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Associations of Warmth and Control of Filipina Domestic Helpers and Mothers to Hong Kong Kindergarten Children's Social Competence

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Research Findings: Across 63 Hong Kong families, both Filipina domestic helpers and mothers separately rated their own caregiving style (warmth and control) and kindergarten children's social competence. Results indicated that Filipina helpers rated themselves as higher in warmth than mothers did. In addition, self-rated warmth of both caregivers, and Filipina domestic helpers' self-perceived control were correlated with children's social competence. With ratings of warmth and control from both Filipina helpers and mothers included in separate regression equations, mothers' warmth was a strong unique correlate of all measures of children's social competence. However, Filipinas' warmth was uniquely associated with children's responsibility only, whereas their control was uniquely associated with children's assertion and responsibility. *Practice or Policy:* Results extend previous research on the importance of nonparental caregivers for children's social development in a new cultural context.

With a sharp increase in labor force participation among women over the past few decades (Campbell, Lamb, & Hwang, 2000; Tam, 1999), the demand for nonparental child care has increased considerably (Cabrera, Tamis-LeMonda, Bradley, Hofferth, & Lamb, 2000; Chan, 2005; Momsen, 1999). In addition to use of

child care provided by family kin and nursery centers, employment of live-in domestic helpers or nannies has been one of the most common ways to solve the dual problems of household chores and child care for many working mothers in North America, Europe, and Asia (Gregson & Lowe, 1994; Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997; Statham & Mooney, 2003; Tam, 2001). In Hong Kong, for example, statistics from the Hong Kong SAR Government Information Center (2006) showed that there were 223,394 foreign domestic helpers employed at the end of October 2005, nearly double the number recorded from data obtained 10 years previously.

Despite the prevalence of family child care provided by overseas live-in domestic helpers, its effects on children's socialization outcomes have remained largely unexplored. The present study examines how Filipina domestic helpers and Hong Kong mothers rate their own caregiving styles, and how their self-perceived warmth and control levels are associated with perceptions of children's social competence. We begin by highlighting the roles of domestic helpers as caregivers and the attitudes of mothers toward the use of domestic helpers as child care providers. Then we discuss the extent to which nonparental child care may affect children's developmental outcomes, in particular their social competence.

THE CAREGIVING LIVES OF FOREIGN DOMESTIC HELPERS

Influenced by the traditional culture of domesticity, home is often regarded as a cradle that provides children with physical, emotional, and moral nurturing (Tam, 2001; Yeoh & Huang, 1999). Some working mothers (and fathers) in Hong Kong and elsewhere therefore prefer housemaids over institutionalized child care centers when other family members or relatives cannot take up the roles of looking after their children (Tam, 1999; Yeoh & Huang, 1999). These helpers typically live together with the families employing them and share many of the childrearing duties that were originally the sole domain of mothers. Examples include preparing meals and taking children to and from school (Asian Migrant Centre, 1994; Tam, 1999). Most often, these helpers are expected to act as substitute mothers (Tam, 1999). They need to be sensitive to children's needs (Tam, 1999) as well as teach and discipline the children (Hong Kong Christian Service, 2002).

These foreign domestic helpers, who were previously teachers, nurses, or low-paid professionals in their home countries (Asian Migrant Centre, 1995), often possess expertise in child caregiving; in general, they report high levels of warmth toward their employers' children (Chan, 2005). Because the caregiver-child ratio is often fairly low within the family compared to in institutionalized day care centers, foreign domestic helpers are able to devote more individual attention to each child they take care of (Clarke-Stewart, Allhusen, & Clements, 1995). Moreover, because many foreign domestic helpers are mothers themselves and

must leave their homes to earn money for their families, they may sometimes transfer their love for their own children to their employers' children (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997). Some of them even assert that they love their employers' children more than their own children (Chan, 2005). Correspondingly, because of their low social status in the employers' families (Chan, 2005), they may feel pressure to get their employers' children to like them to improve their working situation. Thus, they would prefer to do everything for these children (Hong Kong Christian Service, 2002). Nevertheless, because of their aforementioned low social status in the family (Chan, 2005), they sometimes do not assume the authority to discipline their employers' children. As a result, they are likely to exert low levels of control in caregiving (Hong Kong Christian Service, 2002).

MOTHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD THE USE OF FOREIGN DOMESTIC HELPERS

Meanwhile, working mothers have sometimes reported ambivalent feelings toward the use of foreign domestic helpers for child care provision (Tam, 1999), and they might, in turn, develop poor self-images as "good" mothers. Tam (1999), for example, found that many Hong Kong working mothers regarded family members or relatives as the best child care providers, and hiring foreign domestic helpers as child caregivers was only a compromise in the face of a number of constraints. Momsen (1999) also noted that mothers sometimes felt guilty for reliance on a low-paid worker to carry out the important task of looking after their children. Indeed, such worries have received some theoretical support. According to sociobiological theories, adults are more likely to care for and protect those who will carry their own genes into the next generation; therefore, employing helpers who have no genetic links with the family to look after their children may be problematic (Clarke-Stewart, 2002). In addition, though working mothers are eager to see that the housemaids are affectionate toward their children, they may also perceive close affective ties between foreign domestic helpers and their children as a threat to their positions in the family (Tam, 1999). This is because when children and foreign domestic helpers spend a substantial amount of time together, children are likely to view the helpers as their "second mothers" (Bakan & Stasiulis, 1997). Some mothers thus worry that the close attachment with the helper might overshadow their own relationships with their children (Chan, 2005; Tam, 1999). As a result, mothers who have employed foreign domestic helpers to take care of their children may report low self-ratings in warmth because they may feel guilty for leaving others to take up the important roles of looking after their children and for not being available to spend substantial amounts of time with their children (Chan, 2005; Tam, 1999).

On the other hand, compared to sending their children to formal child care centers, employing foreign domestic helpers often allows working mothers to have more control over how their children are raised (Clarke-Stewart et al., 1995). However, working mothers cannot always ensure that their instructions are followed by the maids. A survey conducted by Hong Kong Christian Service (2002), for example, revealed that, although most parents expect their helpers to encourage children to do some daily tasks by themselves (such as putting their toys back after playing or putting on their own shoes), many of the Filipina domestic helpers preferred doing these tasks for children. Furthermore, 43% of the employers expected their helpers to let children try to resolve peer conflicts by themselves, but only about 11% of the Filipina domestic helpers said they would do that. Therefore, it is also likely that mothers who have employed foreign domestic helpers to take care of their children report low self-ratings in parental control because they can only spend a little time disciplining their children. Nevertheless, because foreign domestic helpers have relatively low social status in the family, mothers are still expected to report higher levels of control for their children than are foreign domestic helpers (Chan, 2005).

To sum up, both foreign domestic helpers and working mothers leave their homes to seek material betterment for their families (Yeoh & Huang, 1999); each of them faces challenges in her new situation. Foreign domestic helpers adjust to their new roles as nonparental caregivers, and they may hold more positive attitudes toward the warmth they provide to their employers' children. Working mothers experience ambivalent feelings about hiring housemaids to look after their children; therefore, they may hold more negative attitudes toward their caregiving qualities.

THEORETICAL VIEWS ON THE USE OF NONPARENTAL CHILD CARE

Though there is a steady increase in the number of families adopting nonparental child care practices, different researchers have different perspectives on benefits, consequences, and problems of nonparental child care (Clarke-Stewart et al., 1995). Sociobiological theories argue that people favor protecting those who are genetically similar (Clarke-Stewart, 2002). Nevertheless, Clarke-Stewart and her colleagues (1995) argued that because domestic helpers have no genetic linkages with their employers, they can perhaps assess children's behaviors more objectively. Attachment theory also suggests that children's relationships with a primary caregiver help them to construct an "internal working model" of the self as worthy or unworthy, though the secure attachments might not necessarily be formed with biological parents (Bowlby, 1969). Other theories that focus on stimulation of children's cognitive and social development further suggest that developmental out-

comes depend on the extent to which caregivers provide stimulating environments for children (Clarke-Stewart et al., 1995). Overall, it may be the quality of child care, rather than who the caregivers are, that affects children's developmental outcomes.

PARENTAL AND NONPARENTAL CAREGIVING AND CHILDREN'S SOCIAL COMPETENCE

Of numerous socialization outcomes, children's social competence was our focus because it has been linked to the influence of nonparental child care across many studies (e.g., Belsky, 1988, 1989; Howes, Rodning, Galluzzo, & Myers, 1988), and it tends to be highly associated with children's positive peer relations and later adjustment in school (Mize & Abell, 1996). In the present study, we focused on the relations among caregivers' warmth and control and children's social competence because high levels of social competence require the abilities to feel what others feel and manage thoughts, emotions, and behaviors to function effectively in social interactions (Halberstadt, Denham, & Dunsmore, 2001; Waters & Sroufe, 1983). Caregivers' *warmth*, which includes their sensitivity toward children's needs in an immediate and appropriate manner (Barnard & Solchany, 2002; Baumrind, 1967), and *control*, which describes caregivers' disciplinary efforts to monitor children's behaviors (Baumrind, 1967), can thus promote children's emotional and social competence (Eisenberg, Cumberland, & Spinrad, 1998; McDowell & Parke, 2005). In particular, given that warmth is often associated with social competence (e.g., high cooperative levels) whereas control is associated with instrumental competence (e.g., good behavioral control; Darling, 1999), the independent rather than joint contributions of caregivers' warmth and control on children's social competence were examined in the present study so as to understand whether parents' and nonparental caregivers' warmth and control are associated with different components of social competence.

Parental responsiveness has consistently been regarded as a key predictor of children's development of social competence (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). This is presumably because parental concern and acceptance provide a secure base for children to explore the outside world (Janssens, Gerris, & Janssen, 1990) and make children hold positive conceptions toward relationships with others (Mize & Abell, 1996). Nevertheless, only a few studies have examined the relation between nonparental care and children's social competence. Clerkx and van IJzendoorn (1992), for example, proposed that when secure relationships are formed between nonparental caregivers and children, the experience of interacting with non-maternal caregivers might train children to express their thoughts and feelings verbally in an explicit manner. Thus, in the present study, social competence and

warmth from both helpers and mothers were expected to be positively associated with children's social competence.

Parental control, in contrast, shows fewer consistent patterns with children's socialization outcomes. Several studies conducted in the West (e.g., Isley, O'Neil, & Parke, 1996; McDowell & Parke, 2003) have found that because controlling behaviors of parents inhibit children's emotional displays, they are associated with poorer ratings of social competence or acceptance by teachers and peers. However, some Chinese scholars (e.g., Chao, 1994) have argued that the control exerted by Chinese parents involves the goal of training children to behave in socially appropriate ways. Thus, control serves an important socialization function for Chinese children. Because the present study was conducted with a Chinese sample, we expected that high parental control would be associated with high social competence. However, in addition, we expected that foreign domestic helpers' control would not be related to children's social competence because children in Hong Kong regard their parents as the sole authority figures in the household; domestic helpers have relatively little power or authority in disciplinary matters with employers' children.

With this background, we examined how foreign domestic helpers and mothers viewed the levels of warmth and control they provided to their children. Then we investigated the associations between their warmth and control, and the developmental outcomes of children's social competence. Given that almost 50% of foreign domestic helpers in Hong Kong come from the Philippines (Hong Kong SAR Government Information Center, 2006), the relation of child care by foreign domestic helpers and children's development outcomes were studied in the context of Filipina domestic helpers. Furthermore, to eliminate the possibility that foreign domestic helpers with more years of service may have more bias in assessing their employers' children than those with fewer years of service, we controlled the effects of foreign domestic helpers' length of service, if any, in our statistical analyses.

Based on the literature reviewed here, we hypothesized that mothers would report lower levels of warmth but higher levels of control for their children than foreign domestic helpers would. Furthermore, both helpers' warmth and mothers' control were expected to be positively associated with children's social competence, whereas mothers' warmth was hypothesized to be more strongly correlated with children's social competence than was the warmth of foreign domestic helpers because of the primacy of the mothers' role for children's socialization.

METHOD

Participants

Sixty-three pairs of mothers and Filipina domestic helpers of children who were in kindergarten were the participants in this study. These caregiving dyads came from

three kindergartens. The pairs cared for 24 boys and 39 girls. The mean age of the children was 5 years and 11 months. The mean ages for the mothers (range = 27–44 years) and Filipina domestic helpers (range = 22–48 years) were 37.2 and 35.1 years old, respectively.

Measures

Questionnaires were used to assess mothers' and Filipina domestic helpers' caregiving styles and children's outcomes. Questionnaires for mothers were written in Chinese, whereas those for Filipina domestic helpers were translated into Tagalog. Both were back-translated by native speakers of each language, respectively, to ensure translation equivalence. Mothers and helpers were instructed to complete these questionnaires separately and were informed that the items on the questionnaires were in different orders for each group so as to reduce chances of bias, particularly for helpers trying to please mothers by answering in socially ingratiating ways.

Caregiving style. To assess both the mothers' and Filipina domestic helpers' caregiving styles, we modified the parenting style scale developed by Berndt, Cheung, Lau, Hau, and Lew (1993). Three out of six warmth items and two out of five control items of the scale were maintained. Six original items were omitted (three each for warmth and control) because the meanings of these items were ambiguous. In addition, three new warmth items ("I smile at the child," "I hug the child," and "I comfort the child when he or she is sad") and two new control items ("I set rules for my child to follow" and "I want the child to obey me") were created. All together there were six warmth items and four control items on the caregiving style scale. All subscales had good internal consistencies (α s = .83 and .74 for the warmth subscale for mothers and Filipina domestic helpers, respectively; α s = .70 and .72 for the control subscale for mothers and Filipina domestic helpers, respectively).

Both mothers and Filipina domestic helpers were asked to rate themselves on a 6-point scale, for which 1 indicated *never* and 6 indicated *always*. Scores were added separately so each participant would have a score on the warmth subscale and a score on the control subscale. Higher scores indicated higher levels of warmth and control.

Children's social competence. Gresham and Elliott's (1990) Social Skills Rating System was used to evaluate children's social competence. The original scale consists of 57 items tapping three behavioral domains, namely social skills, problem behaviors, and academic competence. Because the present study focused mainly on children's social competence, only items related to social skills were used. For the 29 items adopted, there were three subscales. The cooperation subscale included behaviors such as offering help to others and following rules.

The assertion subscale included behaviors such as asking information of others, introducing oneself to new people, and responding to others' actions. The responsibility subscale included behaviors such as communicating with adults and being conscientious about chores. Of the 29 items, 9 were on the cooperation subscale, 10 were on the assertion subscale, and 10 were on the responsibility subscale. The subscales had very good internal consistencies (α s = .84–.89) across mothers and Filipina domestic helpers; the internal consistency reliability coefficients for the overall scale were .94 for both mothers and Filipina domestic helpers.

To differentiate differences across individuals more clearly, we expanded the original 3-point scale to a 5-point scale, for which 1 indicated *never* and 5 indicated *always*. This scale was consistently used for both mothers and Filipina domestic helpers to rate the children on these dimensions. In subsequent analyses, the average of mothers' and Filipina domestic helpers' ratings of children's social competence was used to represent children's overall level of social competence so as to obtain a more comprehensive measure of children's performance.

Demographics. Mothers' questionnaires contained questions regarding their own age, education level, and occupation; the gender and age of their kindergarten child; as well as the length of time the current Filipina domestic helper had been working in the family. Of the Filipina domestic helpers, 9.5% of them had worked in the family for less than 6 months, 11.1% had worked for 6 months to 1 year, 33.3% had worked for 1 to 3 years, 15.9% had worked for 3 to 5 years, and the remaining 30.2% had worked for more than 5 years.

Filipina domestic helpers' questionnaires contained questions regarding their age, educational level, and marital status.

Procedure

Invitation letters were sent to children's mothers who had Filipina domestic helpers in their homes with the help of kindergarten principals. Questionnaires along with consent forms were then distributed to those who agreed to participate in the study; to ensure confidentiality, questionnaires for mothers and Filipina domestic helpers were put in separate envelopes. The answered questionnaires were collected 1 week later. The response rate was about 90%. About 10% of the data collected was not included in the final analyses because it was from maids who came from places other than the Philippines.

RESULTS

First, principal components factor analyses (using varimax rotation) were performed to test whether the modified scale of caregiving style still consisted of two

separate factors (i.e., warmth and control). Our results basically supported this typology. For the caregiving style of mothers, two factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 were produced. They accounted for 30.6% and 21.7% of the variance, respectively. All items loaded strongly (.52–.84) on the expected factors except one, which had similar loadings (.57 and .55) on both factors. For the caregiving style of Filipina domestic helpers, though three factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 emerged, one of them had an eigenvalue of 1.14 only. The scree plot also suggested that there was a significant drop of variance explained between the second and the third factors. Therefore, we could still assume that the scale consisted of only two factors. They accounted for 27.6% and 23.2% of the variance, respectively. All items loaded strongly (.54–.80) on the expected factors.

Next, univariate outliers were screened. In the present study, univariate outliers were defined as cases that had values three standard deviations away from the mean. Among all of the variables, only one outlier was detected in the independent variable foreign domestic helpers' warmth. Because the quality of caregiving offered by foreign domestic helpers might have varied a lot across individuals (Tam, 2001), the case was retained to represent part of the population. At the same time, its raw score was increased by 1 unit so as to reduce the influence of a univariate outlier (Tabachnik & Fidell, 1996).

Independent *t* tests were then performed on all measures to test whether there were differences in ratings of mothers and Filipina domestic helpers. Table 1 presents these mean differences. As shown in Table 1, mothers' self-ratings on the warmth caregiving style scale ($M = 5.11$) were significantly lower than those of Filipina domestic helpers ($M = 5.37, p < .01$). In contrast, no significant differences were observed between the ratings of mothers and Filipina domestic helpers on the control caregiving style scale. The means of Filipina domestic helpers' ratings of children's social competence were significantly higher than those of mothers on all subscales ($ps < .001$ for cooperation and responsibility, and $p < .05$ for assertion).

TABLE 1
Mean (SD) Differences of Ratings of Mothers and Filipina Domestic
Helpers on all Measures in the Final Sample ($N = 126$)

Measure	Mothers	Helpers	<i>T</i> (<i>df</i> = 62)	Correlation
Caregiving style: Warmth	5.11 (.71)	5.37 (.59)	-2.65**	.29*
Caregiving style: Control	3.50 (.72)	3.31 (.97)	1.25	.04
Social competence: Cooperation	2.73 (.77)	3.17 (.85)	-3.84***	.37**
Social competence: Assertion	3.09 (.77)	3.34 (.77)	-2.44*	.45***
Social competence: Responsibility	2.86 (.74)	3.32 (.74)	-4.52***	.39**
Social competence: Overall	2.90 (.67)	3.28 (.72)	-4.08***	.43***

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 2 shows correlations among all continuous measures included in the study. Results indicated that mothers' warmth was strongly associated with children's social competence on all subscales ($r_s = .49, .45, \text{ and } .61$ for cooperation, assertion, and responsibility, respectively; $p < .001$). Filipina domestic helpers' warmth was also strongly associated with children's cooperation ($r = .36, p < .01$), assertion ($r = .30, p < .05$), and responsibility ($r = .36, p < .01$). No significant correlations were found between mothers' control and children's social competence. However, Filipina domestic helpers' control was significantly associated with children's assertion ($r = .30, p < .05$) and responsibility ($r = .26, p < .05$) but not their cooperation. Filipina domestic helpers' length of service was not significantly associated with any components of children's social competence, but it was significantly associated with two other independent variables: foreign domestic helpers' warmth ($r = .37, p < .01$) and control ($r = .26, p < .05$).

Based on these findings, two-step hierarchical regression analyses were performed to analyze the explanatory power of mothers' and Filipina domestic helpers' caregiving self-ratings on various components of children's social competence. The current data set was appropriate for regression analyses because it satisfied the basic assumptions of regression analyses. For example, all of the independent variables were linearly independent (tolerances $> .1$). Though the independent variable foreign domestic helpers' warmth had a negatively skewed distribution, the data were still appropriate for regression analyses because the assumption of multivariate normality was satisfied (the data points lay roughly in a straight diagonal line in the "normal probability plot"; Allison, 1999). Also, the assumptions of homoscedasticity and linearity held, and there were no outliers in the solutions (the standardized residuals of the dependent variable of all cases lie within ± 3.3 ; Tabachnik & Fidell, 1996). Thus, to test the independent contributions of each person, mothers' and Filipina domestic helpers' warmth and control were entered alternately first into the model. The R^2 change results of each step are presented in Table 3. As shown in Table 3, both mothers' and Filipina domestic helpers' caregiving qualities (warmth and control) uniquely explained variance in all components of social competence ($p < .05$).

Table 3 also presents the unstandardized beta weights, standardized beta weights, and standard errors of all independent variables in their associations with children's social competence in the final regression equations. As shown in Table 3, Filipinas' length of service was not a significant correlate for any of the subscales of social competence. Mothers' warmth was significantly associated with all subscales of children's social competence ($p < .01$). Filipina domestic helpers' warmth was only a significant independent correlate in the subscale of responsibility ($p < .05$), whereas their self-rated control was significantly associated with the subscales of assertion and responsibility ($p_s < .05$). In short, mothers' warmth and Filipina domestic helpers' warmth and control were significantly associated with the overall score of children's social competence ($p < .05$).

TABLE 2
Correlations Among Mothers' and Filipina Domestic Helpers' Caregiving Qualities With Children's Social Competence

Item	Caregiving Qualities					Children's Social Competence			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Helpers' length of service	—								
Caregiving qualities									
2. Mothers' warmth	.03	—							
3. Mothers' control	.05	.12	—						
4. Helpers' warmth	.37**	.29*	-.13	—					
5. Helpers' control	.26*	.08	.04	.11	—				
Children's social competence									
6. Cooperation	.22	.49***	.08	.36**	.23	—			
7. Assertion	.00	.45***	.05	.30*	.30*	.67***	—		
8. Responsibility	.02	.61***	.04	.36**	.26*	.76***	.79***	—	
9. Overall	.09	.57***	.06	.38**	.29*	.88***	.91***	.93***	—

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

TABLE 3
 Prediction of Children's Social Competence and Coefficients
 at the Final Step of the Hierarchical Regression Equations

<i>Step and Variable</i>	ΔR^2	R^2	B	SE	β
Cooperation					
1. Helpers' length of service	.05	.05	.05	.06	.10
2. Mothers' warmth	.23***	.28	.39	.11	.41**
Mothers' control			.04	.10	.05
3. Helpers' warmth	.05	.33	.22	.14	.20
Helpers' control			.10	.08	.15
2. Helpers' warmth	.12*	.17			
Helpers' control					
3. Mothers' warmth	.16**	.33			
Mothers' control					
Assertion					
1. Helpers' length of service	.00	.00	-.09	.06	-.17
2. Mothers' warmth	.20**	.20	.34	.11	.36**
Mothers' control			.03	.10	.03
3. Helpers' warmth	.12**	.32	.26	.14	.23
Helpers' control			.20	.08	.29*
2. Helpers' warmth	.20**	.20			
Helpers' control					
3. Mothers' warmth	.12**	.32			
Mothers' control					
Responsibility					
1. Helpers' length of service	.00	.00	-.07	.05	-.14
2. Mothers' warmth	.37***	.37	.46	.09	.53***
Mothers' control			.00	.09	.01
3. Helpers' warmth	.09*	.46	.25	.12	.24*
Helpers' control			.14	.06	.23*
2. Helpers' warmth	.21 **	.21			
Helpers' control					
3. Mothers' warmth	.26***	.46			
Mothers' control					
Overall					
1. Helpers' length of service	.01	.01	-.04	.05	-.08
2. Mothers' warmth	.32***	.33	.40	.09	.48***
Mothers' control			.02	.08	.03
3. Helpers' warmth	.10**	.43	.24	.11	.25*
Helpers' control			.15	.06	.25*
2. Helpers' warmth	.21**	.22			
Helpers' control					
3. Mothers' warmth	.21***	.43			
Mothers' control					

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study demonstrate some unique associations of both mothers' and Filipina helpers' warmth and control with children's social competence. Of interest is that mothers reported lower self-ratings in warmth but not control than Filipina domestic helpers did. Despite this group difference, however, both (a) mothers' and Filipina domestic helpers' warmth and (b) Filipina domestic helpers' control were positively associated with children's social competence. This suggests that the caregiving qualities of mothers and Filipina domestic helpers may play specific roles in children's socioemotional development.

As expected, Filipina domestic helpers rated themselves higher on the warmth scale than mothers did. There are a number of ways in which to explain this finding. For example, the influence of social stereotypes that working mothers appear to be less committed to their roles as mothers cannot be discounted. In this case, mothers might have perceived themselves as less communal and "motherly" than the domestic helpers (Kroupa, 1999). Moreover, similar to nannies in Britain (Gregson & Lowe, 1994), Filipina domestic helpers might have regarded themselves as trained child care professionals. They might, therefore, have rated themselves as higher in responsiveness and affection toward the children.

However, contrary to our previous prediction, no significant differences were observed between mothers' and Filipina domestic helpers' self-ratings of control. The relatively lower status of Filipina domestic helpers in the household may have restrained them from disciplining children somewhat (Hong Kong Christian Service, 2002). Meanwhile, though working mothers assume the role of moralizing with their children (Chan, 2005), their limited interaction time with children may limit their teaching of them. As a result, both groups of women reported similar levels of control.

With respect to children's socialization outcomes, as expected both mothers' and Filipina domestic helpers' warmth were significantly associated with children's overall social competence. Nevertheless, the role played by mothers' warmth on social competence seemed to be different from that of the warmth of Filipina domestic helpers. Mothers' warmth was a consistent correlate with all components of children's social competence. This is not surprising, because the mother-child relationship typically serves as the base for many subsequent interpersonal relationships (Clarke-Stewart & Allhusen, 2002). Though Filipina domestic helpers might form secure attachments with children because they provide them with many of their daily care needs (Constable, 1996), mothers still occupy a unique and special position in children's lives. Maternal warmth gives children feelings of security and trust about the environment (Barnard & Solchany, 2002). This may then minimize children's self-concerns and leave room for them to consider and respond to others' feelings (Janssens et al., 1990) and engage in different forms of social interactions.

Filipinas' warmth, however, was a correlate only of children's responsibility. This significant association of Filipina domestic helpers' warmth implies that the caregiving style of nonparental caregivers can influence children's social development to a certain extent. On the one hand, because there is an additional adult to interact with most days, and greater social stimulation, children's ability to communicate with adults (i.e., responsibility) is possibly enhanced with the presence of a domestic helper. On the other hand, sociobiological theories suggest that children, for the sake of survival, should develop necessary social skills to get along with nonfamilial strangers so as to get adequate amounts of care. Therefore, the experience of getting close to nonparental caregivers in early years may promote children's interactions with adults (i.e., responsibility). Nevertheless, perhaps because foreign domestic helpers often occupy relatively low social status in the family (Chan, 2005), their responsiveness might contain fewer encouragements of compliance and self-independence. Thus, their warmth was not a significant correlate of children's cooperation (helping and complying behaviors) or assertion (initiating behaviors).

On the other hand, contrary to the results of some past studies, mothers' control was not associated with any of the social competence measures tested in the present study. There are two possible explanations for this finding. First, perhaps because working mothers are often away from home during the day, they might have few chances to give immediate feedback regarding their children's interactions with their peers and other outsiders. Thus, their control was not directly associated with children's social competence. Second, because different researchers have adopted different conceptualizations and operationalizations of caregiving qualities and social competence (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [NICHD] Early Child Care Research Network, 2000), it might not be easy to compare findings of different studies in this case. Thus, further studies are required to clarify the relation between parents' control and children's social competence.

In contrast, Filipina domestic helpers' control was found to be uniquely associated with children's assertion and responsibility. This is presumably because domestic helpers are often responsible for taking children to and from school (Asian Migrant Centre, 1994) and monitoring their behaviors at home during the day. Thus, their control levels could facilitate children's ability to initiate behaviors (assertion) and communicate with others (responsibility). However, perhaps because cooperation may require caregivers' moralizing rather than training, and domestic helpers often have little say in the household (Chan, 2005), their control is less likely to be associated with children's cooperation.

Of interest is that findings of the present study confirm the work of some previous researchers, though they contrast with the findings from some others. For example, by finding that nonparental caregivers' warmth is associated with children's cooperation, whereas their control is associated with children's assertion and re-

sponsibility, we confirm Darling's (1999) claim that warmth is more related to children's socioemotional competence and control is more associated with instrumental competence. Moreover, our results are consistent with past studies (NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, 2003) that warmth is a fairly universal predictor of children's social competence, perhaps because caregivers' warmth provides an important anchor from which children can explore the external social world (Janssens et al., 1990). On the other hand, surprisingly, inconsistent with sociobiological theories, the present study found that nonparental caregivers reported higher levels of warmth toward children than mothers did. Such findings, however, do not necessarily mean that the notion of sociobiological theories is not supported. This is because the present study relied on self-reported measures of warmth and control; the reported levels might have been affected by other factors, such as others' expectations of helpers' roles as caregivers and whether helpers met these standards. Future researchers should therefore pay attention to other possible factors affecting the self-reported variables. In addition, by failing to replicate the findings of some Western studies that direct control is negatively associated with social competence (e.g., McDowell & Parke, 2005), we confirm that different cultures can hold different parental values and nonparental child care practices, and different types of nonparental child care might bring different developmental outcomes for children in different cultural contexts (Love et al., 2003). For example, Chao (1994) suggested that Chinese and Western parents may hold different meanings of control and thus adopt different practices for disciplining their children.

The present study had a few limitations that indeed provide directions for future studies in this area. First, the small sample size limited the capability for more complex analyses. For example, it was not possible to examine the interactive effects of caregivers' warmth and control, and mothers' and Filipina domestic helpers' caregiving qualities. Second, only questionnaires were used to assess children's social competence. Objective measures such as naturalistic or laboratory observations should also be included in future studies because ratings of mothers and Filipina domestic helpers might be affected by their different expectations toward the children (Hong Kong Christian Service, 2002). Third, because the present study was a cross-sectional study, it left open the possibility that children could influence their caregivers. Future researchers can therefore undertake longitudinal studies to examine the influence of parents' and nonparental caregivers' warmth and control over time. Last but not the least, in terms of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory, the present study only examined the effects of children's microsystems (i.e., mothers' and foreign domestic helpers' caregiving qualities) on their social competence. Because children develop within complex layers of environment, future researchers can therefore examine factors beyond children's microsystems. For example, given that some kinds of "false kinship" exist among mothers, children, and maids and that strengths of such linkages vary largely across families, future research could explore how various mesosystems

within the family (e.g., the power distance between mothers and foreign domestic helpers), exosystems (e.g., whether foreign domestic helpers receive enough social support to stand against their homesickness), and macrosystems (e.g., the societal attitudes toward the use of “outsiders” as child caregivers and the amount of control nonparental caregivers exert on children) might affect the levels of warmth and control foreign domestic helpers deliver to their employers’ children, and thus children’s socialization outcomes.

To conclude, the present study provides an initial overview of the relation between Filipina domestic helpers’ caregiving qualities and children’s socioemotional development. In light of the current findings that high-quality nonparental child care can foster children’s social competence, in the exosystem, the government should ensure that foreign domestic helpers receive adequate formal training for their child caregiving work. In the mesosystem, mothers should communicate more clearly and effectively with their foreign domestic helpers to negotiate appropriate levels of control for children across caregivers (Chan, 2005). This is because in the macrosystem, different cultures may place different values on caregivers’ use of control (Chao, 1994), and foreign domestic helpers may find themselves caught in the societal dilemma in which they are sometimes treated as socially inferior but are, at the same time, assumed to have the responsibility to stop the misbehavior of their employers’ children (Hong Kong Christian Service, 2002). Nevertheless, no matter which culture they are brought up in, children can grow to be socially competent when parties from different layers of the environment cooperate.

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