkins & Wallerstein, 1994, p. 49)

In this way, the focus of the analysis is on the distribution and division of value, rather than the creation of value. This intellectual tradition also argues that commodity chain analysis must consider forms of oppression and exploitation beyond the traditional wage worker model: "the chained network is grounded in sexism, racism and drains of surplus from worker households" (Dunaway, 2014, p. 2). As Hopkins and Wallerstein, quoted by Bair, state, commodity chain analysis "start[s] with a radically different presumption" (2005, p. 155), and foregrounds types of exploitation and oppression that are often rendered invisible by/in economic analyses.

The mainstream commodity chain approach, often referred to as global commodity chain analysis, is most influenced by Gereffi's work (Bair, 2005, p. 155). While relying on the fundamental premises of commodity chains from the world systems approach, Bair notes that these two strains differ significantly in terms of the main motivation for research. As mentioned above, the world systems tradition is highly concerned with the distribution of value, and how this distribution (re)produces hierarchical world systems. Global commodity chains, on the other hand, "are principally concerned with the question of how participation in commodity chains can facilitate industrial upgrading for developing country exporters" (Bair, 2005, p. 156). This tradition, therefore, views global commodity chains as networks of firms which can be managed and manipulated for industrial gain, rather than as networks of people who unequally receive value from their work. The focus is on the "organizational power dynamics that exist along a chain" (Bair, 2005, p. 157).

Finally, the global value chain framework is the most recent thread of commodity chain theory. The scholarship in this tradition focuses on the notion of 'value-added,' a subject central to much international business literature (Bair, 2005, pp. 160, 163). Value-added chains focus on the relationships between industrial sectors and seek to "explain variation across sectors in terms of how global production is organized and managed, focusing on the key role of transaction costs" (Bair, 2005, p. 163).

In essence, value is added in different ways/amounts at different points along the commodity chain; understanding these differences can point to the particular characteristics that are amenable to production in specific areas. Unpacking these dynamics is the central concern in the global value chain framework.

It is necessary to emphasize here that the core question of surplus value in the world-systems approach was originally meant to encompass "multiple levels of surplus extraction from worker households at every spatial node of its lengthy network" (Dunaway, 2014, p. 2). That is, commodity chain analysis was meant to acknowledge both productive labor and reproductive labor, and therefore foreground gendered divisions of labor as central to the production and distribution of surplus value. However, as Dunaway notes, despite the differences amongst the three main intellectual strains described above, the majority of research regarding commodity chains have neglected to incorporate informal reproductive work, and thus 'de-gendered' this analytical tool (2014, p. 2). "As of December 2012, the published work of scholars who have 'gendered' commodity or value chain analyses represents less than one percent of the total accumulated research in the three subfields of this approach" (Dunaway, 2014, p. 3).

Despite this particular shortcoming in all three commodity chain approaches, Yeates posits that "there are valuable conceptual parallels that have encouraged an intellectual progression from 'commodity' chain to an expanded global care chain analytic framework" (2014, p. 175). Specifically, Yeates notes that key concepts from the world-systems perspective gave rise to the global care chain concept; these include, for example, the focus on low-paying waged labor and the emphasis on global mobility of both commodities and labor (2014, p. 176). As such, Yeates shows how global care chains are embedded in commodity chain analysis.

4.2 Arguing for Commodity Chain Analysis: A Discussion

In addition to demonstrating the historical-theoretical relation between commodity chain analysis and global care chains, Yeates also argues for "a more rigorous application of the general approach and methods of global commodity chain analysis to care services" (2009, p. 55). At the same time, Yeates is critically aware of the fundamental differences between these two frameworks. Specifically, she highlights two major issues related to the application of commodity chain analysis to global care chains. These issues are related to the difference between commodities and services, and the differences between the market sphere and the sphere of social reproduction (2009).

The fundamental fact that commodity chain analysis is concerned with commodities rather than services is problematic if commodity chain analysis is to be applied to global care chains. For one, services, like care work, are not commodities, and thus the production/consumption nexus is different for services than for commodities:

> In particular, the nature of service production requires the proximity of producer and consumer and the immediate consumption of that service. This, together with the fact that labor has to be brought to the site of production, renders the physical relocation of production away from the site of final consumption (as in commodity production) impossible… [albeit] partial exceptions do exist… (Yeates, 2009, p. 55)

Yeates also notes that services are traditionally thought of as those that directly facilitate commercial operations. This excludes "human services, such as care services, because the transactions involved in them do not 'add value'" (Yeates, 2009, p. 56). Rather, along the global care chain, the care services do not provide additional value at each node; the difference from node to node is in how the care service is valued at the market level, who receives the care, and how the care giver is remunerated.

More importantly, Yeates suggests, is the fact that commodity chains are concerned with the sphere of market production, whereas global care chains are highly related to the sphere of reproduction (2009, p. 56). While the original work on commodity chains may have intended for this analytical tool to focus on all forms of work, including socially reproductive labor, the reality is that much of the literature "consider[s] both social reproductive labor and environmental costs [to be] 'externalities'" (Collins, 2014, p. 28). As a result, Collins explains that the sphere of social reproduction is relegated to a footnote position in commodity chain analysis, as commodity chains focus "narrowly on competitiveness and industrial upgrading… adopt[ing] the models and concepts of marginalist economics," a field with a notoriously narrow view of what constitutes productive labor (2014, p. 30). Because of these issues, Yeates concludes, "what, then, seems at first sight a relatively unproblematic substitution of 'care' for 'commodity' on closer inspection reveals itself to be fundamentally problematic" (2009, p. 57).

Despite such insightful critiques, however, Yeates still sees space to rework commodity chain analysis so as to apply it to global care chains. In particular, Yeates suggests that three elements of global commodity chain analysis, inputs and outputs, territoriality, and governance, can usefully be applied to care chains with amendments (2009, p. 59). These amendments, according to Yeates, largely involve a shift in the focus of commodity chain analysis. For instance, if the organization of inputs and outputs category is expanded with a focus on labor, then, Yeates writes, "the stages of skills acquisition and development of the care worker, the recruitment of care labor, the organization of care systems and the provision of care itself" (2009, pp. 59-60) becomes a central part of the analysis. Similarly, in terms of territoriality, Yeates explains that an application of commodity chain analysis to global care chains must shift the focus "from international relations between firms to networks of labor that mobilise and coordinate the supply of and demand for care labor internationally" (2009, p. 61). Lastly, Yeates claims that when commodity chain analysis is used to assess global care chains, "the focus of governance [must lie] with the regulation of care labor together with the regulation (however minimal it may be) of care provision itself" (Yeates, 2009, p. 61). Thus, by retaining the categorical elements of commodity chain analysis, but significantly changing the focus of these categories, Yeates sees commodity chain analysis as a potential tool for further understanding global care chains.

I agree that, theoretically, the above categories could be remedied as Yeates suggests. However, there is a final issue that arises when applying a global commodity chain framework to global care chains, and I believe that this issue is problematic beyond repair. Yeates writes:

> Since global commodity chain analysis is also concerned with unequal relations underpinning production processes and the cumulative extraction of surplus value by agents throughout the chain, future global care chain analyses must also attend to the distributive and redistributive features of different chains…. The creation and extraction of emotional surplus value throughout the chain does not readily lend itself to quantification; indeed, the value of this type of care labor is difficult to express in monetary terms. However, measuring the extraction of surplus value from the provision of physical labor involved in caring for another/others is possible. (2004b, p. 386)

From this quotation, it appears that, as a part of merging commodity chain analysis and global care chain analysis, Yeates is arguing for a quantification of the value of the labor involved in care work, so as to better understand the distribution of this value. While, again, I agree that theoretically there may be some merit in this, I believe that a quantification of the value of care labor is untenable. In order to explicate, I follow Tronto, who writes:

> The transnational commodification of care is different from other forms of commodification in the global political economy because direct care work - the work required to prepare all humans to live each day, including care for the bodily needs of the infirm, frail, and young as well as of the adults who are healthy and the spaces in which they live - is not really a commodity. If a commodity is something for which one can receive money in exchange, then in some sense care work is a commodity. However, while people can be paid for their 'work,' measured by time spent, the measure of care resists being turned into just another good or service to be sold on the market. Given its often physical and psychic intimacy, good care grows out of the trust that develops among those giving and receiving care. That caring for an infant involves such trust might be obvious, but for people to give a cleaning person a key to their house also involves a high level of trust. Thus, care creates a *relationship* among the parties caring and being cared for: this relationship is not a 'thing.' (2011, pp. 162-3)

While it is beyond the breadth of this paper to fully explore this distinction between care work as a relationship or a commodity, the fact that there is a relational aspect to care work is significant. If one views care and care work as a relationship, rather than a thing, then monetizing the care work involved in global care chains is problematic: how does one value a relationship?

At first, this may seem to be a moot point. For, despite such relational components, care work is often remunerated, i.e. the care worker receives financial compensation for their care giving, thus implying that the market valuation of care is possible. My concern, however, lies with accepting and (re)producing such market valuations. Several scholars have repeatedly shown that many aspects of care work have historically been, and continue to be, invisible in the market (to name but a few, Duffy, 2011; Folbre, 2001; Waring, 1999). Furthermore, as Duffy writes, "being invisible is antithetical to being valued" (2011, p. 36).

Following this logic then, I argue that market valuations of care work at best undervalue the labor involved in care giving, and at worst further render certain aspects of care work invisible by reifying the enormous (unquantifiable) value that is generated in the relational components of care giving and care receiving. Resorting to a theoretical framework which accepts such valuations will only further reify and devalue such work.

To be fair, I believe that Yeates is suggesting that one only attempts to quantify the value of *physical* care labor in global care chains, which arguably leaves the issue of the relational aspects of care work aside. However, if only physical care labor is valued, I suggest that a 'hierarchy' may be created, whereby the physical labor involved in care work becomes 'more valued' than the emotional labor. That is, by putting a financial valuation on a part of care work (physical care labor), and ignoring other aspects of care work (emotional, relational, and affective labor), the underlying message is that the emotional labor involved in care is less important or significant than the physical labor. In fact, similar to when the market value of care work is used, the emotional labor components may be rendered invisible altogether. By (only) quantifying the value of the physical labor of care, the actual concept of what it means to care is changed, as all affective and emotional care work is no longer financially valued. This thereby changes the value of the work done by certain individuals as compared to the work done by others.

For instance, as Duffy (2005) demonstrates, two major conceptual frameworks for understanding care, nurturance and reproduction, can actually hide important differences in care work, and the bodies who do care work. Nurturance is described by Duffy as "a process or practice that has a strong emotional dimension and is based on human connection in relationship" (2005, p. 68), whereas "reproductive labor is defined as work that is necessary to ensure the daily maintenance and ongoing reproduction of the labor force" (p. 70), including "a whole range of activities, some of which are relational, and others of which - such as shopping and doing dishes - are not" (p. 69). As Duffy shows, by focusing on one of these frameworks over the other, certain individuals are excluded from the analysis while others are not: "by focusing on framing care as nurturance, scholars may obscure one of the major axes along which the racial division of reproductive labor has historically occurred" (2005, p. 80). I argue that similar to the nurturance/reproductive division, a division between physical care labor and emotional care labor also risks marginalizing certain groups of individuals who perform 'more' of one type of labor than the other. While on the one hand, "framing the value of certain occupations in terms of emotional and relational skills required… may risk further devaluing those 'menial' jobs that are not perceived to require those skills" (Duffy, 2005, p. 80), only valuing the physical component of care work will likewise risk undervaluing the emotional components involved in certain care giving, and thereby undervalue the work done by those who perform such tasks.

Therefore, given that Yeates has made extraordinary contributions (as delineated in sections two and three) toward the expansion of global care chains to include a variety of identities and positionalities, I believe that her attempt to merge global care chains and commodity chains is contrary to her goal of creating a global care chain framework that is expansive enough to overcome the limitations of earlier frameworks. While Yeates makes a compelling case for a reformed commodity chain analysis which can be applied to global care chains, the issue of quantifying the value of care labor is extremely problematic, and her 'solution' of valuing only physical labor may create a hierarchy in terms of the value of the work provided in global care chains. Global care chain analysis, I assert, is useful if and only if it does not perpetuate the invisibility and devaluation of the care work done by women migrants. Yet, as this discussion reveals, an application of orthodox commodity chains to global care chains, even with several, substantial modifications, makes the continued invisibility/devaluation of certain types of care work (specifically, in this case, emotional care labor) highly probable. As a result, I believe that Yeates' suggestion to use commodity chain analysis will obfuscate the relational aspects of care work, and thus make it difficult to capture the complex and ever-changing realities and identities of those women who comprise global care chains.

5. Conclusion

Yeates (2004a, 2004b, 2005, 2009) has contributed enormously to developing a more robust and dynamic theory of global care chains. In particular, her work has expanded global care chain theory to include a myriad of identities and positionalities that change and are changed through time-space. Although I disagree with her call to apply commodity chain analysis to global care chains, I also believe that this suggestion is instructive despite its failures.

That is, by constantly moving the global care chain theory forward, and seeking ways to develop this body of work, Yeates has done much to develop a theoretical framework from which to examine global care chains.

In my own small hope of furthering that agenda, I have attempted to build on Yeates' work by arguing that an application of commodity chain analysis to global care chains is a dangerous endeavor. While Yeates recommends considerable reforms so as to amend several contentious tenets of commodity chain analysis, the use of commodity chain analysis maintains the need to financially value care. This valuation of care, I contend, only serves to obfuscate the relational and affective aspects of care giving and care receiving. Furthermore, Yeates' suggestion to focus on the valuation of physical care work, as opposed to emotional care work, privileges one component of care work over the other. This may create a hierarchy in which certain types of care work come to be devalued, as do the women who conduct such work. Such devaluation, I assert, is antithetical to the global care chain tool itself, which seeks to illuminate the complex ways in which migratory care work involves power dynamics and uneven distributions of the value produced through care and socially reproductive work.

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