

1-16-2022

## The Lived Experiences of Migrant Domestic Workers in Taiwan

Li-Yu Liao

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool\\_dissertations](https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_dissertations)



Part of the [Gender and Sexuality Commons](#), [Inequality and Stratification Commons](#), [Migration Studies Commons](#), and the [Quantitative, Qualitative, Comparative, and Historical Methodologies Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Liao, Li-Yu, "The Lived Experiences of Migrant Domestic Workers in Taiwan" (2022). *LSU Doctoral Dissertations*. 5746.

[https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool\\_dissertations/5746](https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_dissertations/5746)

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at LSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in LSU Doctoral Dissertations by an authorized graduate school editor of LSU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [gradetd@lsu.edu](mailto:gradetd@lsu.edu).

# THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF FOREIGN DOMESTIC WORKERS IN TAIWAN

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Sociology

by  
Li-Yu Liao  
M.A., Texas Tech University, 2013  
May 2022

## Table of Contents

Abstract .....	iii
Chapter 1. Introduction .....	1
Theoretical Framework .....	4
Chapter 2. Literature Review .....	18
The Motivation of Migrating for Overseas Domestic Work.....	18
The Identity of Migrant Domestic Workers .....	21
The Policy, Laws, and Regulations and the Experiences of Migrant Domestic Workers .....	30
The Relationship of Migrant Domestic Workers and the Left-Behind Family.....	35
Chapter 3. Research Methods .....	44
Recruitment and Data Collection .....	44
Methodological Challenges .....	46
Writing Ethnographic Field notes .....	51
Participants .....	52
Interview Guide .....	52
Coding and Analysis .....	54
Chapter 4. Women Embark on A Journey to A Foreign Land .....	55
The Motivations of Taking up Domestic Work Abroad .....	55
The Role of Women Migrants on Decision for Departure.....	62
The Effects of Personal Networks on Migration.....	69
Chapter 5. Negotiations of Migrant Women in Their Daily Work and Life .....	78
Micro Politics within the Territory of the Host Family.....	79
Beyond the Jurisdiction of the Employers .....	86
A Paid Domestic Worker or Like One of the Family?.....	89
Negotiating for Economic Gain and Intimate Relationships .....	100
Chapter 6. Home Bound or Trapped in Circular Migration?.....	114
Serialized Migration.....	116
Barriers to Saving Money .....	119
Homeward Bound .....	121
Chapter 7. Conclusion.....	126
Appendix A. Interview Guide.....	130
Appendix B. IRB Form.....	134
Bibliography .....	135
Vita.....	146

## **Abstract**

The constantly increasing demand of domestic workers in developed and newly industrialized countries had prompted many women of less developed countries migrating to engage in transnational domestic work. Among these newly industrialized countries (NICs) in Asia, Taiwan is one of them with burgeoning market of domestic work. In 2019, Taiwan accommodated 261,457 foreign domestic workers. Indonesian, Filipino, and Vietnamese women constitute the three major groups of the population. Compare to their counterparts in other host countries in Asia such as Hong Kong and Singapore, migrant domestic workers in Taiwan were understudied. This research was committed to explore the experiences of migrant domestic workers in Taiwan. Drawn on in-depth interviews and participant observations, it was found that foreign domestic workers made crucial effort to negotiate the control and surveillance of their employers in the context of restrictive policies, laws, and regulations in relation to foreign domestic workers. The agency of women migrant workers was simultaneously exercised in their negotiations to the daily difficulties they encountered in different phases of migration process. Migrant domestic workers displayed they were active actors in locating overseas employment, resisting the control and discipline of their employers, benefiting from their familial-like relationships with their employers, and securing their intimate relationships in Taiwan.

Keywords: migrant domestic workers, Indonesian, Filipina, negotiation, control and discipline, agency, Taiwan.

## **Chapter 1. Introduction**

The feminization of labor migration has emerged as one of the most important recent trends in international migration over the past decades. The flow of feminized migration has been particularly characterized by women in the Asian and the Pacific region migrating across national borders for paid domestic services (ILO, 2013; UN Women, 2012, 2017; Yamanaka and Piper, 2005). Gulf countries and newly industrialized countries (NICs) in East Asia are the primary destinations for migrant domestic workers, resulting from an increasing demand for domestic work and child/elderly care in these countries (Yamanaka and Piper, 2005). Taiwan is a member of the NICs along with Singapore, Malaysia, and Hong Kong, and has witnessed a stark rise in the number of foreign domestic workers over the past two decades. In 2019, there were 261,457 foreign domestic workers in Taiwan, which is more than two times the number in 1999. Indonesian, Filipino, and Vietnamese women constitute the three major groups of the population. Specifically, Indonesian women account for 79 percent, Filipina women 11 percent, and Vietnamese women comprise 10 percent (Ministry of Labor, 2019).

Feminist migration scholars have provided insights into the experiences of migrant domestic workers (Chin, 1998; Constable, 2007; Gamurd, 2000; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2007; Romero, 1992; Parrenas, 2015). However, these experiences are subject to great degree of variation due to the differentiated contexts of the host countries. Migrant women enter these countries with different migratory status, and therefore are entitled to different working rights. Precisely, migrant women who entered the destination country on a temporary labor contract based on a quota control system experience more restrictive control by the state, placement agencies, and the employers than their counterparts in host countries without such policies. Many Asian countries that host

foreign domestic workers impose stringent immigration policies, labor laws, and regulations on migrant women that significantly influence and shape their experiences.

Taiwan is one of these receiving countries which imported foreign domestic workers on temporary labor contracts and banned migrant women from bringing their family with them upon entering, as well as banning permanent settlement in Taiwan. Moreover, migrant domestic workers were not protected by standard labor acts which made them vulnerable to the control and exploitation of their employing family while lacking accesses to resources outside of the confines of their employer's house. The duration of foreign domestic workers' stay has been extended from 3 years when the live-in foreign domestic workers program began in 1992, to up to 14 years in 2015 (Ministry of Labor, 2015). In these years, employers' legal liability to supervise their domestic workers' engagement in illegal behaviors and activities was also substantially reduced. For example, since 2015, employers are no longer allowed to dismiss domestic workers on the account of pregnancy. And the pre- and post-pregnancy screening during regular check-ups for female migrant workers was also removed in 2015 (Ministry of Health and Welfare, 2015; Taipei Times, 6 August 2016; Taiwan News, 26 April 2017). Yet, foreign domestic workers still are not placed under the standard labor act which is central to the protection of basic working rights and conditions for migrant domestic workers.

The employment environment of migrant domestic workers in Taiwan has significantly shifted in the past two decades. The tasks of foreign domestic workers in the employing family were not specified and regulated by the government until 2004, and since then employers are now prohibited to require foreign domestic workers to perform tasks other than providing care to the elderly or disabled of the employing family (Minister of Labor, 2004). Before the amendment was passed in 2004, foreign domestic workers were responsible for all household chores and care

to the children, elders, and disabled in the employing family. Migrant domestic workers since then are only in charge of providing care to the older people or disabled people and they are forbidden to do any housework that is irrelevant to their care work. Unique to Taiwan, migrant domestic workers also do not care for children, but only elderly and disabled people.

In the early 2000s, national attention revealed that migrant domestic workers were overloaded by isolation, long working hours, low pay, and no protection under the standard labor act, which generated tremendous emotional stress and physical exhaustion for them. Following multiple instances of injury, murder, and suicide, this situation eventually led to a governmental crackdown on the mental health of foreign domestic workers. In addition, there was a famous case that also helped to prompt such legal changes. Liu Hsia, a well-known, but wheelchair-dependent writer, who was also one of the national policy advisors to President of Taiwan was attacked by her employed foreign domestic worker, who was later diagnosed with a mental disorder (Taipei Times, 9 February 2003; Taipei Times, 17 February 2003). Liu Hsia died in the hospital about one week after the tragic incident. The Taiwan government then decided to focus foreign domestic workers' tasks onto the care of the elders and disabled only and diminish, to some extent, the exploitative working environments. In addition, because of the dramatically declining birth rate and the increase in the establishment of private day care with subsidies and public day care, there was no such great demand for childcare. What was needed, was care for older and disabled family members.

These were indeed positive changes in the laws and regulations regarding the work tasks of foreign domestic workers. However, migrant women are also subject to greater employment insecurity because their contract is naturally terminated if the care recipient dies, something that occurs often and abruptly, since most care for the elderly and severely ill. Therefore, migrant

women are not only subject to early termination of their contract if their employers are dissatisfied, but also if the person whom they care for dies.

My dissertation investigates the experiences of foreign domestic workers within the shifting social, economic, demographic, and legal environments of Taiwan. Given changes in immigration policies, labor laws, and global trends in migration, these women's experiences are substantially different and distinct from that of migrant women in the past in Taiwan, and also from foreign domestic workers in other destination countries, such as in the Middle East or the West.

### Research Questions

My project was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the motivations of women migrating for paid domestic work abroad in Taiwan?
2. How are these influenced by the dynamics of their household of origin?
3. What is the relationship of migrant women with their employers? How do women negotiate these relationships? How are these relationships shaped by Taiwanese policies and laws?
4. How does migration abroad shape women's relationships with their families back home?
5. What kinds of migration trajectories do these women experience?

### Theoretical Framework

In the following section, I discuss gender perspectives on migration and the feminization of migration. Each of these perspectives helped me to theorize my dissertation research. Before I move to this discussion, I briefly critique some components of classical migration theories.

Piore's dual labor market theory provides a convincing point of view to explain the constant flows of international labor migration from less developed countries to developed countries.



Piore (1979) argued that there existed a dual labor market in developed countries which have a permanent demand for lower strata jobs, or so-called were so called 3D job (Dirty, Dangerous, Demeaning) that are shunned by the locals. Foreign labor from less developed countries was a response to the structural shortage of labor in developed countries. Taiwan is one of the newly industrialized countries in Asia, like Singapore, Hong Kong, and Malaysia which have an increasing demand for less skilled labor in a variety of sectors including construction, manufacturing, personal and domestic services. These low status, low pay, and lack of security jobs provide a niche for foreign laborers from less developed countries and lead to the importation of migrant contract laborers to the host countries including Taiwan.

However, Piore's explanation overlooked the forces of global capitalism that substantially and increasingly incorporated women from developing countries into the service industry to global cities that demanded low pay and flexible labor to the benefit of the global market economy (Sassen, 1984, 1988). Migrant domestic workers account for a significant portion of female labor forces drawn from developing countries, particularly in specific regions and countries.

Classical migration theories posited that migration functions as a household survival strategy and works to the benefits of migrants and their families back home by diversifying sources of income and accumulating capital by remittances. Scholars (Gordon and Robert, 1981) argued that the movement of migrant labors was based on the implicit agreement of household members. However, what was missing in these early theories was the dynamics of power relations between men and women within the household, which framed and affected why and how migrant women made the decision of embarking on economic journeys overseas (Beneria and Feldman 1992; Bruce 1989; Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994; Lawson 1998). Where some women

who left for paid domestic work in foreign countries were motivated by the purpose of supporting their family, particularly their children, the underlying assumption was that migrant women were only family oriented and undertook overseas employment for the betterment of their family in home nations. Such a perspective overlooks the individual decision-making processes of the women themselves. In addition, the agency of migrant women was neglected in early theories. Since then, feminists have demonstrated that migrant women exerted agency in many ways, and in every stage of migration (Beneria and Feldman 1992; Bruce 1989; Chant 1996; Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994; Lawson 1998; Tinker 1990; Wright 1995; Zlotnik 1995). I now turn to the feminist literature on migration that centers women's autonomy and agency.

### **A gender perspective on labor migration**

Feminist scholars have critiqued conventional theories of migration, including neoclassical, historical-structuralist, network migration, and new economics theories, for not being able to conceptualize the importance gender plays in all aspects of migration. While an overview of each of these theories is superfluous to this dissertation, it is important to mention that in each of these theoretical frameworks, gender was never treated as a central theoretical principle in any of these perspectives of migration. The phrase in migration studies, "migrants and their families" was exclusively referred to "male migrants and their wives and children." Women were not treated as an active actor in migration nor as independent migrants themselves.

In the 1970s, feminist scholars began to remedy the situation in which women were missing in migration research and documented women's migration and their experiences as a labor migrant (Cock 1980; Colen 1990; Heyzer 1986; Jelin 1977; Kossoudji and Ranney 1984). These studies focused on women's migration and emphasized that women not only constituted a significant share of many migration flows but also had different migration experiences from that

of their male counterparts. Specifically, a gender, or feminist perspective on migration emphasizes examining how gender relations are embedded within various social institutions that promote or constrain men and women to migrate, and in turn, how migration bring changes to gender relations in both sending and receiving countries. As Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994) puts it:

Gender is not simply a variable, but a set of social relations that organize immigration patterns. The task, then is not simply to document or highlight the presence of undocumented women who have settled in the United States, or to ask the same questions of immigrant women that are asked of immigrant men, but to begin with an examination of how gender relations facilitate or constrain both women's and men's immigration and settlement.

### **The state's role in gendering migration**

The nation-state exerts a powerful force that facilitates and constrains migration for their nation's men and women. It is well documented that labor sending countries linked the nation's development to international migration, specifically their labor exportation for overseas employment. The direct benefit of labor exportation for the sending countries was the production of remittances which are used to pay foreign debts and improve the balance of payments. At the same time labor exporting can significantly relieve the pressure of under- and unemployment that is prevalent in developing countries (Russel and Teitelbaum, 1992; Massey et al., 1998). Thus, labor sending countries played an active role in controlling and managing the emigration flows of their national labor and sought to attain a greater share of labor contracts in the international labor market.

However, the emigration policy of the sending countries was not equally applied to migrant men and women but rather, exerted gendered conditions for men and women seeking for employment abroad. A telling example of the way that state policies are gendered involves the case of what happened when Sri Lanka and Bangladesh established programs aimed to increase and secure better employment opportunities for their nationals in the international labor market.

In the overseas-employment-oriented program, pre-departure training and orientation were mandatory and constituted as part of a package. However, the cost and access to the pre-departure training was not the same for potential migrant men and women. For men, it might only involve the financial costs of attending the non-residential training by commuting daily long-distance commutes or find temporary accommodation near the training center. For women, there were additional costs and pressures. For one, most women were not accustomed to traveling long distances alone and would need a chaperon, which increased the cost of attending the training. Also, it was not easy for women to find accommodations given that women are less likely to stay at a commercial lodge or hotel. Furthermore, women needed to ensure a greater preparation and coordination of household activities during her absence from home to attend the training. For most men, families and communities do not notice as much when they are away from home during training. In contrast, women's absence from home was much more noticeable because of the greater role women play in household activities. In addition, in the unfortunate case, that a woman was not able to migrate after receiving the training, the community had a greater tendency to misinterpret her absence as having problems in the relationship with her husband (Weeraratne, 2018). Thus, a gender lens on migration means that we need to think critically about how all of these non-financial costs, including the social stigma which is easily associated with a woman's absence from home, might constrain the initiatives and materialization of migration for women in the first place.

In addition, some countries once banned women from seeking overseas employment, particularly women who are low- or unskilled. The assumptions underlying the bans and restrictions meant that the state did not see female migrants as eligible and capable actors to protect themselves from the possible risks and disadvantages with respect to foreign employment

and their circumstances. Second, the state continues to only imagine women as having the reproductive role of the family, and that this role is of the upmost importance to women's lives, and thus women are always considered secondary to the contribution of family income. The assumptions grant the state with justifications of imposing the bans and restrictions on female migration.

However, in the past few decades, the state began to promote female labor migration when the demand for male labor was saturated and shrinking in the world labor market and there was an increase in the demand for women in the domestic and manufacturing sectors (IPS, 2015; Siddiqui, 2008; UN, 2015). These labor sending countries promote overseas employment by marketing national workers in a gendered pattern to cater to the demand of labor importing countries. This is demonstrated in the deployment of national men and women to overseas employment by the sending countries, in which native men and women are channeled to gender-specific occupations based on the notion of sexual division of labor. For instance, the Philippines government has sent Filipino men primarily to construction jobs in the Middle East countries while Filipino women were dispatched to "women's jobs" such as nurses and domestic workers throughout Asia.

In reality, the efforts of acquiring international labor contracts by labor sending countries lies significantly in their marketing strategies. To make Filipino labor more attractive to the potential employers in the labor importing countries, the Philippines government and private institutions employ specific representations of Filipino men and women by attributing "valuable" or "desirable" characteristics to their workers. These representations are generally comprised of gendered stereotypes. The use of representations in which specific occupations and workers are

depicted in distinct, carefully constructed, and easily recognizable images (Tyner 1994, 1996a, 1996b).

The marketing strategies, based on a gender-stereotyped division of labor, are utilized by labor sending countries to promote international employment for their national men and women and are reflective, of and attended to the demand of the gendered, institutionalized labor market in labor receiving countries. Thus, migrant men and women are disproportionately concentrated in specific occupations which usually are low-paid, temporary, and less secured. This is particularly true for migrant women, who have limited options from a much smaller spectrum of occupations than their male counterparts. Namely, migrant women were found concentrated in the categories of either domestic and care service or garment manufacturing which has poor working conditions and migrant women are subject to a high risk of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse considering they work in relatively isolated private households as domestic workers.

### **The feminization of labor migration**

There are many forces that contributed to the feminization of labor migration including, the political-economies of both sending and receiving countries, segmented labor market of the destination countries, and social and cultural norms regulating gender roles and gender relations. The following will explicate how the forces work to the formation of the feminization of labor migration.

#### ***The feminization of migration and pulls from host countries***

A soar of economic growth in advanced industrial countries such as the United States, Canada, and Western European countries since the 1950s has produced numerous job opportunities and created a strong demand for the labor force. As a result, the recruitment of

international labor and internal women entered the workforce as solutions to the deficiency of the labor force due to the tremendous loss of male workforce associated with the participation in the Second World War. Both solutions for making up the deficiency of labor force have contributed to women's migration, internally and internationally. The early international labor was primarily male because most of the jobs generated at the time were in the sectors of industrial and construction. In the situation, women generally migrated to join their husbands or families in the host countries based on the permission of family reunion and they became an important source of the potential workforce in the receiving countries.

Simultaneously, the substantially increasing participation of women in the labor force in these industrialized countries led to a great number of women engaged in paid work outside the home, particularly married women with children. In a study on the rise of women's labor force participation, Costa (2000) demonstrated that this was a significant trend since 1960s and that, this increase was not unique to the United States but also occurred in most industrialized countries. Moreover, the increase in participation of women in paid employment since 1960 was primarily a result of the increase in the paid work participation of married women (Costa, 2000). Therefore, the conventionally unpaid housework and care of children which once was undertaken by women in these industrialized countries, had to find a substitute for this work from either low-qualified local women or foreign women from less developed countries.

In addition, the aging of populations in industrialized countries generated a substantial and sustained increase in the demand of care workers which coincided with the social welfare reforms that were oriented to promote the privatization of public services since 1980s. Thus, there was a drastic curtailment in social services. This shift to liberalization and privatization of social services was initiated by the Reagan and Thatcher administrations in 1980s and

throughout the 1990s (Bendick, 1989; Gurin, 1989). The significant decline of state's role in the funding and providing public services made affordable social services, including child and elder unavailable for many citizens in industrialized countries. As a result, many resorted to the supply of paid domestic workers from the international labor market.

Both demographic changes and the dramatic cut in funds of social welfare services resulted in a sustained increase in the reliance of the developed countries on the supply of domestic and care labor from the less developed countries which were replete with surplus labor.

Consequently, this created a great number of women migrants from the less developed countries to seek employment and economic opportunities in the developed countries by taking on paid domestic or care work. The trend was supported by the report of European Working Conditions Observatory (EWCO), which indicated that majority of those who worked as domestic or care workers were women migrants. In Italy, women migrants accounted for seven out of eight migrants with a regular domestic employment contract in 2004. And women migrants earned about 59 percent of what male migrants did (EWCO, 2010). It clearly reflected the fact that the plentiful supply of cheap and flexible immigrant female workers was able to overcome the structural deficiency of public family care provisions which prevailed among developed countries.

In an increasing globalized market economy, a “global care chain” (Hochschild 2000) emerged. A “global care chain” refers to a pattern where women from less developed countries left their children in their countries of origin to provide her care to the children of well-off families in developed countries. These women migrants, in turn, employed poorer women in their countries of origin to care for their children, creating “a series of personal links between people across the globe based on paid or unpaid work of care.” The care and love, in



Hochschild's words, has transferred from the third world to the first world through the links (Hochschild 2000).

There was a constant growth both in demand and supply of care labor in the globalized labor market which did not only include Western nations, but also newly industrialized countries and oil rich countries in the Middle East and East Asia. These countries began to recruit domestic workers from less developed countries. Since 1970s, oil-rich countries in the Middle East and East Asia became one of the major regions of immigration, including the recruitment of female domestic workers from less developed countries. Migration of this region was particularly characterized by the so called "feminization of migration." Domestic and care services in terms of child and the elderly care appeared to be the fastest growing industry in the globe in which female migrant workers were over-represented.

### ***The feminization of migration and effects on origin countries***

For labor sending countries, whose economic development was at an early stage, they were incapable of providing jobs to the increasing domestic labor force. Thus unemployment and underemployment were the biggest problems in less developed countries. Labor migration to established industrialized and the newly industrialized countries was an effective solution to unemployment and underemployment for the less developed countries. This was indicated by labor exporting policies that were not only a way to cope with the lack of employment opportunities for domestic labor, but also a route to economic development. High levels of unemployment may generate social and political unrest within the society and bring damage to the legitimacy of the government. Moreover, remittances sent home by labor migrants have been acknowledged as a critical source of foreign exchange which not only paid foreign debts, but also financed trade deficits, and improved the balance of payment and the accumulation of

capital for economic development (Agunias, 2006; Hugo and Stahl, 2004; Taylor, 2004). In this sense, sending laborers to developed countries is seen in the same way as the export of any other commodity and became a way to generate foreign earnings that are both, stable and reliable.

Among the major recipient countries of remittances, the top five were India (83.1 billion), China (68.4 billion), Mexico (38.5 billion), the Philippines (35.2 billion), and the Arab Republic of Egypt (26.8 billion). Remittances can account for a critical level of gross domestic product (GDP) of the labor sending countries (UNDESA, 2019). For instance, the Philippines, from which many of my participants migrated, has been recognized as one of the major source countries for labor supply and one of the largest remittance-receiving economies. It was indicated that remittances accounted for about 12% of the gross domestic product (GDP) of the Philippines in 2008, and remittances have become the single most important source of foreign exchange to the economy and a significant source of income of recipient households (Ang etc., 2009). Since the era of the Marcos administration in the mid-1970s, the Philippines government has enacted an emigration policy promoting overseas employment for Filipino labor. The nation's advocacy and high value placed onto labor migrants was reflected in the creation of "Migrant Workers' Day" in which the president awarded outstanding migrant workers and appreciated migrant workers as heroes and heroines of the national economic development (O'Neil, 2004; Wongboonsin, 2003).

For labor sending countries in which women took a significant role in overseas labor deployment, the emigration policy of the state tended to be a critical determinant of female labor migration. Particularly, there was a shift from male-dominated migration to women migrants outnumbering their male counterparts in some labor sending countries that showed a decline in the demand for male labor and a critical rise in female labor in the international labor market. In

labor sending countries, such as the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia, the emigration policy promoted female migration, contributing to the feminization of labor migration in these countries.

In addition, where there was a long tradition of domestic migration in labor sending countries, such as the Philippines, there was a higher likelihood of female emigration (Oishi, 2002, 2005). For example, many of the Filipino women who migrated to the receiving countries of Southeast Asia have tended to come from conventionally domestic mobile areas such as the regions of national capital region and Southern Tagalog. A culture of female migration may be facilitated and reinforced by the penetration of migration into the socialization process of girl children which was linked to the heightened consumerism. Specifically, it was common among women migrants to send their children a lot of toys and gifts for compensate their absence from the household. When children of women migrants have been brought up with material comfort since childhood, many children of migrant families have associated migration with wealth and happiness. Daughters wanted to be like their migrant mothers and sought overseas employment and earned a great amount of money that way. Hence, migrant mothers became a role model for their daughters, facilitating intergenerational migration desires.

#### ***A note on agency***

Despite the state playing a profound role of determining and promoting women migration for overseas employment, the agency of women is critical in understanding motivations for overseas employment. Feminist scholars have revealed the extent to which women migrants displayed autonomy and decision-making power regarding their overseas employment (Huang and Yeoh 1996; Oishi 2002, 2005; Tacoli 1999; Ueno 2008; Yeoh et al. 1999a; Yeoh and Huang 2000). In most cases such as the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, that the vast majority of

women migrants took initiatives to find out about overseas employment and made the decision of whether to go with or without the discussion or consult other family members, i.e. parents or husbands. In some cases, women migrants even left the country over the objections of their husbands or parents while some informed immediate family members only a day or a couple days before the finalized departure (Oishi 2005; Yeoh and Huang 2000).

The capability of women migrants to act on their own will is critical in understanding the initiatives of migration. In my dissertation, I show how women migrants actively negotiated their identities in the process of becoming and being a transnational domestic helper. In addition, they were active sexual subjects, constantly negotiating their sexuality while also acting as a foreign-female-domestic worker, and finally, they were always consciously managing social boundaries with their employers.

#### Organization of Dissertation

The organization of my dissertation proceeds as follow: First I review the literature on women and migration, specifically as it pertains to migrant domestic workers. Next, I provide an overview of my research methods and describe the process and challenges that encountered in the field of data collection during the period of August 2016 to December 2019. Then, I move into my findings. In my first findings chapter, I detail the motivations of migrant domestic workers for taking on employment overseas, and how migrant domestic workers rely on their social networks to manage the challenges of migration and employment. In the next chapter, I examine how migrant domestic workers resist the control and discipline of their employers. I also explore the familial-like relationship of migrant women and their employing family, and the negotiations made by women migrants to retain their intimate relationships in Taiwan. In the third findings chapter, I document migrant women's engagement in serialized migration. I

conclude with a discussion of my findings and highlight other important issues that are worthy of attention and should be explored in future studies of women and migration.

## **Chapter 2. Literature Review**

The phenomenon of women's migration for domestic service in countries other than their home nations has caught attention of scholars of migration and feminist researchers over the past decades. This scholarship has provided impressive insights into the experiences of migrant domestic workers with respect to employer-employee relations in the intimate territory of the employer's home and in different contexts of the host country such as in the West or in the Asia context. In this chapter, I provide an exhaustive review of this literature, focusing on varied aspects of the experiences of migrant domestic workers in distinct, dissimilar context of the host countries. The following review divides the scholarship into four sections that look at different spheres of migrant women's experiences. First, I examine the motives of migrant women undertaking domestic work abroad; second, I explore the deprivation and reconstitution of the identity of migrant women vis-à-vis the control and surveillance of their employers and the destination country; then, I detail the relationship of migrant women and their left-at-home children and husbands; and finally, I examine how the experiences of migrant women are conditioned and influenced by the host country's policies.

### **The Motivation of Migrating for Overseas Domestic Work**

Most of the literature on migrant domestic workers has focused on the determinants which drive women to leave their home countries for overseas domestic work (Barber, 1997; Huang and Yeoh, 1996; Yeoh and Huang, 2000; Zlotnik, 1995). Some scholars emphasized the forces of globalization of capitalist economy which substantially and increasingly incorporated women of developing countries into the service industry to global cities and sectors that demand for low-wage and flexible labor to the benefit of the global market economy (Sassen, 1984, 1988).

Migrant domestic workers account for a significant portion of female labor forces drawn from developing countries, particularly in specific regions and countries where migrant domestic workers account for the majority of exported labor of those countries. Through the globalization of the capitalist economy, women in developing countries become wage labors in private households of industrialized countries undertaking the reproductive work of house chores, caring for the employing family's children, and caring for elderly and disabled family members, while leaving the own reproductive work of their original households to other local women and their female family members. The presence of foreign domestic workers exposes how distinct systems of gender inequality, namely the gendered division of labor within the household, in sending and receiving countries, are linked by the globalized market economy (Parreñas, 2006, 2015).

In addition to the macro forces which commodify domestic labor and drive women to migrate internationally for paid domestic work, some literature shed light on individual migrant workers with respect to the decision-making factors that shape their migration choices (Asis et al., 2004; Dannecker 2005; Gamurd, 2000; Huang and Yeoh, 1996; Oishi 2005; Silvey, 2006; Tacoli 1996; Yeoh and Huang, 2000). The vast majority of migrant domestic workers were motivated by the pursuit of economic goals of supporting and improving the financial conditions of their own family. In addition to meeting the needs of daily necessity for the family, the motivation of taking up domestic work abroad also might be associated with the increasing desires of consumption. Prospective migrants may see the gifts and exotic goods sent home by migrant workers, and admire how their homes were equipped with electronic devices for entertainment, home appliances, fashionable clothing and jewelry. This might increase the desire of prospect migrants and simulate their desires to work overseas (Silvey, 2006). In some cases, the economic goal was geared to facilitate social mobility by sending children/siblings to

expensive private schools, accumulate capital for investment, build or buy houses for the family, build houses to rent out, and/or start a business. It also was found that rather than economic goals, other considerations such as staying away from domestic violence, unhappy marriages, problems with family members, obtaining autonomy, and/or the desire of seeing the outside world, all drove women to become transnational domestic workers (Dannecker 2005; Huang and Yeoh, 1996; Oishi 2005; Silvey, 2006; Tacoli 1996; Yeoh and Huang, 2000). Since a quest for economic betterment was not in conflict with other considerations, migration for overseas employment in effect offered migrant women a socially acceptable way out of these predicaments. In so doing, they insert their personal goals/gains within the family project.

Despite a variety of motivations for undertaking domestic work abroad, migrant women have always played a central role in their own fate. Against the conventional migration theories that the decision of migration (e.g. whether to migrate and who was/were assigned the task) was made by the family of origin and functioned as a strategy of family survival (Massey et al., 1993; Massey 1990a, 1990b), this was not the case for women who migrated for overseas domestic work. Migrant domestic workers were found to be the ones who initiated migration, either by their own accord or by consulting with family members. In some cases, women insisted to do their part in the overseas employment over the objections of their parents or husbands (Tacoli, 1999; Oishi, 2005; Silvey, 2006; Wille and Passl, 2001; Yeoh and Huang, 2000). The importance of individual agency was demonstrated not only in the stage of pre-migration but also in the extension of their stay for more than one work contract, and their decision to continue the work or transfer to a different host country. In this regard, migrant women became more actively engaged in the decision to migrate, and oftentimes, they became the sole decision maker in their



journey of becoming a domestic worker outside of their home countries, even at the expense of leaving behind their family.

However, the presence and exertion of autonomy of women migrants concerning migration-related decisions and their participation in wage job to support their families does not necessarily translate to gender equality within the households. Specifically, neither women migrants nor their husbands thought of women migrants as the head of the household and the main breadwinner of the family, though their earnings constituted the most important, sometimes the only source of income to the family (Asis et al., 2004). Rather, women migrants identified themselves as dutiful daughters and/or sacrificing mothers to help their parents or husbands to support the family (Asis et al., 2004; Parreñas, 2015; Yeoh and Huang, 2000). Thus, women migrant were still responsible for the caring and nurturing of their family after they left for overseas domestic work. The primary identity and responsibilities of the women's gender role within the household of origin remains while they are working abroad, at the same time they still have to bear the responsibility for the rearrangement of care provision. This was reflected in the fact that women migrants left children in the care of other female relatives rather than their fathers (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1997; Parreñas, 2006, 2015).

### **The Identity of Migrant Domestic Workers**

Once they embark on their journey, transnational domestic workers have to constantly (re)define their identity as an intimate member of their original family and a diasporic domestic worker in the host country. Home-bound identity was actively reaffirmed through a variety of different means of communicating with family members while engaging in a diasporic journey as a domestic worker. This entailed physical, social, and cultural dislocation from their original homes. Migrant domestic workers not only face abrupt rupture of physical and sociocultural

familiarity of their home countries by moving to a foreign land but also engage in many negotiations with the host society which seeks to construct migrant domestic workers as outsiders based on the differentiation of nationality, class, race/ethnicity, and gender (Asis et al., 2004; Constable, 2007; Pratt, 2012; Yeoh and Huang, 2000).

The negotiation of establishing or reaffirming the identity of migrant domestic workers often involves strenuous interactions with the host society, specifically with their employers. As foreign domestic workers from less developed countries, migrant domestic workers were perceived by their employers and other folks as less cultivated, less educated, and unskilled poor foreign women. These preconceived notions regarding migrant domestic workers gave employers and the public justifications to control and discipline these less civilized foreign domestics from being led astray legally and morally. One of the most pressing concerns toward migrant workers in general, and migrant domestic workers in particular, is fear that they might become sex workers (Chin, 1997; Constable, 1997; Lan, 2008). Scholars have found that employers use domestic laborers' behaviors and practices on their days off to justify these stereotypes. Even when simply gathering in shopping malls, public parks or the areas around main train and bus stations, they were perceived as physically invading these public places and their behaviors were translated into characteristics of being morally loose and having tendencies of behaving disorderly in terms of societal value and legality (Constable, 1997; Yeoh and Huang, 1996).

Because of this fear that migrant domestic workers may be wrongly influenced on their days off and become lazy and lack commitment to work if they were granted too many days off, many employers sought to control and restrain the mobility of foreign domestic workers. Restraining migrant domestic workers' mobility by making prohibitions on going out and having days off,

and enforcing curfews were commonly adopted by employers to prevent migrant domestic workers from bad outside influences (Constable, 1997; Yeoh and Huang, 1996, 1998; Ueno, 2010). Particularly, in host countries where holidays and days off were not mandated for foreign domestic workers, the struggles over the freedom of mobility were often the focal point of negotiation with employers for migrant domestic workers. In contrast to their counterparts in the West where foreign domestic workers have the option of choosing not to reside with their employing family or only work for one employer, it was mandatory for foreign domestic workers in Asian countries to work as live-in domestics, since their work permits were conditioned on complying with this rule. The imperative confinements of foreign domestics in private houses of employers, together with restrictive immigration policies and the exclusion from labor laws, left migrant domestic workers with even smaller room to negotiate their disadvantaged conditions.

The imagined potential of the uncontained sexuality of foreign domestic workers also shaped their social controls and discipline by their employers. This was a vital way in which employers and the public justified the necessity of controls and restrictions against migrant domestic workers. Migrant domestic workers' sexuality was contained by restricting their mobility, which prevented foreign maids from mingling with male migrant workers and/or become pregnant. There were other explicitly constituted rules for migrant domestic workers within the households of employers. Dress codes and body disciplines for foreign domestics were often seen in the list of household rules required by employers. Attires such as low-cut tops, tight jeans or pants, short dresses and skirts not covering the knees, makeup, perfume, jewelry, and nail polish were prohibited and their hair had to be short and tidy so long as foreign domestic workers were at work (Constable, 1997). The controls over the physical expression of migrant domestic workers were out of the fear and insecurity of their women employers that the physical

attractiveness of foreign maids may pose a sexual threat to them, as there was fear that they would seduce their husbands. In some cases, jealousy and feelings of insecurity lead to the dismissal of foreign domestic workers (Constable, 1997; Lan, 2006, 2008). Furthermore, as scholars pointed out (Glenn, 1986; Rollins, 1985; Romero, 1992), the regulated dress and physical appearances as well as other visible markers that distinguish foreign maids from their mistresses and the employing family, further emphasize the inferiority and subordination of domestic workers to their female employers.

Even with all this stereotyping, body disciplining and social control, scholars found that migrant domestic workers did not just quietly accept the premature perceptions and discriminatory treatments toward them. Instead, migrant domestic workers sought a variety of tactics to cope with the difficulties they faced in order to establish or reclaim their positions and identities. Migrant domestic workers utilized a wide spectrum of tactics to overcome their daily struggles, across the different host societies and individual employing families with whom they worked. These tactics ranged from direct confrontation, ignoring the common insults, and self-scrutinizing or self-disciplining in response to the public criticism and insults (Constable, 1997; Ueno, 2010). Namely, migrant domestic workers may defend themselves by confronting rude and impolite shopkeepers and other service workers during their limited days off, or they may defend themselves by simply continuing to do what they were doing in the public, such as singing and dancing to relax, even with the disapproving stare of passerby's. On the other hand, they might also react to the public surveillance by being very mindful of their moves, for example, only using the public restrooms in high-end places. They also might choose not to frequent the sites where most migrant workers gathered and stay away from discos and pubs,

with the intention of easing the bad perceptions by locals (Constable, 1997; Yeoh and Huang, 1998).

The effort of migrant domestic workers to establish and reclaim their identities was particularly vigorous in the private territory of employers' home. Among the difficulties facing foreign maids, the expected or required deferential performances of migrant domestic workers from their employers was probably the most problematic (Constable, 1997; Lan, 2003; Parreñas, 2015; Romero, 1992; Rollin, 1985; Ueno, 2010). The readiness and willingness to yield to the wishes and orders of their employers in every respect of interactions from migrant domestic workers was important, as it affirmed the higher class and social status of employers and emphasized the subservient status of foreign maids. The confirmation of employers' status was not only accomplished by purchasing the labor of a foreign maid, but also by enforcing a dress code and controlling the daily rituals and practices of language, space use, food distribution, and gestures (Constable, 1997; Lan, 2003; Parreñas, 2015; Romero, 1992; Rollin, 1985; Ueno, 2010). Foreign maids were expected or required to call their employers by last names and/or Miss, Mrs., Ma'am and Sir, while their employers called them by first names. Sometimes names were changed or assigned similar sounding English/Chinese names when employers could not pronounce their names correctly. Regardless of how big or small the house space was, migrant domestic workers were confined to the specific space of the house that was considered as appropriate for them, i.e. kitchen, balcony, their bedrooms if they have one, and the children's playrooms, while the living room was reserved only for the social activities of the employing family and their visitors. Migrant domestic workers were also expected to be invisible and not interrupt their employing family's activities while moving around the house doing chores. Migrant domestic workers were not allowed to eat with employing family at the table and the

food offered to them was not only insufficient but also limited to items of food allowed by employers (Chin, 1998; Constable, 1997; Lan, 2003; Ueno, 2010).

Another distinctive avenue that affirmed the superior status of employers was exerted through the benevolent maternalism which is often seen in the forms of gifts given or other material gains (e.g. loans or salary advances) granted to migrant domestic workers by their employers (Lan, 2003; Parreñas, 2015; Rollins, 1985; Romero, 1992). Literature on domestic work recognized that gift-giving by employers acted as a maternalistic practice which defined domestic workers as needy and were willing to accept goods, including those that employers want to get rid of. At the same time, the unilateral nature of gift-giving made employers to perceive themselves as kind and generous. All this strengthens the class distinctions and the superior status of employers vis-à-vis the servants. Moreover, the maternalistic practices trap employees into a web of debts and obligation which masks the consideration of a raise in wage or benefits. As Mary Romero illustrated (Romero, 1992), in this way of granting favors, making promises, and giving gifts to employees, employers intended to keep their domestic workers working in a low wage and draw out their additional unpaid labor. In a similar paternalistic vein, employers acted in the name of protection for migrant domestic workers by prohibiting days off. The practice was commonly seen for live-in domestic workers in Asian settings in which foreign maids were not given days off because employers claimed the need to protect the workers from mingling with male migrant workers, making bad friends, being cheated, or learning inadequate habits (Chin, 1997; Constable, 1997; Huang and Yeoh, 1996; Lan, 2003; Ueno, 2010). The pattern of protecting migrant domestic workers from getting contaminated by the outside world clearly reflected the perception of employers who defined foreign maids as immature, unable to

make wise and independent decisions, and at the same time accentuated employers as developed, thoughtful and moral guardians.

In face of the numerous forms of deference and maternalism conceived by employers, migrant domestic workers made efforts to negotiate and resist, to a varying degree, the domination of their employers. In host societies with less stringent immigration and labor policies, migrant domestic workers are allowed more options of choosing between different job structures of domestic work, such as live-in or live-out nanny/housekeeper, or housecleaners who work in different houses and for various employers (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2007). Conversely, foreign domestics in host countries that had rigid immigration and labor policies, were exclusively confined to the stint of live-ins, which conditioned the validity of visas and work permits (Chin, 1998; Constable, 1997; Huang and Yeoh, 1996, 1999; Lan, 2003; Ueno, 2010a). Strategies and tactics which the former used to cope with the difficulties they encountered seemed to be distinctive from that of the latter who were left with no option of transferring between different job structures of domestic work. For instance, as argued in previous paragraph, the freedom of mobility of live-in workers in Asia host countries was seriously repressed and it was often the cause of friction between domestic workers and their employers. Moreover, the more institutional constraints imposed onto domestic workers, the fewer alternatives that were left for them, which could severely limit the resources accessible to the workers and their ability to cope with the difficulties. Where some foreign domestics in host countries were permitted to negotiate the master-servant relationship toward a contractual/businesslike, employer-employee relation by working for different houses and working for more than one employer, this strategy of resistance was not accessible to these workers stipulated by state policy as live-ins.

Despite the work environment in which demanding employers exerted excessive and ubiquitous control over live-in foreign domestics, the workers still made efforts to claim their self-worth and maintain their dignity. Women used a variety of tactics (Constable, 1997; Lan, 2003; Parreñas, 2015; Ueno, 2010). When food was restricted, some workers bought their own food and put on a noticeable place in the kitchen to embarrass their employers who provided insufficient or no food at all, others would habitually snatch food while cooking (Constable, 1997; Ueno, 2010). Some workers would consciously reveal the impoverished living conditions of their family in their home country to elicit the sympathy of employers and request loans or salary advances when needed (Parreñas, 2015). Some workers would maneuver emotional displays, such crying or expressing gloom about missing their immediate family to diminish an unreasonable workload. Finally, some women reported talking back to their employers to combat the inhumane treatment as a last resort. However, this was risky and often entailed the cost of being fired or repatriated to the country of origin (Chin, 1998; Constable, 1997; Parreñas, 2015).

These tactics utilized by foreign maids to deal with the difficulties facing them may appear to be limited and even trivial since, as Parreñas (2015) contended, it did not really challenge the script of deference and maternalism which was inherent in domestic work performed by a foreign woman in private home. Nevertheless, it demonstrates the agency of foreign domestics and the complex operation of power in which the domination of employers over the workers did not simply result in adversities to the subordinates (Parreñas, 2015). Instead, domestic workers could subvert the authority and superior status of their employers and manipulate them to attain their goals by using artful tactics. In host countries with particularly restrictive immigration and labor policies, such as Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, in which foreign domestics had little leverage to negotiate for the protection of work rights and decent work



conditions without the state's intervention, these tactics allowed foreign servants to resist, even for just a moment, the perpetual requirement of deference and control by employers.

The exercise and performance of various subtle forms of resistance allowed foreign servants to reclaim their sense of self-worth and humanity, yet, they did not alter the structural asymmetry of power relations between themselves and their employers as well as do anything to improve their work conditions as a whole (Constable, 1997). Foreign domestic workers in the Asian setting were still confined to constant surveillance and control by their employers while also being excluded from the protection of labor laws, partly derived from state's stringent immigration and labor policies toward foreign domestics.

Scholars have found that laws and policies in some Western nations permitted foreign domestics' options of transferring from live-ins to live-out domestic workers, that gave workers bargaining chips to negotiate better work conditions. These strategies reduced their dependence on just one employer. Some could construct contracts that clarified which tasks would be performed and charged by the house instead of by the hour, allowing workers more control over the work pace and method. These domestics presented themselves as professional housecleaners by displaying a wide range of accumulated knowledge of cleaning by working in a variety of homes and avoid offering personal services which involved emotional labor that further distinguished them from maids (Romero, 1992; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2007). Consequently, these efforts attempted to transform the mistress-domestics relationship which widely held in the domestic service to the one of customer-vendor was gradually and effectively established. However, the transition toward a businesslike relationship between employers and domestic workers was hardly possible and practical for foreign domestics in Asian host countries, as

foreign maids were subject to the stringent guestworker system which disallowed the freedom of changing employers by their own will.

### **The Policy, Laws, and Regulations and the Experiences of Migrant Domestic Workers**

Scholars have emphasized the role of the state in the control and management of foreign domestic workers by immigration policies (Chin, 1998; Constable, 1997; Lan, 2007; Huang and Yeoh, 1996; Tan, 2014; Yeoh, and Huang, 2004). In receiving countries where the government actively and forcibly engaged in the control of migrant domestic workers' entry and employment, foreign domestic workers were viewed as alien others (different race and ethnicity as well as non-citizens) and deprived of work rights and decent work conditions. This is particularly evident in receiving countries in Asia, where migrant domestic workers' entry and repatriation were strictly controlled by the immigration policy of the host countries. Specifically, foreign domestic workers were authorized to enter only by the sponsor of employers and were forced to stay in the employers' houses. Foreign domestic workers cannot transfer to a new employer by will or to a new job in the non-domestic industry, at least on their first work contract (Cheng, 2020; Chin 1998, 2005; Huang and Yeoh, 1996; Vivienne Wee and Amy Sim, 2005; Yeoh, Huang, and Gonzalez 1999; Yeoh, Huang, and Devasahayam 2004). Thus, foreign domestic workers were both confined to employers' houses and the domestic sector industry while being excluded from the protection of standard labor law which renders them particularly vulnerable to exploitation and abuses.

The live-in practice makes migrant domestic workers overloaded with long working hours with some even staying available 24 hours a day, and yet many are underpaid and are withheld salaries. The mandated stay in the private home of employers puts migrant domestic workers under the extensive surveillance by the employers and they were not allowed free movement

even on their off days, if any. The isolation of foreign domestic workers from the outside world subjects them to mistreatment and exploitation while leaving them with limited access for help at the same time. As a result, foreign domestic workers were particularly vulnerable to exploitation and abuses in such confinement (Chin, 1997, 1998; Constable, 1997; Huang and Yeoh, 1996; Yeoh, Huang, and Devasahayam 2004). Moreover, the validity of work permits for migrant domestic workers was not only tied to the stipulated duration of employment, ranging from one to three years, but also more often to the will of employers. Specifically, migrant domestic workers' work contract might be prematurely terminated by employers but not the other way around. Once the contract was terminated, migrant domestic workers were faced with immediate repatriation (Chin, 1998; Constable, 1997; Lan, 2007). Therefore, foreign domestic workers generally refrained from reporting experiences of mistreatment to government authorities (Chin, 1998; Constable, 1997; Huang and Yeoh, 1996; Yeoh, Huang, and Devasahayam 2004).

The state's strict controls over migrant domestic workers were not only based on class, race/ethnicity and nationality but were also contingent on gender. This is reflected in the regulatory measure of medical examinations for foreign domestic workers before/at their arrival and the duration of employment in receiving countries. However, this regulation only applied to lower skilled but not professional foreign workers. Migrant domestic workers were mandated to receive pregnancy tests before/at their arrival and in the period of work contract in addition to the medical examinations that all categories of migrant workers have to take. With the exception of Hong Kong and Taiwan, migrant domestic workers were seen as breaching the contract with their employers as well as violating immigration policy if they were found pregnant. Those who were found pregnant were subject to the termination of work contract and faced immediate repatriation (Chin 1997, 2005; Huang and Yeoh, 1996; Tan, 2014; Yeoh, Huang, and Gonzalez

1999). The measure of prohibiting migrant domestic workers from pregnancy and giving births as the conditions to the validity and legality of employment was an extension of the strict immigration policy which aimed to ensure these foreign domestics are no more than just transient and disposable workers.

In practice, migrant domestic workers were afraid of being sent home, which meant they could not make money while bearing a huge loan in their home country. If migrant domestic workers found themselves pregnant, they would have to risk either running away, working illegally in the host country or seeking an abortion without the knowledge of their employers in order to retain their jobs. In cases where women were unwilling or unable to take these risks, migrant domestic workers were left with no choice but prematurely terminate their contracts with their employers and were repatriated (Constable, 1997, 2020; The Guardian, Jul. 22, 2019; The New Humanitarian, May 26, 2016; The Strait Times, Dec. 3, 2015; Reuters, Nov. 8, 2017, and Dec. 17, 2019; Yeoh, Huang, and Gonzalez 1999). To prevent foreign domestics from having access to permanent residency or citizenship as well as using social services and welfare benefits, host countries not only keep migrant domestic workers on temporary contracts at the outset but also extend the controls to surveil their bodies and sexuality to make it difficult for them to establish their own family there. The message of such a policy is that foreign domestic workers are expected to do no more than to provide their labor to the receiving countries' household that are in need of caring. They are expected to be just a foreign domestic worker, who is out of the protection of labor law, but not a woman, and not even a human being.

In Hong Kong (Constable 2014, 2015, 2020) and Taiwan (MoL 2017a, 2017b), foreign domestic workers are not required to do pregnancy screenings and were entitled to legal rights of pregnancy and delivery. However, they are not free from premature termination of their

contracts and the unfavorable consequences following a pregnancy. Few employers, in reality, accept and abide by the laws which prohibited employers from dismissing foreign domestics due to pregnancy. Moreover, migrant domestic workers were unaware of the stipulated rights and felt pressured and agreed to resign and were then repatriated once they were pregnant. The consequences of becoming pregnant for those who were officially protected were not so different from that of their pregnant counterparts without the protection. Namely, many of them, in practice, chose to overstay their visas and turned themselves into runaways in order to work continually, and clandestinely to pay debts and support their family back home. Some of them, instead, sought to legal or illegal abortion to retain their jobs (Constable 2014, 2020; Reuters, Nov. 8, 2017, and Dec. 17, 2019; The Guardian, Jul. 22, 2019; The New Humanitarian, May 26, 2016).

For the few foreign domestics who knew their rights and wanted to challenge the wrongful termination of contract, it was not easy because these foreign domestic workers still had to pay for living expenses, housing/shelters, extension of their visa, medical bills for prenatal checkups and delivery, all while not having any income because they were not permitted to work awaiting the determination of a lawsuit or labor dispute. A lawsuit or labor dispute takes from anywhere from a few months to over a year or even longer and is a costly process in all respects for foreign domestics. Plus, there are social and psychological struggles. As Sim (2009) argued, in cases when migrant domestic workers' status became illegal (i.e. not on valid work permit) which coincided with pregnancy, the consequences would be more complicated and often unfavorable. Thus, in practice, only a handful of these foreign domestics who faced illegal termination of contract choose to pursue legal rectification since most of them cannot afford to be unemployed.

Another measure of preventing migrant domestic workers from inclusion into the receiving countries was the marriage restriction policy which prohibited foreign domestics to marry local men or to become permanent residents. In Asia, migrant workers in general were barred from obtaining permanent residency and citizenship of the host countries regardless the length of time they worked there. Some host countries, however, further prohibited migrant workers from acquiring permanent residency and citizenship by applying the marriage restriction policy which particularly targets migrant domestic workers since the population is overwhelmingly made up of female (Chin 1997, 2005; Yeoh, Huang, and Gonzalez 1999; Huang and Yeoh, 1996). The effort made by host countries ensures that migrant domestic workers do not put down roots through marrying other permanent residents and local men, and to ensure these workers do not enjoy the entitlements that were granted only to the nationals. There is a presumption that these lower-skilled foreign women workers have a propensity to take advantage and depend on the social welfare resources of receiving countries and/or their spouses (Tan, 2014). This might contribute to the stereotypes of migrant domestic workers as dependents and becoming burdens on the host countries and their families once they are married to the nationals. The receiving countries, on the one hand, rely on the provision of care labor of foreign women at minimal economic cost, but do not desire migrant domestic workers to become part of the host society and utilize public resources.

Driven by the fear that immigrants of other races and ethnicities, particularly those who are less skilled, bring changes and even pose threats to the racial/cultural homogeneity of the host societies, host countries do everything in their power to ensure that migrant domestic workers are not allowed to stay and establish their families there. Thus, the immigration and employment policies, exclusion from standard labor laws and temporary work contracts, bans on pregnancy

and childbirth, and marriage restrictions, reveals the extent to which receiving countries view migrant domestic workers and foreign domestic labor as exploitative, disposable, and undesirable.

### **The Relationship of Migrant Domestic Workers and the Left-Behind Family**

When women leave home for domestic work abroad, this leads to the reconfiguration of their original family, both in family structure and family relations. The absence of women (i.e. daughters, wives, and mothers) inevitably results in the vacancy of women's gendered role and the labor ascribed to them in their family. When mothers of young children migrate to undertake jobs abroad to economically support her family of origin, the responsibilities of caring for children and performing housework are unsurprisingly transferred to others at home. The largest concern related to the mothers' migration for overseas employment were the impacts of the mothers' absence on children, and changes to care arrangement and family relations, namely the mother-child relationship and the relationship between migrant women and their husbands.

#### ***The relationship of migrant women and their children***

The impacts of the mothers' migration on the well-being of children with respect to the financial improvement and material betterment of original households as well as the increased investment in nutrition, health care, and education of children has been recognized (Bhadra, 2007; Go, 2009; IOM and UN-INSTRAW 2007). However, evidence on the non-material effects on children, particularly the emotional and psychological stress that may incur because of the long-term spatial and temporal separation between children and their migrant mothers has been less promising and controversial. Scholars (Asis etc., 2004; Horton, 2009; Parreñas, 2015; Pratt, 2012) have pointed to the negative consequences of the mother's migration on their young children left in their countries of origin, including a sense of loss and disconnection, feelings of

abandonment and estrangement from their migrant mothers, degraded school performance, dropping out of school, youth delinquencies, and dislocation (e.g. moving to live with other kin, and in some cases, children were separated and lived with different relatives). Moreover, the emotional stress was not only experienced by children who were left by their migrant mothers but also migrant women themselves experienced the emotional difficulties of a prolonged separation from their children. The emotional strains of family separation were shared and shouldered simultaneously by migrant mothers and the left-at-home children (Horton, 2009; Parreñas, 2015). Nevertheless, it is the children who suffer more from the emotional stress and insecurity.

Some literature emphasized the tremendous challenges, even damages made to the left-at-home children due to the absence of a migrant mother who cannot physically and emotionally tend to her children's needs on a day-to-day practice (Pratt, 2012; Asis et al., 2004). The pain of failing to look after their own children in their homeland while nurturing the children of their employers, has been referred to as “diverted mothering” by Sau-ling Wong (1994). Migrant mothers often put their energy and time into children they care for overseas. This care is diverted to the extent that it should be provided to her own children who are left in the care of others. This has also been illustrated by the prevalence of women of color in the United States who have historically been caregivers and domestic workers for white families, as with these women, mothering was also diverted from their own children, who are the rightful recipients (Wong, 1994).

The phenomenon observed by Wong was equally true for transnational domestic workers who were forced to leave children in their countries of origin while undertaking care for the children of their employers. Migrant mothers who have to mother their children at a distance



reconstituted the definition of motherhood to accommodate the situations prompting their physical absence from home (Gamurd, 2000; Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila, 1997). Scholars have documented that in the face of the difficulties which migrant mothers cannot provide care to her own children in person while she is abroad, some sought to reconfigure the care arrangement for their left-at-home children with trustworthy family members and friends. Despite the challenge of being unable to provide daily care to her children in relation to her work overseas, migrant mothers sought to make sure their children were provided for with proper care arrangements. As scholars observed, the mothers put their children in the care of female relatives, usually grandmothers, aunts, or other female kin was the preference of migrant mothers. Even for those children who were left with the father, it was common to have female relatives live in close proximity and offer assistance to care for children (Gamurd, 2000; Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila, 1997; Parreñas, 2015). The preference of relegating care for left-behind children to female kin is linked to the traditional notions of motherhood that assume a biological mother is obliged to provide proper care and nurture to her own children. When a biological mother is unable to perform the responsibility herself, then the best replacement for her is considered to be other female relatives of the biological mother. Patricia Hill Collins (1991) refers to these arrangements as “other mothers”, and in the case of migrant women, it was particularly maternal grandmothers, who migrant mothers preferred and depended on to care for their children in their absence. Migrant mothers endeavored to maintain the intimacy with their children, which might be eroded by the long-term geographic distance forced by migration. By being emotionally present and communicating frequently with her children, absentee mothers managed actively to fulfill the mothering responsibilities of caregiving to their children at a distance (Asis etc., 2004; Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila, 1997; Parreñas, 2005, 2015; Pratt, 2012; Yeoh and Huang, 2000).

Migrant mothers who employed family to care for their children still took heed of what occurs with their children on a daily basis and were not emotionally absent from the everyday life of their children (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila, 1997; Parreñas, 2005, 2015). In addition to sending money to support their children which functioned as an important expression of a mother's love, migrant mothers also sought to intimately participate in the lives of their children through the exchange of letters, photos, phone calls, and text messages which were accessible and affordable ways of communication to them. However, as Pratt (2012) argued, there were limits to the medium of communication in that, women were still unable to see their children face-to-face. Also, such communication does not make up for the loss of daily knowledge of each other derived from the lengthy temporal and spatial separation. The accumulated loss of daily knowledge from each other means that the communication between migrant mothers and their children are decontextualized, which can make it difficult to forge emotional and affectionate communication. Furthermore, scholars argue that it might more difficult for children than their adult migrant mothers to adjust to the extended period of separation (Asis, Huand, and Yeoh, 2004). Therefore, the emotional attachment of children to their absentee mothers may decay as time passed on with a sense of loss, even if migrant mothers spent efforts to retain an intimate relationship with her children through frequent communication.

It is noticeable, as Parreñas (2015) observed in Filipina domestic workers, that the feeling of care deficiency and emotional difficulties incurred by geographical separation between children and their migrant mothers might be intensified by ideological norms that persist in transnational families. This is often the case when the transnational family continues to hold onto the traditional gendered division of labor ascribed to fathers and mothers, where the mother is expected to provide care physically and emotionally to her children while the father is the

breadwinner and should support his children economically. If a mother was unable to be physically around her children daily, she was deemed as failing to properly and fully nurture her children and inadequately perform her roles and responsibilities for her children and the family. This is evident by the fact that when mothers migrate for the sake of the family betterment, they are criticized for the breakdown of the family, but this is not the case when fathers leave home for employment abroad. Even though migrant mothers strive to attend to the emotional needs of their children through a variety of communication methods, try to visit home as often as they can, and provide care rearrangement to have fathers and/or kin to look after their children, most of those left-at-home children felt emotionally insecure and that their family was incomplete solely due to the absence of their mothers (Asis, Huand, and Yeoh, 2004; Parreñas, 2015; Pratt, 2012). By the same token, migrant mothers who grasped on to traditional gender ideology of the family suffered intense guilt and affliction for leaving their children with the care of fathers and/or relatives who denied their children of maternal love. Historically, this was considered child abuse in the Filipina diaspora (Parreñas, 2015).

Though some women migrant workers still clung to conventional family gender ideologies, others sought to redraft the traditional notions of motherhood. Specifically, migrant mothers reconstructed the meaning of being a mother to encompass the responsibility of providing material to her children and the family by earning money from employment abroad. The redefinition broadened the spectrum of conventional motherhood which was exclusively tied to nurture and care for her children by being physically present, to include the provision of economic support to her children, even though it entailed long-term spatial and temporal separation (Gamurd, 2000; Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila, 1997). To maintain the responsibility of mothering children at a distance, migrant mothers strived to be actively and emotionally involved

in the life of their children through a variety of communication methods and more importantly, through sending money home. As Hondagneu-Sotelo argued (1997), transnational migrant women did not intend to make a linear progression from a way of motherhood which involved daily, face-to-face caregiving toward one that defined primarily through breadwinning. These women instead, sought to conflate caregiving with breadwinning and expanded their definitions of motherhood to encompass the responsibility of material provision to their children.

The reconfiguration of motherhood was also evidenced by the ways migrant mothers distinguished themselves from the motherhood practices held by their employers, who were of privileged class, race, and nationality. Migrant mothers often critiqued their female employers, particularly those who were homemakers, as unqualified mothers for not spending quality time and providing emotional care to her children (Gamurd, 2000; Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila, 1997). Thus, the ideal of motherhood, in which biological mothers feed and care for their own children might be normative but is widely broken at both ends of the class spectrum (Collins, 1991, 1994; Glenn, 1994). Women migrating for domestic work overseas and their female employers both reveal the fragmentation of the ideal motherhood. For migrant mothers, earning money abroad to provide her children with food, clothing, and schooling was a way they could which substantiate their motherly duties, but alongside these tasks, they also emphasized the emotional care and affectionate to children as the defining figure of motherhood. They redefined the conventional notions of motherhood to accommodate the circumstances which prompted their migration abroad and justified the properness of the reconstructed motherhood by disapproving the beliefs and practices of mothering performed by her employers.

### ***The relationship of migrant women and their husbands***

When women leave home for employment abroad, this inevitably leads to the rearrangement of family roles and labor, particularly for those women with young children. Specifically, the transnational migration of mothers' results in the transference of house chores and care work, which once the purview of mothers before migration, is now handed over to others in the family. It was not common for these responsibilities to be passed to husbands, often with the help of extended family members. Scholars have observed that although it took some time for husbands of women migrants to adjust to the entry into the work of mothering, husbands learned to better appreciate women's role and effort on keeping the household running well prior to their wives' departure (Asis et al. 2004; Yeoh and Huang 2000). Despite the fact that husbands of women migrants take on the responsibility of housework, this does not necessarily mean that left-behind husbands who assumed part of the work of caring for children and house chores stepped into the role of full-time caregivers, as many still kept full-time or part-time employment (Asis et al. 2004; Gamurd, 2000; Parreñas 2015). In this respect, these husbands can retain their roles as breadwinners of the household which significantly constituted and reaffirmed a male's masculinity and position in the family, even if the pay was marginal to the income of the family. As long as he stays employed, this partially shielded the husbands from suspicions and attacks on his departure from traditional gender roles by the local community.

Scholars are not convinced that women's migration to economically support her family challenged the traditional gender order and relations, and argue that in many ways it was reinforced. For example, research found that the husbands claimed that both migrant women and their husbands recognized the husbands were still the head of the household while women were helping their husbands by taking job overseas (Asis et al. 2004; Yeoh and Huang 2000).

Compared with the very small proportion of left-at-home husbands who undertook the nurturing work in the household, many men rejected the transference of responsibilities of looking after children and doing housework because their wives left for employment abroad. The husbands engaged in heavy usage of alcohol, drugs, gambling, and/or marital infidelity which usually goes hand in hand with misuse of money earned by their migrant wives (Gamurd, 2000; Oishi, 2005). The unfavorable behaviors of husbands can be seen as a form of resistance to the disruption of their ascribed gender roles and norms brought about by his wife's migration. This might also reinforce women migrants to extend their stay in overseas employment to escape from the unpleasant relationships. Some studies, however, argued the opposite that, rather than the distressing marriage being the consequences of women's migration, it constituted partially the motivation that pushed women to take the journey to work overseas in the first place (Dannecker 2005; Gamurd, 2000; Oishi 2005; Tacoli 1996; Yeoh and Huang, 2000). Indeed, literature has shown that in addition to economic motivation to enter overseas employment, unhappy marriages, domestic violence, and strained familial relationships motivated women to use the participation in transnational employment as a means to escape from these undesirable situations at home (Dannecker 2005; Gamurd, 2000; Oishi 2005; Tacoli 1996; Yeoh and Huang, 2000).

While women's migration may not overturn conventional gender norms and relations at home, the migration experiences of women and the economic contribution they made for the original households has positive impacts on women migrants individually (Asis et al. 2004; Bhadra 2007; Constable, 1997; Dannecker 2005; Gamurd, 2000, Oishi, 2005; Yarova 2007; Yeoh and Huang, 1998). Women migrants not only were proud of being able to economically provide and save for the future of their family, especially their children, but also saw the values of themselves, became more confident, stronger, self-reliant, and assertive even when faced with

the predicaments of their lives. They also claimed that working in foreign countries broadened their horizons and skills, such as learning the local language and the ability to communicate and negotiate.

These findings stand in stark contrast to earlier literature which invariably depicted migrant domestic workers as sacrificed and suffered daughters, wives, and mothers from the exploitive and abusive circumstances of work and employers (Graziano and Paganoni 1992; Gonzalez 1998). The sacrifice and suffering perspective of women migration for domestic work overseas, as Carling argued (2005), exclusively highlighted the pain and misery that women's migration brought to themselves and their left-behind family, particularly children. Moreover, the victimization of women migrants represented these less-privileged women as weak, passive, and having little ability to make agentic decisions for themselves and their families. This perspective completely overlooked the agency of women migrants and the benefits of employment abroad.

### **Chapter 3. Research Methods**

I collected data for this project from August 2016 to December 2019. I used participant observation, informal conversations with participants in person, and conversations on Messenger and Line, and in-depth interviews.

#### **Recruitment and Data Collection**

Informed by Pei-Chia Lan (2006) and Rhacel Parreñas' (2015) effort to diversify their samples in their research on migrant domestic workers, I recruited potential participants in three ways. The first avenue to reach potential participants was by taking a stroll in parks close to the train stations in Taichung city (my hometown, a city located in central Taiwan) and Tainan city (my residence, a city located in southern Taiwan) on Sundays. Train stations and areas adjacent to stations in every city of Taiwan were the main places foreign migrant workers gathered on their days off. Parks, in particular those that were big and close to stations, were popular places for foreign migrant workers to gather due to their free accessibility. I approached migrant women in their gathering spots and initiated casual talk to everyone. I showed my interests in their activities and food. I stayed in the gathering for a while and entered the contacts of those who were particularly welcome to me in my Facebook or Line account.

I also visited churches to get access to potential participants, particularly Filipina migrant workers who attended mass service on Sundays. As for Indonesian women, it was difficult to reach them in public places in terms of mosques, as there were very few mosques throughout Taiwan, and Indonesian domestic workers generally prayed in private in their employers' homes. The churches I visited in Tainan city were in small congregations and were only attended by Filipino migrant workers. One of these churches also offered mass service on weekdays in



addition to Sundays, at these workers' convenience. This was how I was able to meet with one of my participants, who was not allowed to have days off but was permitted to go to church once or twice on weekdays. After her church services, we would talk and she would share her experiences with me. I met the pastors of these churches on my first visit and told the pastors about my background and my research project. The pastors introduced me to their congregation, all of whom were migrant workers, after mass service and then I was able to add them to my contacts in Facebook or Line account.

The most effective avenue that I used to reach my participants was through my circle of friends who employed foreign domestic workers. This contributed to a significant share of my participants in the study. I gave information about my project to friends and asked them to inquire if their employees were willing to allow me to interview them. All these friends with a foreign domestic worker gave me a positive reply to my request. Some friends were enthusiastic to help me with my project and introduced their friends with a foreign domestic worker to me, if they themselves did not have one. Just as with Lan (2006) I wanted to avoid interviews being seen as a job assignment, as I was well aware of the asymmetric power of the employer-employee relationship and the extent to which domestic workers would rarely express their true opinions in face of their employers' orders. Therefore, I politely asked these employers not to be present in my interview and was candid with my participants that they were not obligated to take my interview and they can quit any time if they want. Also, I promised them I would not reveal any information to their employers about the conversation and if they chose to withdraw. The effectiveness of the strategy was evidenced in that some participants backed out after our first meeting and never replied to my compliments and questions on Messenger or Line.

Upon our first meeting, I asked all potential participants if I can be a contact in their Facebook accounts and/or Line and all of them added me as a friend to their social networking accounts. The progress in telecommunication technology, internet, and social networking media enabled me to collect data and engaged in non-participant observations through Facebook and Line. This was useful because I intended to directly contact them and asked to meet with them in person on their days off or in places they would go during their workdays, such as parks, grocery stores, hospitals and clinics. By so doing, I could converse with them in person and avoided having to meet their employers. Furthermore, an advantage to conducting interviews in places other than their employers' house, was that I could observe what they were doing and saying in these places which were often hidden and obscured in the confines of their employers' houses. Also, I hoped to get more knowledge of them and their daily activities through casual and informal conversation with them on messenger and Line. In the meantime, I observed other aspects of their life by text, pictures, videos, and livestreams they posted on Facebook which were not under their employers' control and supervision. However, many of these posts were in Tagalog (one of the two official languages, the other is English) by Filipina participants, and in Indonesian by Indonesian participants. I relied on Google translator to help me understand these posts on Facebook, and sometimes I asked participants who were in friendships with me about the meaning of these posts. There were a handful of participants who stopped doing interviews with me after one or two interviews, but kept me as a contact on their social networking sites so I could continue to observe their Facebook activity.

### **Methodological Challenges**

The local context of my research was dramatically different from that of Lan (2006) and Parreñas' (2015) studies which were conducted more than a decade ago. Taiwan's immigration

and labor policy on migrant domestic workers are more restrictive than in the States and Italy where Parreñas' (2015) conducted her research since migrant domestic workers' permission in Taiwan are bound to contract labor and a sponsoring employer. Furthermore, migrant domestic workers do not have the freedom of choosing work structure, residence, and changing employers. Migrant domestic workers in Taiwan were more cautious and suspect of the purpose of my research and were concerned that it might bring with them harm to their employment or subjects them to the risk of dismissal. I deliberately avoided having them mistake me as a friend or an extension of their employers by meeting them in places other than their employers' residence on days off or worktime. Moreover, I offered migrant domestic workers with updated information of immigration policy, labor laws, and regulations on placement agencies, as well as linguistic and cultural instructions regarding their work and life in Taiwan. In cases where workers had labor disputes with their employers or placement agency, I provided migrant domestic workers with access to the local labor department for help and inspection, or volunteered to be a translator for them in their communication with their employers and agency.

Though Lan (2006) conducted research in Taiwan, there was a striking shift in the local context the past decade, including significant changes to immigration policies, labor laws, and regulations on placement agencies; the shifting composition of migrant domestic workers; the progress in telecommunication technology and internet; and the recognition of Taiwan society as a whole toward foreign laborers and migrant domestic workers. All these changes brought me an ease and simultaneously presented challenges to my data collection.

The first hurdle I faced in data collection was that many foreign domestic workers were suspicious of my purpose and had little knowledge of policies and laws related to foreign contract labor. They thought I was a social worker/labor officer, an agency broker, or an extension of

their employers if they were introduced to me by their employers. It was understandable that they distrusted a stranger who was asking them about their experiences in work and life in Taiwan. They had every reason to distrust me because they were ruled out of the protection of the standard labor act, subject to the cunning and manipulation of placement agencies, and the controlled and disciplined by their employers. The composition of migrant domestic workers in Taiwan has changed since Lan's (2006) work. Many of Lan's (2006) participants were college-educated and experienced "downward mobility", to use Parreñas' (2015) term, by working as foreign domestics in Taiwan. Indonesian women became the dominant group of foreign domestic workers in Taiwan since 2007 and their average education level was high school as well as their Filipina counterparts. In my research, there were only a few Filipina participants that had some college education.

To reduce their doubtfulness, I explained to them as much as I could that I was a student interested in conducting research on foreign domestic workers in Taiwan. Also, I encouraged them to ask me any questions they wanted, particularly about policies, laws, and regulations related to their working rights and environments. Migrant domestic workers were evident to have little knowledge of Taiwan policies, laws, and regulations associated with their working conditions and rights when I informed them the changes to these policies and laws over the years. Some of them still did not understand why I, a Taiwanese woman who studied abroad, was interested in their experiences. And while they did believe I studied in United States since I was fluent in English and had knowledge of laws and regulations in relation to foreign domestic workers, they were still unsure about my project. In contrast to the benefit of Lan's (2006: 26) affiliation to the States which made her popular in Filipina participants who were highly curious to the land of promises, my participants including both Indonesian and Filipina migrants did not

show particular interest in my stay in United States but rather expressed more concern about policies and laws that regulated their working conditions and rights as well as information useful to their exploration and incorporation into local life.

The second hurdle in my data collection was the language barrier. Mandarin and Taiwanese (a dialect was originated from Fujian province of mainland China) are native languages of Taiwan. Foreign domestic workers in effect were required to learn Mandarin for basic conversation so they took courses, including Mandarin, in their training center prior to migrating. However, when I was in the field I realized that many migrant domestic workers were not in good command of Mandarin nor spoke English and it was difficult for me to let participants understand my questions regarding their work and life.

My conversations with Filipina participants, whether they spoke Mandarin or not, did not present many problems of communication with me because most of them spoke English while some of them had very limited English ability. As for Indonesian participants, when I discovered that we were unable to have “meaningful conversations” with respect to my data collection, I had to give up and look for potential other participants. Thus, I decided to actively locate Indonesian women for my study who were at least on their second term of contract so that they had basic Mandarin and Taiwanese proficiency. This was the reason that all Indonesian participants in my study were experienced domestic workers and have worked, in Taiwan and Hong Kong, from 7 to 12 years.

The third difficulty was the challenges of meeting with them. The vast majority of my participants had one rest day per month and it was usually on Sunday. The precious day off was not fixed but subject to change. Namely, my participants’ decision on which Sunday of the month they were going to be off depended on their employers’ schedule on weekends and

holidays of that month. In other words, their employers' schedule and activities in weekends and holidays were prioritized over the rest day of my participants. Thus, even my participants informed me in advance (usually a couple of days before their coming rest day) the date of their day off to that we have decided to hang out, their day off could be moved or cancelled if they employers happened to have something do and were not home or, just cannot find a substitute to care the elders. Then, I had to wait and see what date could be made for meeting after my participants rescheduled it. Sometimes, it would happen that the rest days of my participants were overlapped that month, so I had to consider and choose between which gatherings I should take part.

In contrast to the challenges of meeting with my participants on their days off, meeting with them in public places where they regularly visited during their workdays was more predictable and stable. This has to do with a shift in migrant domestic workers' main tasks from housecleaning and childcare to exclusively elderly and disabled care that was responding to the increasingly aging society of Taiwan. As regular and important part of home-based migrant caretakers' job, they walked their wards in the park on a daily basis and frequently took their wards to the doctor. Therefore, I decided to join them in parks, hospitals, and clinics where my participants took the elderly there for a walk, visited the doctor, or received kidney dialysis three days a week during their work days. These frequent participations in these places were significant to data collection in many ways. First was that their frequent and regular visits to these places were part of their daily work as a home-based foreign caretaker which I could observe and got to know more about their job performances on a daily basis. Second, their performances in these places, similar to what they did on their rest days, were beyond the control and surveillance of their employers, thus they could express themselves with freedom and

authenticity. Third, they made friends with their compatriots in the neighborhood whom they otherwise would not get to know if they did not visit these places. Therefore, it provided me a rich opportunity to observe their interactions and chatting in group settings. Lastly, they were gradually getting used to my presence and participation in these places and more importantly, my participants and their compatriots developed trust and familiarity with me so that they were willing to share more of their genuine opinions of their experiences.

In the process of data collection, I engaged in all kinds of activities with my participants during their working days as well as on their rest days. I offered them information in relation to their working rights and conditions, I became a translator/mediator for them and their employers, their Taiwanese boyfriends, I searched for travel information of attractions for those who wanted become tourists on their days off. I listened to them when they had issues or quarrels with their countrywomen and families back home, I gave them rides and became a local guide for them, turning into a translator and bargainer to make good deals for them in shops, and celebrated birthday parties with them. Some of the participants developed friendships with me over the extended periods of time in my field work. So, they kept in contact with me even after they left for home.

### **Writing Ethnographic Field notes**

Throughout my field work, I was unable to take field notes while I was in the field because the settings usually were gatherings in group in parks, train stations, grocery store and shops, churches, night markets, hospital and clinic on my participants' working days or on their days off. Also, I chose not to write field notes to avoid distracting my participants and their compatriots by the act of writing field notes. I wanted to be unobtrusive to observe their performances, just as other researchers who (Chin, 1998; Constable, 1997; Lan, 2006) collected

research on migrant domestics. I took field notes immediately after I came home because many sites where I met my participants were not far from my residence. Also, I took photos of my engagement in my participants' days off activities and asked them send me these photos they took in group which were helpful to remind the detailed of the hours I spent with my participants. Furthermore, I made conversations with them on messenger and Line after I left for home to confirm the information that I collected in gatherings that day.

### **Participants**

There were 25 participants in my study, 19 of them were Filipina and 6 were Indonesian. The majority of my participants were in their 40s, some were in their late 30s, and only one was in her early 50s. Four Filipina participants received some college and the rest of them, including all of Indonesian participants, completed high school education. Half of my participants were married and the rest of them were separated, divorced, widowed, and single. Filipina participants had average 3 to 5 children in their home countries. Indonesian participants had an average of 1 to 2 children at home. The length of staying on overseas employment including working in Gulf countries, Singapore, Hong Kong, and then Taiwan for Filipina participants was ranged from 4 to 26 years. Indonesian participants had worked 5 to 12 years, and all of them worked in Taiwan throughout their overseas employment, except one who had worked in Singapore and then migrated to work in Taiwan.

### **Interview Guide**

I followed an interview guide (see Appendix A) to conduct interviews with my participants while I also added or skipped questions in these interviews depending on the answers and reactions of participants to these questions. In many cases, they did not answer directly or avoided answering some of the questions I asked. For example, when I asked if they were



married, some participants were not willing to reveal the information and the details to me and then, I would skip this line of questioning and then time and jump to casual chat. I later learned after they became comfortable with me, that they did not want to reveal to others who they did not trust about their unpleasant marriage at home nor did they want to recall these bad memories. Also, if I met my participants with the presence of her compatriots in the neighborhood, I would skip some questions or avoid some topics sensitive to my participants to which they did not want to talk about in public. Thus, I did not strictly stick to the questions in order as I originally formulated in many interviews with my participants but depending on the situation in the field.

Questions in the interview guide investigated the processes prior and after their arrivals on Taiwan including, why and how they decide to take on paid domestic services in foreign countries, why they chose to work in Taiwan instead of other countries. I also asked about the processes they had to go through in order to find employment overseas, how much money they spent through these processes, and what they spent it on, how they collected the money they needed to complete the processes before they landed on the destination countries. Next, I switched gears and asked about the tasks of their daily work in their employing family, the relationships between them and their employers, the cared, and other family members of the employing family, and how they manage to cope with the difficulties in their work and life if there were any. I asked about whether they have days off and what they did on their days off. I also asked them to share how much money they sent home and how remittances were spent, and about their relationships of their children, husbands, and other family members while they were abroad. Finally, I asked how long they expected to stay on overseas employment and what their plans were upon their return.

## **Coding and Analysis**

I analyzed my data using constructivist grounded theory methodology (Charmaz, 2014). There was no pre-existing coding scheme applied to the data. Data was coded line-by-line into initial codes. Then, I used “focused coding,” based on the comparison of those most frequently appeared initial codes and those I thought have more significance than others to the data, to filter through the textual material to “synthesize, analyze, and conceptualize” larger amount of data to emerged themes and patterns (Charmaz, 2014:138). These themes and patterns I treated as root or core categories of phenomena. Some of these themes included altruistic versus selfness, subservience versus resistance, pragmatic versus desire, and intimacy versus exploitation. Those focused codes made it clear to me of the direction and theoretical concepts of my preliminary analysis and it also helped to clarify the theoretical centrality of certain ideas in my further analysis. I returned to some participants based on those focused codes to explore ideas and topics that they glossed over, or did not state or, had been too implicit initially. This process further strengthened and clarified the analytic power of those focused codes to my data. I also returned to literature to see these themes and patterns emerged in my data and those had examined in the scholarship. There were some similarities of the themes and patterns shared in the scholarship and my data while some were distinctive and unique in my data. I then employed the similarities and distinctiveness of these focused codes to certain the direction and centrality of my analysis. The findings chapters that follow reflect my coding and analytic process.

## **Chapter 4. Women Embark on A Journey to A Foreign Land**

As scholars of migration have pointed out, women have always played an important role in participating in productive activities of the household, but their efforts were neglected and invisible due to the fact that these activities were unremunerated and because of the gendered division of labor and asymmetric power relations within the household (Chant 1996; Dwyer and Bruce 1988; Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994; Lawson 1998; Tinker 1990; Wright 1995; Zlotnik 1995). Women's place and role have always been associated with the private territory of the household and as the nurturer/caregiver of the family. There are thus many social and institutional constraints that prohibit women's participation in the labor force. However, due to a growing demand for domestic workers in rich and newly industrializing countries, women are increasingly migrating for paid jobs of domestic service in foreign countries for the betterment of their family, particularly their children. As they do this, it provides them with an opportunity to explore the place and realm outside of their family. Thus, to understand the migration experiences of women in transnational domestic services, we cannot get a proper comprehension of such experiences without placing it in the context of family dynamics. This chapter places focus on the stage of pre-migration and seeks to unpack how women migrants take the initiatives to migrate for overseas employment, the role women play in the decision of migration, and the significance and effects of personal networks on the transnational migration of women.

### **The Motivations of Taking up Domestic Work Abroad**

Literature has suggested that women migrants' employment abroad was motivated by pursuing the family goals such as putting her children or siblings through college, improving financial conditions of the household, building or renovating the house, and investing in the

purchase of land or the establishment of a small business (Oishi, 2005; Tacoli, 1996; Yeoh and Huang, 2000). However, undertaking a job overseas for the sake of the family does not mean that there is no personal desire involved in the decision to migrate. Rather, the motivation to support the migrants' family in the country of origin is entangled with personal desires in the decision, though the latter is viewed as less "altruistic". These personal considerations, as scholars illuminated, include staying away from domestic violence, unhappy marriages, problems with family members, and/or obtaining autonomy, and/or the desire of seeing the outside world (Chin, 1998; Dannecker 2005; Gamurd, 2000; Huang and Yeoh, 1996; Oishi 2005; Silvey, 2006; Tacoli 1996; Yeoh and Huang, 2000). Since a quest of economic betterment of the family was not in conflict with personal reasons, migration for overseas employment in effect offered migrant women a socially acceptable way out of these predicaments while inserting their personal desires in the family project.

Resonating with the argument above, some of my participants longed to get away from unhappy marriages or follow their husbands to become a migrant worker, or yearned for adventure and to see the outside world through overseas domestic work. Wila, an Indonesian in her late 30s and a single mother, left home for domestic work on her first contract in 2000-2003. She was motivated to work overseas to support her parents because her father was sick at the time which required Wila to take up the role as the breadwinner of the family. Wila did not plan to continually work in Taiwan upon the completion of the contract until an event occurred which was a turning point of her life and made her decide to embark on the journey of paid domestic work in Taiwan again. Wila got married under the arrangement of her mother in 2005, but she had no idea of the arranged marriage until she was asked to quit her job in Jakarta (the capital of Indonesia) and came home. Wila says that she thought of becoming a runaway bride but her

mother warned her about the serious consequences of doing such a thing and suppressed her idea. However, the marriage did not last long due to many issues, but Wila did not in fact get an official divorce until 2010, and by then she was on her second contract in Taiwan. She came back to work in Taiwan in 2008 and this time she bore the responsibility of supporting her mother and her daughter while her husband was not informed of her departure. She expressed:

...I did not tell him (her ex-husband) when I came to work in Taiwan again in 2008...he just learnt that I left for work in Taiwan when he came to visit unexpectedly one day to my mother's house to see my daughter...then, he left and was gone forever. We did not stay in touch, maybe he died...

Wila talks bitterly about the unpleasant marriage and her indifferent and irresponsible ex-husband. She has not gotten in touch with her ex-husband for over a decade when I meet her. The motivation of undertaking overseas employment on her second contract to Taiwan was unquestionably not just to raise her daughter and support her mother, but it also provided Wila a socially acceptable way to cope with the pain and difficulties of the unfavorable relationship with her husband.

Marilena, is a Filipina in her late 40s and a single mother with two children. Marilena began to work in a major Japanese electronic plant in Manila when she was still in college to help her parents. The salary she earned as a factory worker was even higher than that of most jobs in the Philippines, including government jobs at the time, and Marilena was quickly able to build up savings to buy a plot of land. She even built a house on the land, though it was not large. Marilena was proud of herself for her ability to provide a house for her parents in her young adulthood and she made her decision to drop out of college for the generously remunerated job. Marilena met her husband in the plant where she worked and got married soon after. When her husband quit the job and applied to work in Taiwan in 1998, Marilena followed her husband to

Taiwan and worked in the manufacturing factory until she transferred to the sector of domestic service in 2015. There was a great demand for foreign workers in the sectors of manufacturing and construction since the late 1980s because Taiwan was a member of these newly industrializing economies in Asia. Marilena explained that, “I came to Taiwan in 1998...My ex-husband came to work in Taiwan, and I followed him to work in Taiwan”. In 2000-2008, Marilena went back and forth between the Philippines and Taiwan intermittently due to giving birth to two children in her homeland and resuming her work in Taiwan. Marilen and her husband divorced soon after. Though Marilena’s husband went back the Philippines after the dissolution of their marriage, Marilena remained in Taiwan for work. Her motivation for doing migrant work shifted from keeping the marriage intact to focusing solely on bringing up her children and supporting her parents.

Wila and Marilena’s experiences reveal how the reasons for undertaking overseas employment may shift over time with respect to household dynamics, personal circumstances, and different stages of life. Nonetheless, economic considerations are never absent from the reasons of departure. The vast majority of my participants were not novices in terms of being transnational migrant domestic workers, rather, they have been doing this kind of work for 4 to 12 years. The stipulated maximum years that foreign domestic workers are permitted to work in Taiwan is 14 years (the duration of employment was amended up to 14 years in 2015 and none of my participants knew of this revision to the law), and this does not include the time in which some participants had worked previously as migrant laborers in other economic sectors and in different receiving countries. Those participants who have put their children through college to adulthood and are now in their late 40s or early 50s, expressed concerns of preparing and saving for their retirement. Thus, they preferred to work to the stipulated maximum years to save as

much as they can for their old age once they return home, since migrant domestic workers are prohibited by law to settle in Taiwan. When asked why not retire and go home to stay with her children and grandchildren because both her daughter and son are already adults and married, Glory (Filipina, in her early 50s) answered, "...I want to work more for my old age...I cannot ask a support from my children, I feel shame if doing so...it's my responsibility as parents to give children study."

In cases of longing for experiences in a foreign culture and seeing the world, some participants indeed explicitly expressed the desire to venture and see the world in addition to the remunerative goal through overseas employment. Ani is a Filipina, 37-year-old single mother of a daughter who has to shoulder her daughter's living expenses and education and support her own parents while her parents look after her daughter while she works abroad. Ani's earning barely made ends meet and there was little savings after working full-time for over 10 years in the Philippines. Domestic work abroad not only helps to support her daughter and parents, sometimes also her siblings, but also is a means of realizing her dream to see the world. She shared that:

...I want to work abroad, and my agent said Taiwan is very beautiful than the Philippines, Taiwanese are very kind and high salary... I want to experience how to work abroad...it's my dream.

With the completion of the first three-year contract, Ani decided to renew the contract with her current employer for another three years. She also revealed a plan to return home after finishing the second term and then journey to Australia in the future. She explained, "I hope to go to work in Australia in the future. I have cousins working there and I want to see Australia."

Sriya, an Indonesian woman in her late 40s, was a full-time employee at an office staff before she migrated to work in Taiwan. She was not obligated to provide necessities or support

to her family since both of her sons served in the military and her husband works full-time. However, when her youngest sister provided her with the information of domestic work and already found her an employer in Taiwan, Sriya decided to take up the job though she was still a bit worried about the uncertainties of the adventure:

...my younger sister worked in Taiwan for 9 years and she introduced me to my former employer in Hsinchu. My sister got to know a very kind employer in Hsinchu and she urged me to apply to the work. She told me not to hand over the work to other foreign workers because the employer is really nice...I had never worked outside of Surakarta and this is the first time I worked overseas and so far away from home...I want to see many places of Taiwan, I am curious to see what Taiwan looks like.

Despite the fact that the different levels of economic roles, marital status, the household formulation, and stage of life, both Ani and Sriya's desires to see the world motivated them to venture into paid domestic work in a foreign land. The inclination of adventure and yearning for different experiences by undertaking overseas employment is not limited to the young, single, and/or from middle and lower-middle class migrants as literature has suggested (Oishi, 2005; Tacoli, 1996). Women migrants, particularly those of working class with economic burdens of their families, have the responsibility to their children and were not expected to hold activities of self-interest. They are supposed to be co-contributors, or even main earners of the family income, as well as dutiful wives/mothers in charge of caring for children and housework which conform to their ascribed gender roles in the family. Thus, women in this group are naturally excluded and morally disapproved as being an autonomous individual with personal desires. The increasing demand for migrant domestic workers in the countries of employment offers them an opportunity to combine the altruistic goal of financially supporting their family in their homeland with their personal interests.

Additionally, women migrants of lower classes generally cannot afford to travel long distances by airplane even within their own countries, let alone overseas. Sriya, who is fond of



and did travel much locally in her home country by car prior to migration, never had a chance and could not afford to see a world beyond her birth country until she embarked on the journey of overseas employment in Taiwan which is thousands of kilometers away from her country of origin. As Aguilar argued (1996), international labor migration offered migrants of less privileged background an avenue in which migrant workers symbolically invert the hierarchies of class and status by taking part in foreign travel via overseas employment, which is perceived as a prerogative and extravagance of the elites. Migrant domestic workers, though they work in low-status jobs based on the socioeconomic standard of destination country or their country of origin, can redefine themselves as tourists and take pleasure in visiting attractions with fellow migrant workers on days of rest, in some cases with their employing family on holiday. This reconfigured identity as tourists for migrant domestic workers on their day off was evident in my study, as many participants posted and shared photographs, cell phone videos of events and new places they visit, and some even livestreamed on social networking websites. Such photographs, videos, and livestreams are shared immediately with family and friends both in their home country or somewhere else outside their countries of origin. The redefinition of their identity as tourists is further pronounced through the images of a glamorous life distributed by social media to family, friends, acquaintances, and even other strangers so long as they are in contact list of social networking media. The tourist experiences of migrant domestic workers nowadays are particularly recognizable and accentuated via the advancement in telecommunication technology and social networking service which indeed, in Aguilar's words (1996), "undermine the exclusivity of the elites' tourist experience."

## **The Role of Women Migrants on Decision for Departure**

While women migrants' initiatives for paid domestic work in a foreign country are driven by the well-being of their original family, their personal desires are often conflated with broader economic considerations of the decision to migrate. Moreover, the initial motivation for domestic work abroad might change based on household dynamics, personal factors, and the life cycle of individual migrants, particularly in the duration of an extended journey. This highlights the varying and complex contexts in which women migrants were situated, as they manage to enhance the welfare of the family, and also their own, through overseas employment. Taking into consideration women migrants' personal desires in the pursuit of their family project demonstrates how they are active actors in initiating the economic journey to a foreign country, and highlights their autonomy and agency in the decision-making process of migration. Namely, this refers to how the decision of migration is made and how women migrants choose/prefer one receipt country over others.

According to the widely-held perspective of migration (Gordon and Robert 1981; Stark and Bloom 1985; Stark and Taylor 1989; Stark and Yitzhaki 1988; Stark, Taylor, and Yitzhaki 1986, 1988; Stark 1991; Taylor 1986; Wood 1982), migration is part of a household strategy for its survival based on the achievement of two purposes; one is to maximize the household income and the other is to diversify the sources of household income, which reduces the risk of relying on a single source of income. The household is seen as a harmonious, or cooperative unit and household members pool and share resources based on the rule of optimal reallocation of household resources. Decisions are made collectively, including the decision of migration, which serves the good of the household as a whole.

Scholars have raised questions about the very idea of “household” and have critiqued the assumptions of this approach. Namely, household members’ interests are not necessarily in harmony with each other and are not consolidated into a unit. Rather, a household is constituted of several, often competing economies. In reality, there are unequal social relations of gender within the household between men and women, that implies differentiated access to and control over resources of the household (Beneria and Feldman 1992; Bruce 1989; Chant 1996, Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994; Lawson 1998; Tinker 1990; Wright 1995; Zlotnik 1995). Instead of reallocating and sharing the household resources equally by all household members, the process of reallocation of resources is replete with conflict, inequality, and exploitation, which are illustrated in many stories of the women migrants with whom I spoke. As demonstrated in the previous section, women migrants, with different household structures and in different stages of life, may insert personal desires and gains in the search of family betterment when overseas employment provides them with such an opportunity. On the one hand, the personal desires of the pursuit of the well-being of the family reveals the exertion of individuality and the agency of women migrants in their economic pilgrim overseas, but on the other hand, the unequal and contradicted relations of gender within the household requires women migrants, like Wila and Marilena to shoulder the responsibility of supporting their children on their own. Thus, it is not enough to merely focus on the autonomy and agency of women migrants, but the power relations of household members, particularly the power inequalities of men and women, need to be unpacked in order to understand how the asymmetric gender relations construct the experiences of women migrants and conversely, how migration of women influences the gender relations within the household.

Women migrants are family-oriented and migrate for the sake of the family, however, this does not necessarily mean that women migrants made the decision to migrate on a collective base. As other researchers illuminated (Asis etc., 2004; Gamurd, 2000; Oishi, 2005; Yeoh and Huang, 2000), my study did not find evidence echoing the assumptions of the household strategy approach that migration decision is discussed and made together by all household members or, strategically assigns who should go overseas. Rather, participants with whom I spoke made their own decisions regarding whether to migrate as well as which destination they wanted to land. And they usually informed immediate family members when the application to the overseas jobs was in process or was completed. In some cases, women did not reveal to or inform the family until a few days before their departure. In most situations, they took the initiative to amass information of overseas employment. Many participants obtained the information by inquiring with friends, relatives, acquaintances who have had experiences or are currently migrant workers abroad. Others collected the information by taking part in job fairs for overseas employment while some got the information through a recruitment agency and/or subagents. The women with whom I spoke tried to gather as much information as they could by accessing various sources of information to help them to make an optimal decision and reduce possible risks and unexpected costs of leaving for jobs in a foreign country.

There are many constraints on the decision-making potential for women migrants. Given that migrant domestic workers' contracts and visas are tied to the complicated immigration policies, laws and regulations of foreign workers in each destination country, it is unlikely that prospective women migrants comprehended all the intricacies of these policies, laws and regulations, let alone their great variations. Furthermore, government and recruiting agencies in labor sending countries may promote or withhold information of overseas employment, often

with embellished words, to their benefits. Wee and Sim (2004) have found that the recruiters in the home country of intending migrant workers used various strategies to attract overseas employment, including showcasing beautiful and scenic pictures of the foreign country, emphasizing the nice employers, good working conditions, and the modernity of the receipt countries, and of course, accentuating monetary gain, to lure migrant workers into overseas employment. There exists incomplete, fraudulent and fragmented information which recruiting agencies intentionally use to induce prospective migrant workers into jobs in a foreign country. This phenomenon is echoed by the accounts of my participants. For example, Ani recounted,

...I want to work abroad and my agent says Taiwan is very beautiful than Philippines, Taiwanese are very kind and high salary. That's why I tried." Gena, a Filipina woman in her early 40s with one daughter, told me, "...I go to a job fair and a recruiting agency secretly introduced me job information of Taiwan and gives me her business card. The agent tells me Taiwan is a good place to work...and I decided to give it a try...almost all agencies in the job fair provide only information of going to work in Arab countries..."

Many structural and personal limitations exist which impede women migrants to make an ideal decision for their family and themselves with respect to overseas employment. This is, however, not to imply that women migrants are doomed to be poor and passive victims subject to the manipulation and control of institutional organizations associated with migration and trap themselves in a miserable situation in a foreign country. Conversely, women migrants manage to collect as much information of overseas employment as possible, which they use to make a favorable decision of migration, and this demonstrates their determination and ability to be in control of their lives and jobs. When asked the reasons of preferring Taiwan over other destination countries and choosing jobs between manufacturing and domestic service in private house, participants expressed that the decision were made by taking many things into consideration. AY says:

...we have many countries to apply for work, like Singapore, Arabic countries, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. I choose Taiwan because the salary is higher than in other countries...we can choose what kind of work we want to do, the placement fee and salary has a big difference for a factory worker or a caretaker. But in Hong Kong, there is no factory and we only can apply to care work. If you apply to factory work, you pay placement fee and you need to get a loan to process all papers and buying fly ticket to Taiwan. If you choose to work as a caretaker, you don't need to pay placement fee but only a loan for processing papers and fly ticket. You pay nothing before you get to work in Taiwan. Then, the loan will deduct from your monthly salary for 8 months...By the time, application to work in Taiwan the most urgent needed is caretaker. So, we were told we don't need to pay placement fee if we apply to care work in Taiwan and we need to pay a big amount of placement fee to being factory workers.

Ueno (2013) refers to this as the “fly now, pay later” scheme, whereby women are given free placement fee (some Indonesian agencies adopt the policy for promotion), free room and board for live-in domestic workers, and most importantly, women can depart for work abroad sooner. The women with whom I spoke chose among receipt countries based on which had comparatively higher salaries. In addition, they preferred domestic service in private homes over work in factory due to the attractiveness of loan schemes. Thus, prospective migrant domestic workers sought to locate an employer in the receiving country as soon as possible and tried to pay as little fees to the recruiting agency as possible prior to their departure (it is important to note that, those fees are never lowered). What prospective women migrants do not know is that their ability to embark on their economic journey abroad so quickly is attributed not only to the strong demands for domestic caretakers in Taiwan but also to the promotion and the profit of the recruiting agency. These fees are deducted from the salary of migrant domestic workers on a monthly schedule once they begin to make earnings in their destination country. The various charges of going for overseas employment adds up to an equivalent of 6 to 10 months of migrant domestic workers' salaries and leaves only a small sum of allowance to migrant workers in the duration of repaying the loan. For women of low-income households who are considering migration, they have little savings for the agency fees, let alone the exorbitant amount of total

charges. Thus, the lure of “fly now and pay later” is enchanting and feasible to women migrants of poor households. The salary deductions and loan schemes are strategically utilized by recruiting agencies to draw out more clients for overseas employment and are recognized by research on foreign domestic helpers in Singapore, Hong Kong, and other host countries in Asia (Oishi, 2005; Ueno, 2013). It is noteworthy, as Oishi (2005) argued, that the salary deductions and loan schemes might also serve to transform the composition of migrant workforce.

Specifically, the crafty payment systems require only a small cash deposit or none at all from intending migrant workers which enables migrant workers of poor households, particular those who are hard-working single mothers, to join the line of overseas employment. All those migration fees are packed into a loan of a substantial sum which must be paid by monthly deductions of women’s salaries. I too observed changes in the composition of the migrant workforce, in that the vast majority of participants in my sample were from the households of the lower rung of the income hierarchy and were barely able to make ends meet prior to migration. All participants were either stay-at-home mothers or employed in sectors of domestic service and manufacturing except one who taught English and hymns for children in a local church. She was the only participant in the study who did not adopt the schemes of “fly now, pay later” in order to work abroad.

Of course, one could argue that women migrants were left with little option for overseas employment, namely, either working in a factory or a private home of the employer, both of which are low-status, low-pay, and lack job security, with the excessive sums of agency fees and cunning loan schemes. The highly constrained overseas employment as well as the exploitative loan schemes by recruiting agencies still provide women of poor households with an opportunity for economic achievement and self-discovery. Aya told me she prefers Taiwan over other Asian

countries and also prefers being a domestic worker rather a laborer in factory. She did not have money to pay the exorbitant agency fees prior to leaving for Taiwan and thus, chose to “fly now, pay later.” She tells me that, with a smile on face, “...I build my own house and it costs me five-year salary of working in Taiwan...it takes a life-long of working to build your house if you were in Indonesia.” The reality is Aya’s salary provides to her two children back home and supports her younger sister through nursing school. She eventually accumulated enough money to build her house after eight years of working in Taiwan.

Despite the reality that the manipulation and control of recruitment agencies and the industry as a whole leaves women migrants of less privileged households with little option for overseas employment, women migrants manage to make the most of their options. Women migrants actively work to lower the exploitative fees of migration charged by recruitment agencies in two ways. One way is they locate an employer in the receipt country through their personal networks to free themselves from the placement fee, which accounts for the largest share of these migration fees. The other strategy employed by women migrants, particularly Filipina domestic workers, is to get a loan from family members, relatives, friends, or acquaintances, rather than from local moneylenders who generally are in alliance with recruiting agencies and charge excessively high rates of interest on loans. Rosa’s account reveals this struggle:

...one neighbor asked me if I want to work in Taiwan. The neighbor is the one who lends money to me for coming to work in Taiwan and she lives in Taitung now. She introduces my first employer in Kaohsiung to me...The placement fee is very high. If I got a loan from local lending company, I have to pay my debt in Taiwan dollar. I borrow money in peso but have to pay in Taiwan dollar. I pay back more than the amount of the loan if I pay in Taiwan dollar...Then, my neighbor lends money to me and I pay \$5000 NTD every month to her when I begin work in Taiwan. She doesn’t charge me any interest for the loan. I pay off the loan by one-year working...



Migrant domestic workers are afflicted with the excessive cost of migration and the cunning loan schemes invented by recruiting agencies. The currency of the loan which women migrants get in their original countries is converted into the currency of Taiwan, New Taiwan Dollar (NTD), once women migrants begin to pay back the loan. In this logic, the loan of 100,000 peso, for instance, is directly converted into the loan of 100,000 NTD which is the real amount women migrants pay back to local moneylenders in the Philippines. Recruiting agencies use this deceitful tactic of converting currency to forcefully extract a sizable profit from women migrants. In the face of the forceful loan schemes, women migrants make every effort to reduce the inordinate amount of fees incurred by securing a position in Taiwan. The active struggle of migrant domestic workers to negotiate with the cunning and forceful loan schemes imposed by recruitment agency highlights women migrants' agency to tackle the difficulties they encounter. Yet, this also reveals how they are excluded from the bank services and have a lack of access to financial resources in their home nations. Women migrants heavily rely on economic resources from family members, relatives, and friends to help pay for the agency fees in order to procure a job abroad, otherwise they have to get a loan with excessively high rates of interests from local moneylenders.

### **The Effects of Personal Networks on Migration**

The centrality of personal networks in the process of migration for migrant domestic workers is not only useful for collecting information and providing financial resources, it also works to secure a position in the destination country for women migrants. This is illuminated by Jaja's and Sriya's accounts:

...this is my first work out of Philippine. I never leave Philippine for work in other countries... My friend introduces me to the present job to taking care of grandpa. She used to take care of grandpa and she decides to go home after the end of the contract. My friend's employer, grandpa's daughter, asks my friend to introduce a Filipino to take up

her work. So, my friend asks me if I want to go to work in Taiwan taking care of older people. Then, I come to work for my friend's employer. Both grandpa and my employer are good. (Jaja)

...my younger sister worked in Taiwan for 9 years and she introduced me to my former employer in Hsinchu. My sister got to know a very kind employer in Hsinchu and she urged me to apply to the work. She told me that not hand over the work to other foreign workers because the employer is really nice... I had never worked in place outside of Surakarta and this is the first time I work overseas and so far away from home... (Sriya)

To locate an employer in a receipt country through personal networks is particularly critical in facilitating the realization of migration for women migrants. This helps women to have some degree of accurate information about their prospective employers and work environments prior their departure. More importantly, it frees women migrants from the obligation of placement fees as well as shortens the period of staying and waiting in their home nations. In other words, the procurement of employment by personal connections in the destination country brings both economic and psychological advantages to prospective women migrants. With regards to the financial benefits, obtaining a job through mediating contacts (usually friends or relatives) in the receipt country instead of by a recruiting agency, greatly minimizes the size of the agency fees and other expenses induced by the extension in time waiting for the agency to find women migrants an employer. In some cases, it may take up over six months to a year to find women migrants a job. It should be noted that women migrants get a loan, in great or small sum, to attend training courses and pay for food and lodging while training, the longer they stay in their countries of origin, the larger the sum of the loan they borrow with accumulating interests. The growing debt with respect to the extension of time for locating a job in destination country puts substantial financial distress on women migrants.

Gamurd (2000) contended that women migrants put their trust on a "known person" who could evaluate the personal traits of the employers, the size of the employing family, and the

working conditions. Friends or relatives in the destination country act as mediating contacts and usually find women migrants work with households of their employers' networks of friends, relatives, and neighbors. The psychological assurance is further strengthened when the job is directly "handed down" to women migrants from their friends or relatives who decide to quit the job for personal reasons and do not want other unknown individuals to take over the good job she held. This was the case of Jaja, who was handed her job from a friend. Jaja's friend cared for a grandpa and her employer, the grandpa's daughter, was pleasant and nice. However, her friend decided to go back Philippines and open a pet business when the three-year contract was finished. The friend assured Jaja that grandpa was a gentle and quiet old man and the employer, the grandpa's daughter, was not only nice, but since she does not live in the same house, she would not be around the house to give instructions all the time. Therefore, the handed down job from her friend frees Jaja from having to rely on luck to get a good employer and pleasant working environments, which is what most migrant domestic workers, particularly the first-timers must do. Furthermore, it spares Jaja the possibility of suffering from an abusive employer and exploitative working conditions.

Securing a job through personal networks in the receiving country benefits women migrants. This job obtainment strategy is further mobilized when women migrants begin their work. They are positioned in an extensive and dense web of current workers, returned migrant domestic workers, prior employers, and fellow countryman in the destination country. Migrant domestic workers are permitted to transfer by the consensus of employers and themselves when they abide by the regulations of Taiwan and in practice, employers generally accept domestic workers' resignation. Even so, migrant domestic workers in general do not quit before the completion of their three-year contract due to the fact that they may risk having to return to their home nation if

the agency or themselves cannot locate a new employer within a maximum of up to four months after the termination of the contract. Moreover, quitting prematurely creates an additional expense of room and board, in addition to the monthly service fees to the agency, which has to be paid by domestic workers during the period of finding a new employer. And, she is not allowed to work in any way during transference.

Migrant domestic workers working with these constraints are forced to deal with a difficult employer until the contract is finished. Yet this does not prevent the premature termination of contract. The employment environment of migrant domestic workers in Taiwan has significantly shifted in the past two decades and the recipient getting the care has to go through an evaluation by teams of authorized medical institutions to qualify as a care receiver in need of hiring a foreign domestic worker to provide nursing services. The contract is naturally terminated if the recipient dies and this occurs often and abruptly. Because many of my participants cared for the older people or disabled, they were subject to early termination of their contract pending the death of the cared. In face of the high probability of unexpected job loss associated with being dismissed by employers or the sudden death of the cared, migrant domestic workers strive to achieve a higher level of job security through mobilizing the broad and dense web of personal connections. After all, women migrants are in a disadvantaged position to attain job security vis-à-vis their employers, agencies, and the host society, and they cannot afford to lose their job and return home with little savings. Ninan, an Indonesian woman in her mid-30s, explained her strategies to keep her job secure:

... I keep in touch with the master of the temple until now. She is very kind and generous to me... My previous employer in Kaohsiung is a friend of the master. The master introduced me to my prior employer after the boss died in Puli. My prior employer in Kaohsiung is a so nice person and his family I have ever seen...

... I took care of grandma for 2 years and 8 months until grandma died, then I stayed in the dorm of agency for 2 two month waiting for a new employer. I don't know what to do

and when I can find a new job...Then, I made a call to my prior employer in Kaohsiung asking for his help. I told him that I need a job and asked him if he can find me a new employer through his networks. My boss is a very nice person. He found me a new employer in the circle of friends. And I come to work for my current employer, who is one of my prior boss's friends... My prior employer even paid the service fee of two months for me when I was at the agency's dorm and I learn it later...

The job procurement strategy functions to buffer the impacts of being in-between jobs during the duration of their stay in their destination country. The sooner foreign domestic workers get a new job, the fewer economic losses they have to incur. Additionally, this saves women migrants from the risk of being repatriated if they do not transfer successfully within the authorized period. Even though the agency would find women migrants a new employer since they charge a service fee from them, the agency usually does not offer this service with earnestness, nor do they guarantee their clients foreign domestic worker's decent work. On the contrary, the agency strives to satisfy the demand of another group of their clients- the employers, and promises their clients a hard-working and well-behaved worker. One of my participants, Ninan told me she stayed in the dorm of the agency and paid room and board and monthly service fees on her own for two months after the termination of contract with her "best ever employer" due to the grandma's death. In this period, Ninan's agency found her a new job taking care of a grandpa, however, it was arduous work for her, and dangerous for both of them, as it was difficult to help grandpa move around in the house because he could only move with a wheelchair. When Ninan requested to transfer after only a few days of working in the new position, the agency responded with a rejection and asked her to stay on the job. When faced with no way to get out of the difficult situation, Ninan eventually resorted to the help of her prior employer, with whom she remained on good terms with after their contract had ended. Her prior employer actively looked for a new employer in his social network and soon located a job for her. Furthermore, Ninan's former employer assured her that the incoming job was far less

physically demanding than that of the previous one because the grandma who Ninan was tending to was able to perform daily activities. In this sense, being engaged in a broad and dense network of current, and prior employers, and circles of relatives, friends, and neighbors of their employers acts as a fruitful and effective resources for women migrants during their stay in the receipt country, both in terms of job procurement and getting away from unfavorable employment. Furthermore, the development and maintenance of a good relationship with employers facilitates the ability of foreign domestic workers to negotiate and reduce the possible exploitation by agencies, which is pervasive. Women migrants demonstrate agency in accessing the resources of personal networks they can draw on to get a job, rather than having to only rely on the service of an agency which subjects domestic workers to unfair control and exploitations. Migrant domestic workers do recognize the benefits and significance of securing a job through these personal connections. Even in my own field research, some of my participants inquired if I could introduce them to the households of circles of my relatives, friends, or anyone I knew who was in need of hiring a foreign domestic worker.

The migration literature shows that the network connections of migrants, former migrants, and non-migrants in their origin and destination countries act to reduce the costs and risks of migration for intending migrants (Böcker, 1994; Hugo, 1981; Massey, 1990a, 1990b). Namely, migrants find employment and accommodation upon their arrival in the destination country through predecessors who are already established in the receipt country. For prospective migrants, the cost and risk of migration is constantly lowered as a result of material, psychological, and cultural supports of settled migrants through bonds of kinship, friendship, and shared community origin (Bocker 1994; Choldin 1973; Hugo 1981; Taylor 1986; Tilly and

Brown 1967; Massey 1990a, 1990b). Secure employment and housing in the destination country are motivating factors that facilitate prospective migrants to move.

However, in the case of migration for contract labor, which is generated by a bilateral agreement between labor-sending and labor-importing countries, migrant labor are proscribed as temporary labor and are thus, forbidden to settle and only permitted entry based on the sponsor-the employer. Also, contracted migrant laborers are not allowed to bring their family with them to stay in the receiving, country which further discourages migrant workers from permanently staying in the host country. Therefore, the argument that the growing network connections of migration over time motivates and facilitates further migration from the country of origin did not really apply to the case of contracted domestic workers in my study. Nonetheless, I did identify significant benefits of personal connections in the process of migration for migrant domestic workers. It is evident that network connections of migrants, return migrants, fellow countrymen, employers, prior employers, and circles of relatives, friends, and neighbors of employers develop into broad and dense fabrics of network over the duration of women migrants' stay in the destination country. Women migrants make use of the resources of their personal connections to secure employment which not only saves them a sizable amount of agency fees, it unfetters them from unfavorable jobs, and makes them free from repatriation if they cannot find an employer within the authorized period. It should be noted that foreign domestic workers in Taiwan adhere to the restrictive immigration policy which does not protect these workers in standard labor law and in turn, subjects women migrants to exploitation of institutional constraints. To secure a position, particularly a decent one is critically valuable and important to migrant domestic workers in many ways.

Obtaining a job through personal networks in the receipt country benefits migrant domestic workers in different stages of migration as demonstrated above, but the precious information associated with a prospective employer may only be distributed to women migrants who are in the close circle of family, relatives, and close friends. Specifically, migrant domestic workers who have access to the information of secured employment may only be willing to share the information to women migrants who are in these close social networks. For example, Sriya's younger sister, who was an experienced domestic worker in Taiwan, withheld the information of a prospective employer from other domestic workers and reserved it only for Sriya. She urged Sriya to take the job and "not hand it over to someone else." This mirrors findings from Böcker's (1994) study on network migration in which settled migrants benefit and facilitate migration of intending migrants through providing material, psychological, and cultural supports on their arrivals but are hesitant or unwilling to aid prospective migrants who are outside of the strong bonds of family, kin, and close friends. In this regard, migrant domestic workers who have access to information of employment may, act as a "bridgehead", benefiting and facilitating the migration of the intending migrants while simultaneously acting as a "gatekeeper" to impede migration of women migrants who are not in these social circles (Böcker, 1994).

The women in my study who migrated for paid domestic work in Taiwan were responding to the structural constraints of both, their home nations and Taiwan. Namely, there was a dearth of job opportunities at home for citizens in general and for women in particular. But there was an increasing demand for domestic workers in developed and increasingly industrializing countries, such as Taiwan. I found that women migrant workers were not just subject to the control and restraints at a macro level with respect to overseas employment, they also sought to be active actors in the process of migration. The migrant domestic workers integrated their personal



considerations into the pursuit of their family's economic advancement by entering paid domestic service overseas. These were also motivated and conditioned by household dynamics. As a consequence, understanding migrant women's experiences of migration would not be possible without examining the context of the household.

The emerging loan system employed by recruitment and placement agency both in sending and receiving countries to team up to their profits may bring a change to the composition of migrant labor force. The "fly now, pay later" loan system which requires little or no cash deposit from women migrant workers before their departure for overseas employment makes it possible for women migrant workers of poor households to join the migrant labor force of domestic work. The agency fees are packed into a loan of an excessive amount which is later deducted from migrant domestic workers' salary on a monthly basis and the sum average is equivalent of 6 to 10 month salary of women migrants. In the face of the exploitative loan system, women migrant workers who struggle to make the most of their option instead actively seek loans from their relatives and friends instead of from local moneylenders and by securing employment through personal networks. I found that the effects of personal connections on migration is further expanded and deepened for migrant domestic workers during their stay in Taiwan.

## **Chapter 5. Negotiations of Migrant Women in Their Daily Work and Life**

The denial of legislative protection on working rights is another dimension of how immigration policies contribute to the disadvantaged and subordinate position of migrant domestic workers vis-a-vis their employers. Foreign domestic workers make efforts to negotiate the difficulties that confront them in daily work and life in the private territory of the employer's house. However, it should not be assumed that foreign domestic workers are always passive and powerless, and subject to the control and exploitation in employer-employee relations. Literature has shown that migrant domestic workers engage in various forms of resistance to redefine employer-employee relations (Chin, 1998; Constable 2007; Lan 2003, 2006; Parreñas 2015; Ueno, 2010).

In addition to the discipline and surveillance of domestic workers by their employers, they are also subject to being treated “like one of the family,” which is a common strategy adopted by the employers to blur the employer-employee relationship and distorts the contractual work conditions for migrant domestic workers. Moreover, the claimed familial-like relation is intended to elicit additional unpaid physical and emotional labor from migrant domestic workers in the name of affection and emotional attachment (Parreñas 2015; Romero, 1992). Yet, it does not necessarily mean “like one of the family” acts exclusively as an adverseness for migrant domestic workers. Rather, in some cases, migrant domestic workers benefit from the intimate relations with their employing family in many ways. Migrant domestic workers' relations with their employers are not the only concern to them during their stay in the host country. Migrant women also take the effort to protect or build an intimate relationships in their destination

countries despite the fact that this desire and effort is substantially constrained by their status as a foreign maid.

The first section of this chapter demonstrates the tactics, in subtle or straightforward forms, used by migrant domestic workers to cope with the control and discipline of the employers. Also, I detail the activities which migrant domestic workers engage on their rest days to reconstruct their identities that are in stark contrast to the subservience of migrant women built and framed by their employers. Then, I examine the familial like relations which the employers utilize to their advantage through socially incorporating the migrant domestic workers into the host family and how migrant domestic workers respond to and use the bond and closeness with their employers to their own benefits. The last section emphasizes the desires and efforts of migrant domestic workers to maintain and create an intimate relationships in Taiwan, which denies foreign domestic workers the rights to intimacy and sexuality before their arrival in the country, and points to the fluidity of the social status of migrant women in terms of their roles as workers, wives, mothers, and citizens in the host country.

### **Micro Politics within the Territory of the Host Family**

Migrant women develop various tactics to negotiate the day-to-day difficulties in their work and life as foreign domestic workers in the destination country (Chin 1998; Constable 2007; Lan 2003, 2006; Parreñas 2015). The concept of the hidden transcript stresses the importance of the unorganized, trivial and negligible ways in which, beyond the perception and direct observation of the powerholders, is used by the weak to resist the images and conduct produced by those in power (Scott, 1990). Scholars have provided a fruitful discussions on various subtle forms of resistance which migrant domestic workers utilize to reconstruct their position of vulnerability and subordination vis-à-vis their employers. Thus, inspection into the hidden transcript of

domestic service is particularly significant and insightful to the recognition of foreign domestic workers as capable and proactive actors who reject the rules and conducts constructed by the employers as well the public.

Ueno (2010) points out that the forms of resistance used by migrant domestic workers might be different and distinctive from each other in differentiated contexts, i.e. the Western and Asian host countries. Specifically, in contrast to the receiving countries in the West, major receiving countries of migrant domestic workers in Asia have stringent policies and regulations which subject migrant women to restrictive control and exploitation by their employers and their collaborators (Chin, 1997, 1998; Constable, 2007; Lan 2003b, 2006, 2007; Tierney, 2007, 2011; Tseng and Wang, 2011; Yeoh and Huang 1996, 1999, 2000). As Ueno (2010) pointed out, migrant domestic workers in Singapore tended to adopt covert, passive, and discreet tactics to tackle manage difficulties with regard to the surveillance and domination of their employers.

I too found evidence of these Asia-specific tactics in prudent, discreet and reserved ways. Rena, a Filipina in her late 40s, is on her first three-year contract. Rena's employer is an old woman in her late 70s and Rena is hired to take care of her employer's son and daughter-in-law. The son basically relies on a wheelchair to move and the daughter-in-law is in a vegetative state as a result of a car accident. Rena always names her employer "grandma," who is a Buddhist and runs a small vegetarian cafeteria. Grandma prepares meals for the family, including Rena. But Rena does not really like the vegan meal and the Taiwanese style flavor. Thus, Rena always takes little food and shows no appetite to the dishes that grandma cooks. When grandma notices Rena's behavior and asks if she is feeling unwell or sick. Rena tells grandma that "the taste of food is good but it is different from the dishes of home-nation style. I miss my home dishes very much." Since then, grandma buys foodstuff such as pork and chili which are common materials

in Filipino dishes, and grandma lets Rena use the kitchen to cook if she wants, even though grandma herself is vegetarian and is not fond of spicy food. There is no issue of food consumption between Rena and her employer, in reality, Rena can have plenty dishes from grandma's cafeteria, but Rena uses the rhetoric of yearning for the home-made dishes to comfort her feelings of homesickness and successfully make her employer provide food materials and flavor which satisfies her palate.

Another example is from Christa, a Filipina in her mid-40s. Christa has been working in Taiwan for about eight years and is now working for her second employer in Taiwan. Christa's male employer is a physician and the female employer is a nurse. Both her employers work in their clinic and are not home during the day. Christa is in charge of all house chores including cleaning a three-story house. Also, she has to look after three elderly people in the family, namely her employer's parents and her employer's father-in-law. The two grandpas are able to perform daily activities by themselves and Christa does not really have to serve them, the mother of her employer has dementia but there is no loss of physical mobility for her. This is the source of frustration for Christa, because grandma creates a mess and clutter in the house at all times and Christa has to always keep an eye on her except when grandma is in asleep.

Therefore, Christa spends her very energy and time not only on housework every day, but also works to keep grandma from danger and causing chaos in the house. It is never easy to keep the house clean. When Christa's female employer gets home and finds out a corner of the house is not clean and tidy, she becomes unpleasant and nags Christa for not doing her job well. Christa does not talk back or defend herself but merely remains silent and smiles at her employer. Christa knows that her female employer will stop nagging soon so long as there is no talk back from her and more importantly, wears a smile on her face. By displaying false compliance,

Christa does not argue with the unreasonable workload and tasks which assigned to her which she knows is beyond regulation, neither does she express bad feelings of doing too much when scolded by her employer. Instead, she acts to comply with the required/expected deference by the employer in order to stop her employer from faultfinding and reprimands.

The discreet and hidden tactics migrant domestic workers utilize, in some cases, are not only used to cope with their daily struggles but it is also used to upgrade working conditions. Tatini, an Indonesian in her late 30s, has been working for her employer for 9 years. Tatini's employer runs a small scale factory and her female employer has a full-time job and volunteers in Tzi Chi, a Buddhist foundation. So, both her male and female employers are busy and usually come home at late night. Tatini and her ward are left on their own and she makes a phone call to her employers only if needed. Tatini's work is to take care of her employer's father who has diabetes which had led to the amputation of three toes and has to receive kidney dialysis in the hospital three days a week.

Over the years, Tatini has become an experienced caretaker of elders with serious chronic diseases like the grandpa she is currently caring for. Her employers respect and trust her and always inquire Tatini's opinions regarding the care of grandpa. Tatini has the freedom of working at her own pace. The daily schedule of Tatini's work is that it takes her more than an hour every morning to nurse the wounds on grandpa's toes before serving him breakfast and then, spends the whole afternoon with grandpa either for kidney dialysis in the hospital or for a return appointment in another hospital. Tatini's work is physically demanding because grandpa cannot move on his own and have to rely on Tatini to lift and transfer him between beds, the wheelchair, and the toilet. One day, she feels soreness on her back and waist, she then tells her female employer that she feels there is a decline in her physical strength and energy, and she

feels soreness on her body recently. Tatini goes further to say that “I think I cannot do this job good anymore. I cannot take good care of grandpa because I often feel the pain and soreness on my body recently and the power of my body is weakening. I hope to quit the job next year.”

Upon hearing this, her female employer is shocked and asks Tatini not to quit because she does not know what to do without her. The next day, her female employer buys Tatini waist protectors and offers to take her to physical therapy. More importantly, her employer promises her a raise to her salary starting next month.

The familiarity between domestic workers and their employers and between domestic workers and the cared develops as an extended employer-employee relationship in which the employers and the ward become emotionally attached and dependent on the workers, and vice versa. This leads to it being difficult for employers to dismiss workers. In addition to the dependence on her to continually provide the appropriate care to grandpa, Tatini uses the closeness and trust her employer has of her to achieve a betterment of working conditions and an increase in payment.

In some cases, direct confrontation appears to be a more powerful and effective way for migrant domestic workers to defend their stance against the exploitation of their employers and to better their working conditions. Aya, an Indonesian in her late 30s, has been working in Taiwan for about 11 years. At the time of our interview, she began working for her present employer a couple of months ago. Aya lives with a grandpa and grandma. Grandma is able to perform daily activities and walk around on her own while grandpa has a loss of physical strength and to some degree, needs assistance in performing daily activities. Grandma is always discontented with the work done by Aya and keeps nagging at her. Aya sometimes gets upset

over domination of grandma. Eventually, Aya stands up for herself and fights back with direct confrontation when grandma scolds her again while Aya was taking a nap. Aya recounted:

I don't have enough sleep and sleep not well at night neither. Moreover, I get up early for praying and preparing breakfast for grandpa... grandpa and grandma take a nap in the afternoon. But grandma nags at me if I go to a nap. Grandma used to be a boss and a successful business woman. She is very demanding. She often nags at me, keeps nagging, and it sometime upsets me. I tell grandma that if she doesn't let me take a nap in the afternoon, I don't want to work for them and they can get someone to take up my job. I tell her that I get up early and go to bed late because grandpa and she has different schedules while I have to serve both of them. You know, grandpa goes to bed early the night and wakes up at 2 or 3 a.m. Then, I have to pay attention to him and keep him from falling down. However, grandma goes to bed late. So, I don't sleep well at night and have to get up at 6 a.m. to do breakfast for grandpa. It tires me with a bad sleep. I don't think they can have a foreign caretaker like me. I know how to deal with the elderly and how to take care of them. Also, I am fluent verbally in Mandarin and Taiwanese. It's hard for foreign workers to pick up Taiwanese...

To cope with a demanding employer and resist the required deferential performance and constant exploitation of the employer, talking back straightforwardly to hold her ground is a powerful method and works well to the workers' intention. This often poses a risk that migrant domestic workers may be dismissed by directly challenging the authority of the employer. As for Aya, it did not lead to a layoff after she fought back with direct defiance to her dominant employer. It is greatly attributed to her sophistication of taking care of the elderly and her linguistic skills gained from a long-term employment which gives her crucial leverage to successfully change the adversities of work and redefine the control of the employer.

Indeed, migrant domestic workers obtain the knowledge of providing good care to the elderly with chronic diseases and/or disability through prolong durations of caregiving work. Furthermore, the older people in Taiwan only speak Mandarin or Taiwanese, or both which often poses problems of communication and leads to misunderstandings if the caretakers do not understand or learn the language. Thus, a foreign domestic worker who acquired the language skill of Mandarin and Taiwanese rather than English is competitive in the labor market of



domestic service in Taiwan. In this respect, experienced migrant domestic workers establish themselves with the accumulating knowledge of nursing the elders and the language abilities which enables them to better negotiate the improvement of work environments. Moreover, familiarity and closeness may grow in a long-term relationship between migrant domestic workers and the employing family. The formation of familiarity and intimacy may lead to the trust and dependence of the presence and services of the domestic workers in practical and psychological terms as in the case of Tatini mentioned above.

It is notable that the forms of resistance which migrant domestic workers utilize to tackle with the difficulties they face on a daily basis in effect varies in different household dynamics of the employing family and the relationship between migrant domestic workers and their employers. Despite the fact that many of tactics to resist the control and required deference over migrant domestic workers by their employers tend to be discreet and covert, however, the ways of straightforwardness and explicitness to stand up for themselves is also used and is an effective way to achieve the workers' intention. This is particularly true in a long-term relationship between the workers and their employers as well as when the workers' human capital accumulated in a prolonged period of their overseas employment. It is not necessary, as Ueno (2010) contended, that foreign domestic workers in Asia host countries with restrictive policies, laws and regulations are more likely to adopt passive and hidden tactics as the workers have limited resources to resistance. However, we need to be aware and cautious, as Constable (2007) argued, that there still exist inequalities of power between foreign domestic workers and their employers, recruitment agencies, and the sending and receiving countries. There is still a long way to go on obtaining egalitarian working conditions for migrant domestic workers.

## **Beyond the Jurisdiction of the Employers**

Public places outside the territory of the employers' house are important spaces in which migrant domestic workers engage in activities and performances distinct from those shown in their employers' residence. Among the activities, gossiping is one of them and likely the most common one. Migrant domestic workers talk behind their employers' back and exchange stories of private affairs of the employing family with their compatriots in secure spaces with freedom. As scholars (Chin, 1998; Constable, 2007; Lan, 2006) illuminated, gossiping is one of the common activities done by migrant domestic workers which acts as a form of resistance to reverse the required or expected deferential performance as well as the control of the employers. Given that migrant women are under the control of their employers and/or other members of the employing family, they self-consciously behave in the way of deference and unobtrusiveness in the host family. When the workers criticize their employers and gossip about what goes about in the employing family this conversely turns the employers into the object of control and interpretation. In so doing, migrant domestic workers not only are allowed to reconstitute a sense of dignity which is denied by their employers, but gossiping also works to relieve their feelings of isolation and stresses. The activity is carried out in the presence of their fellow domestic workers and they exchange stories and comments on the relationship with their respective employers.

In some cases, going to the park as part of the migrant domestic workers' routine tasks is more important than the granting of a rest day to the workers in terms of easing them from the dominance of their employers. This is, because some domestic workers are not given regular days off, with some only permitted a day off once a month. Nevertheless, they are permitted to take the elders for a walk in the park on a daily basis. Precisely, in my field research, I found that

some domestic workers and their wards go for a walk in the park as a daily schedule. Some even go to the park twice a day, in the morning and the afternoon which is believed to be healthy for older people by their employers and thus, domestic workers are permitted to do so. This is also the place I often met up with my participants because of the easy accessibility of exterior spaces outside of their employers' house. They spend an average of 2 hours in the park and engage in activities similar to what they do on their days off, i.e. chatting freely, sharing and enjoying food, exchanging information, relating the difficulties of their work, and gossiping, with humor and laughter.

Although the time and space available to migrant domestic workers in the park is not as satisfying as it may be on their days off, it indeed gives domestic workers freedom of genuinely expressing themselves and speaking bluntly about their employers. For example, when I met an Indonesian domestic worker in her early 30s, who is a newcomer in the park, I asked her questions about her transfer to the new employment and the main tasks of the new job. I surprisingly overheard another participant express her preference of being a caregiver for elders over of being a house cleaner when the participant answers these questions for the girl. As Wila, an Indonesian in her late 30s, recounted:

...her job is to clean up the house and walk the old dog every day. I like to take care of the old people rather than cleaning the house because house chores is boring and all you can do is cleaning, cleaning, and cleaning...there is no one to talk in a huge house (the girl's employer is not home the whole day but only herself)...moreover, employer would check if window glass is clean or not but they don't check grandpa or grandma's butts.

Yayvk, another Indonesian in her late 30s, and one of the fellow domestic workers in the neighborhood meets Wila and other countrywomen in the park almost every day. Yayvk breaks into loud laughter upon hearing what Wila said, she probably thinks it is inappropriate, Yayvk gently nudges Wila with her elbow and asks her not to talk like this. Wila insists that what she

says is true. She continues, “being a domestic care worker has more autonomy than a house cleaner and I want to have more autonomy over my work.”

While Wila’s straightforwardness may have sounded like a vulgar joke, it reveals the extent to which, there is a divisive difference in domestic work and housecleaning. Specifically, the performance and outcome of house cleaning is subject to detailed checking up since the work involves objects while care work only serves a human being whose body is not under the scrutiny of the employers, particularly when the cared is the elderly parents of the employers. Additionally, there are many nuances and intricacies, such as Wila’s joke, involved in the performance of nursing work which are not perceivable by the employers. These nuances and intricacies of the care tasks are not easily perceived and visible to the employers which allow for a specific degree of autonomy and liberation from surveillance for migrant domestic workers. Here, the agency of migrant domestic workers is manifested in their effort to obtain autonomy and control of their work even when faced with constraints and left with limited options.

Carving out time in the park as a part of their everyday work schedule permits migrant domestic workers time and space to express themselves, laugh, enjoy food, recount the hardship they suffer in the control of their employers, give emotional support to each other, and gossip. However, days off for rest, are still essential and crucial for the workers. This is the time which completely belongs to them where they get the freedom of mobility outside of the jurisdiction of their employers, despite having it only once a month. A day off, for migrant domestic workers, is not entitled and protected by law but is instead decided by the will and at the mercy of their employers. Though, many migrant domestic workers are given a day off per month, the day of rest only refers to an interval of 8-14 hours, not 24 hours. Migrant domestic workers have a small amount of their day off to break out of the confines of their employers’ home. Most employers

have curfews on domestic worker's days off, except the case when migrant women have husbands who are also employed in Taiwan. The exception will be explicated in the third section of this chapter. Therefore, the once-a-month day off is precious to migrant domestic workers where they can engage in activities that deviate from their work routine and expected deference to their employers. However, it is important to note that not all workers are granted respite.

Off-day dressing is one of the obvious indications of putting a pause on the discipline and surveillance of their employers. Even though, I never heard from participants that there was a dress code applied to them in their work places, many participants shared that their clothing on their day off stood in dramatic contrast to what they put on at work. Migrant women dressed up in blouses, tight jeans, or flamboyant outfits; they put on hats, stylish sunglasses, necklaces, dangling earrings, other jewelry and accessories as well as trendy shoes; and had their fingernails and toenails polished (Chin, 1998; Lan, 2006; Constable, 2007; Yeoh and Huang, 1998). The rest day dressing is in stark contrast to the plain T-shirt and slacks they wear on work days. Migrant women's day-off attire not only severs them from the association with the image and identity as a maid, it also marks, symbolically, that they are above the control of their employers on their rest day.

### **A Paid Domestic Worker or Like One of the Family?**

Romero's 1992 study of the relationship of Chicana domestic workers and their employers found that domestic workers were vulnerable to the claim of being "one of the family" initiated by their employers in many ways. The attempt of employers to redefine domestic workers as "one of the family" not only obscures the workers' position as a paid laborer but also leads to the distortion of their working conditions. The notion of being "one of the family" indicates affection and closeness between domestic workers and the employing family which weakens the

worker's ability to negotiate better work environments. Further, the claimed familial-like relations are exerted by employers to elicit added unpaid physical and emotional labor from migrant domestic workers, for instance, being affectionate and attached to their wards. As Lin and Belanger (2012) contended, by granting an "insider" status to migrant domestic workers and socially incorporating the workers into the employing family promotes the quality of care and the allegiance of the workers to their employers. I found that the status of migrant domestic workers as paid labor is masked by the notion of being "one of the family." One such way this manifest is workers forsaking their rights for a day off and staying home to keep their wards company, as they develop attachments to the elderly they care for. As Wila narrates:

...both the eldest son and the daughter of grandpa introduced me to others and the vendors of traditional market that I was the younger daughter of grandpa...the vendors said how it could be possible we were siblings, we have different skin colors...all family members of grandpa always treated me like part of the family...I didn't go out all the times but only go to grocery nearby when I need to buy something. I have to stay with grandpa because grandpa was ill seriously. He needed intensive care...I do not want to have day off, though my employer said I can have day off and he would look after grandpa if I were not home...

Grandpa had undergone an operation of the trachea and was a ventilator-dependent patient which required specific knowledge and skills of providing intensive care, even at night. Grandpa was barely able to speak due to the illness and his operation and Wila was left with no one to talk to and interact with in the house every single day. Therefore, Wila's employer visited grandpa every day to deliver meals and necessities for grandpa and Wila since they lived nearby. They often stayed and chatted with Wila until the evening to drive away Wila's feelings of boredom and loneliness. Sometimes, her employer also took her to look around in the traditional market and other places in the neighborhood. Further, grandpa's daughter bought Wila many clothes, shoes, and other gifts for her. They even arranged a birthday party without Wila's knowledge to surprise her, of which Wila told me she was moved to tears. Her own parents had never had a

birthday celebration for her, though she had yearned for one for many years. The ways that she was treated by her employers, made Wila feel was genuinely accepted by her employers as “one of the family.” As such, she devoted herself to her obligations and felt true affection as a pseudokin to this family. She repaid her employer by performing good and relentless care of grandpa. Yet there was no overtime payment or monetary compensation to Wila for her double shifts and work on rest days. Nor did she ever receive a raise to her salary throughout the term of her contract. Wila’s determination and effort to do a good job came at the cost of suspending her rights for a day off, hanging out with fellow nationals, and a receiving any respite from the isolation and subservience of being a foreign domestic worker.

However, unlike Romero’s (1992) finding that Chicana domestic workers were capable of negotiating better working conditions through keeping their employers at a distance, I found domestic workers in Taiwan pursued an alternative. Women migrant workers in my study did not recoil or stay away from being included as “part of the family.’ Instead they felt that being treated coldly and neglected by the employing family as disrespectful and inhumane. My findings were more consistent with what Hondagneu-Sotelo and Parreñas have demonstrated in their respective research on Latina and Filipina migrant domestic workers, wherein foreign domestic workers desired to build personal bonds with the host family rather than being just treated as a maid or contractual employee in the intimate space of a household (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2007; Parreñas, 2015). Specifically, foreign domestic workers hoped to minimize the differences of class, race/ethnicity, and nationality between employers and themselves, or as Parreñas argued, to de-emphasize the servility as a domestic worker, by embracing the notion of “like one of the family” and the closeness with employing family. However, inequalities of class,

race/ethnicity, and nationality still contributed to the servant-status of women migrant workers vis-a-via their employers in a private home.

In some cases, domestic workers made an effort to develop familial-like relations with the employing family. For example, the workers proposed to undertake additional tasks and responsibilities beyond those designated to them or expressed genuine concerns for the care recipient and/or other members of the host family. This is exemplified by Wila, in that even though Wila's employer did not ask her, Wila helped out at the hardware store at her breaks from providing care to grandpa. In another case, Wila suggested transferring grandpa to a rehab center that was closer to the family's residence to help her employer save time from driving grandpa between home and the rehab center. Wila offered to walk grandpa the 15 minutes in a wheelchair to the rehab center:

...I want to help my employers (the son and daughter of grandpa run the hardware store and Wila refers to both of them as her employers) when they are busy with hardware business, even though they do not ask me to do... prior care workers did not help with employers' business. They take a nap or do their things in their room up stair when grandpa goes to a nap...my employers appreciate my help to the business of the store and they say I am different from ex-workers...

... Grandpa used to go to a local hospital for rehab and needs a ride from my male or female employer (son and daughter of grandpa). I think that my bosses are very busy in the business of the store. So, I suggest GeGe and JieJie (the titles of senior brother and sister in Mandarin) that I can take grandpa in wheelchair, by walking, to another rehab center which is nearby grandpa's house...GeGe and JieJie agree to my idea and let me take grandpa by my own to the rehab center...

Wila felt she was treated by her third employing family as "one of the family" and was willing to forego her rights for days off and a complete rest at night in order to take a good care of the bed-ridden and ventilator-dependent grandpa. Wila transferred to another work from her present employer after the death of grandpa. Wila's present employer runs a hardware store and works at the store Monday through Saturday. Wila's new charge is her employer's father who



had a stroke and is unable to perform daily activities without assistance. Wila has a high level of freedom to do her job with respect to providing care to grandpa with little oversight and supervision. However, this also means that there is limited interaction between her and her employing family. Wila's employer and his family do not reside with grandpa and only grandpa and Wila live on the second floor of the house while the ground floor is houses the hardware store. Most times, grandpa and Wila are on their own. With the desire to build personal relations with the employing family, Wila voluntarily takes the time to work with employees in the store when grandpa takes a nap upstairs. Rather than staying in her room and keeping to herself, she enjoys the time participating in the work team composed of her employer, the older sister and the nephew of her employer, and two other employees. Additionally, Wila makes the effort to be considerate to her employer and ease her employer's burden by shuttling back and forth between grandpa's house and the rehab center three times a week when the employer is occupied with work. She recommended to her employer to transfer grandpa to the rehab center in a nearby neighborhood and she offered to walk grandpa in a wheelchair to the rehab center, even though it increases the workload for her. Wila's employer was grateful for her thoughtfulness to the employing family and commitments to the caring work. He paid a higher salary to Wila than her former employer and gave Wila a raise only a year after Wila came to work for him.

Even though redefining domestic workers as "part of the family" has its advantage, it makes it difficult for domestic workers to negotiate better working conditions because it distorts their position as a paid laborer. As Romero pointed out, authority lies with the employers because the effort of domestic workers and their hard work is not always rewarded with respect and trust by the employing family. This further reinforces the asymmetric relationship of power between the employers and the workers and the subservience of domestic workers. Migrant domestic workers

may find they were treated with disregard and contempt by their employer, though they are striving to do a good job. Ninan's experience underscores this:

Grandma doesn't like me and doesn't talk to me. She easily gets angry at me and shouts at me. I ask her if she is thirsty and wants a glass of water. She doesn't answer me at all. I feel sad and stressful of working in the house. Grandma never thought that I am the person who takes care of her and keeps her company. There is no one in the house talks to and cares her...She never thought what I have done for her and how hard I try to serve her. She only concerns about money, though she is rich...

...Grandma's granddaughter-in-law doesn't want her little boy sitting with me and she doesn't want me hold her child in arm. I just want to help and take care of the little boy when grandma's grandson and his wife were eating late at night. They are very busy and usually come home and have dinner at 10 p.m. So, I wait to clean the plates and the dinning table even I feel tired after a whole day schedule. But you know what grandma's granddaughter-in-law says when I was taking care of her little boy? She turns to her husband and says, "Don't let my baby sitting with her (Ninan) and let her hold my baby in arms." It's really hurting me. I am helping and doing good for them. They treat me like this!

Ninan, as mentioned in previous chapter, established personal bonds with her prior employer and asked her prior employer's help for locating a job for her when she was awaiting a transfer while staying with the agency. This is why she came to work for her present employer who is a friend of her prior employer from their golf club. Ninan explained that she was treated genuinely by her prior employer and their entire family. She felt grateful to be admitted "like one of the family" and being part of a family, treated with love and care. Family members showed real concerns and care for each other, particularly to grandma. Ninan's previous employer organized family gatherings and spent quality time with grandma every weekend, with many family members coming from different cities. For that, Ninan believed it is the family atmosphere and bonds that leads grandma to always have a big smile on her face and sing all the time.

However, this was not the case in Ninan's present employing family. Ninan's main task was to care for grandma in her present host family. Grandma and her grandson's family live on different floors in a four-story house while Ninan's employer, the son of grandma, lives next door. Although Ninan's employer's house is close to grandma's house, and the grandson, his wife and, a toddler reside with grandma under the same roof, most times grandma and Ninan are left on their own. There was little interaction between grandma and other family members except during supper time. Her employer and his wife then returned home shortly after they finish dinner. Most of the time, there was only grandma and Ninan in the spacious house. Therefore, Ninan wanted to be a good companion and a caretaker to grandma, and concerned herself with both, the physical and emotional needs of grandma. Yet, Ninan was given the cold shoulder for her earnest care to grandma. Additionally, the granddaughter-in-law of the family refused to let Ninan hold her baby in her arms when Ninan offered to help the young parents enjoy a meal without interruption. Being treated with neglect and even scorned by the employing family with respect to her striving to be an attentive worker, Ninan felt frustrated and stressed working for this family.

In stark contrast to her prior employer's appreciation of her effort to do a good job and treat her "like one of the family", Ninan was treated with neglect and disdain by her present employing family, even though she worked just as hard as she did with her previous family. Ninan's relationships with her prior and present employing family illuminates a cruel reality that whether and how a relationship is built between the employers and domestic workers is not dependent on the workers' effort to do a good job, but instead lies in the authority of the employers. Particularly, when domestic workers take the initiative and desire to be integrated

into the family, it reaffirms the inequalities between the employing family and domestic workers and the power of the employers.

Sometimes, domestic workers may take advantage or benefit from the familial-like relations with their employers. Studies of domestic work rejected the practice of gift-giving by the employers which trapped the workers into a web of debt and obligation that obscured the workers' considerations and ability to enhance their work rights (Rollins, 1985; Romero, 1992). According to Romero, "...gift giving is simply another employer tactic for keeping wages low and for extracting additional unpaid labor from the employee". Yet, in some cases, "being part of the family" can be beneficial to migrant domestic workers in material terms and more. Parreñas (2015) observed that Filipina migrant domestic workers benefited materially from the close and trusting relationships with their employers, in some cases, it brought tremendous advantages to the workers. For example, Parreñas found that one Filipina worker's employer signed a loan jointly which enabled the worker to purchase a house in Los Angeles and another was able to build a house for her family in the Philippines due to the employer in Rome granting her a two-year salary advance.

Similarly, I found that migrant domestic workers can obtain material benefits from the personal bonds with the employers. In some cases, the advantage of domestic workers to "like one of the family" continues after the termination of the contract. Rena, a Filipina worker in her late 40s, was in charge of caring for the disabled son and the daughter-in-law of the grandma, who was Rena's actual employer. Grandma was the breadwinner of the low-income family, with just enough governmental subsidies enabling her to employ a foreign domestic worker to take care of her disabled son and daughter-in-law who was in vegetative state. It was not affordable for grandma to put her son and daughter-in-law in a nursing home. As I stated earlier, grandma

ran a small vegetarian cafeteria and was a volunteer of Tzu Chi (the largest Buddhist foundation in Taiwan). She attended occasions and activities of community service for Tzu Chi on Sundays and in the weekday evenings. Grandma gave Rena plenty of freedom with her work schedule since grandma was busy with the cafeteria and volunteering services.

There was a language barrier between Rena and grandma, Rena spoke English and grandma spoke Taiwanese. Even though, there were difficulties of communication between grandma and Rena, grandma still treated Rena with trust and genuine concern. In addition to her caregiving duties, Rena also undertook additional work, including helping in the cafeteria during busy hours at noon and in the evening, and preparing food. When there was an occurrence of failure to repay the debt in the Philippines on time, Rena requested a salary in advance for five consecutive months and grandma agreed on it without hesitation. Further, grandma did not deduct money from Rena's salary for having a day off once a month which is advised to the employers by the agency of Taiwan because she knows the salary of a foreign domestic worker is hard-earned.

Two other cases reveal the ways that domestic workers can use the intimate relations between them and their employers to their advantage even after the end of their working relationship. In both cases, the employing family and migrant domestic workers built personal relationships and the employers unilaterally continued to give material benefits to the workers when the employer-employee relation ended. Wila, as mentioned earlier, took the initiative to incorporate herself into her last employing family in Taiwan by spending her break time to help her employer's hardware business. Wila's employer expressed his gratitude to her commitments to work and the family by giving her a holiday bonus on Mid-Autumn Festival and on Chinese New Year, two of the most important holidays for Taiwanese people. It is not uncommon for foreign domestic workers to be rewarded with holiday bonuses in Taiwan, particularly for the

Chinese New Year. However, Wila is the only one among the participants who received such a large holiday bonus for the Chinese New Year, which was equivalent to eighty-eight percentage of the average salary of a migrant domestic worker in Taiwan. Further, Wila surprisingly got a package with a lot of gifts for her and her family from her employer for the Indonesian holiday-the celebration to the end of Ramadan. At that time, Wila had quit her job and gone home to stay with her daughter who was only two years old when Wila left for Taiwan. Her last employer in Tainan city, Taiwan retained personal connections with Wila and gave her material benefits after the contract was terminated. In addition, Wila's former employer in New Taipei city kept up similar relations with her as well. Wila recounted that her former employers came to visit her in her present workplace in Tainan to give her red envelopes for Chinese New Year (red envelope is a monetary gift as best wishes usually to family members and close friends in significant holidays).

The other case is Ninan, who, as discussed earlier, had been upset with the responses of her present employing family for her effort to do a good job. Nonetheless, Ninan had been accepted "as one of the family" by her prior employer and remained in touch with her prior employer when the contract came to an end. In fact, her prior employer recommended her to work for his younger sister, whose daughter had intellectual disability and was in need of full-time care. Ninan declined the offer, even every member of the family was nice to her and treated her just "like one of the family", including her employer's sister. She told me that the reason was because that she was afraid of dealing with the waste matter of the young woman, particularly the menstrual blood. Thus, Ninan went to stay with the agency who looked for new employment for her, since after all, the agency collected a monthly service fee from her. Ninan felt anxious and helpless after being kept in the agency for two months with no good news with respect to new

employment. She made a phone call to her prior employer for help. Her prior employer got her to work for her present employer. Ninan also left some personal stuff and clothes in one of the rooms of her former employer's house which her employer reserves for her and welcomes her to visit at any time. Thus, Ninan keeps the keys of the room even now:

I still have contact with my former employer and I keep the key of my employer's house. I left some personal stuff and clothes in my former employer's house. I wasn't sure if I can get used to work here and maybe I will transfer again. So, I asked to leave some of my personal stuff and clothes in my former employer's house. My former employer told me that I am always welcomed to their house and there is one room reserved for me. So, he wants me to keep the keys of their house and told me to visit him and his family on my days off.

The employer-employee relationship between Ninan and her employer eventually came to an end after grandma, the primary care recipient, died. Though she was given an offer to continue to work with the loving family, she opted to transfer to a new employer. Nevertheless, that she chose to leave some personal belongings and keep the keys to the house functions as a security blanket for Ninan's uncertainty. It not only assures Ninan that her personal connections with her prior employer would remain but also provides her with a haven when she is afflicted and suffered from domestic work in Taiwan. When she was stuck and felt helpless with respect to the lack of progress on finding new employment, Ninan was able to turn to the help of her prior employer who immediately found her a new employer without resentment of being rejected. This implies that intimacy grows when migrant domestic workers are considered "like one of the family" by the employers and the closeness in some cases can extend beyond the term of the work contract. Also, the advantage derived from the familial-like relations with domestic workers may have tangible and intangible benefits in the worker's lives so long as the personal connections exist.

In this regard, the notion of “like one of the family” as well as the practice of gift-giving do not always signify disadvantage and exploitation of migrant domestic workers as previous scholars have contended. However, this can be used by employers to solicit added unpaid labor of domestic workers and to ensure the quality of care provided by the workers. Further, whether and how the relationship is established lies in the power of the employers, which can subject domestic workers to dependency and vulnerability. On the other hand, the familial-like relation between the employers and domestic workers may also act as an advantage to the workers and brings them benefits, both material and emotional, even later in their lives when their contract ended.

### **Negotiating for Economic Gain and Intimate Relationships**

Previous studies on women migrating for overseas employment have mainly focused on the challenges and changes brought on by these women’s departure of their intimate relationships between them and their left-behind family. Specifically, migrant mothers take up overseas domestic work to provide economic support for their original households while struggling to carry out the responsibility prescribed to her to look after her children. Those women migrant workers who have children left in home nations experienced the phenomenon of “mothering from a distance” (Asis etc., 2004; Hondegneu-Sotelo and Avila, 1997; Hondegneu-Sotelo, 2007; Parreñas 2005, 2015).

With respect to women migrant workers’ relationship with their husbands, some literature pointed to the negative consequences on the intimate relations at home as the result of their migration. The left-at-home husbands may involve themselves in alcohol, gambling, infidelity, and sequential neglect of children while their wives work overseas. It is problematic to assume intimate relationships of female migrant workers are consequently subject to destruction because



of their absence from home. This proposition presumes that the marital relationships at home countries were harmonious and intact and only damaged due to women's work abroad. In the opposite way, studies identified that female migrant workers not only leave their countries for overseas employment to improve the financial conditions of their families but also to stay away from domestic violence (Dannecker, 2005; Oishi, 2005; Ueno, 2010), unhappy marriages (Gamburd, 2000; Tacoli, 1996; Yeoh, 2000), and to obtain autonomy and distance themselves from their families (Dannecker, 2005). Employment abroad provides a socially acceptable way for women to escape the predicament in their countries of origin (Tacoli, 1996). Therefore, the transformation or even destruction of intimate relationships in their countries of origin is not necessarily malicious, particularly for migrant women who want to escape undesirable relationships at home.

The transformation of women migrant workers' intimate relationships at home has attracted the attention from scholars of migration and contributed insights to the issues of transnational motherhood (Hondegne-Sotelo and Avila, 1997). However, with the exception of Ueno's (2013) research on foreign domestic workers in Singapore, the creation and maintenance of intimate relationships of migrant domestic workers in their host country rarely catches the attention of scholars. In addition, scholars rarely attend to the extent to which women migrant workers are sexual beings. In reality, migrant domestic workers desire to build and secure intimacy with their husbands or prospective partners in their receiving countries, despite some constraints imposed on the development of relationship.

### ***I see my husbands on my day off***

I observed the desire and effort of migrant domestic workers to secure intimate relationships in Taiwan. The intimate relationships of foreign domestic workers is exclusively conditioned and

influenced by immigration policies and regulations of foreign labor in Taiwan. More precisely, foreign domestic workers are prohibited to bring family with them on their entrance to Taiwan and are only allowed to visit once in the home nation within the period of a three-year contract if there are no family emergencies (Ministry of Labor, 2018). In some cases, domestic workers are restrained from going home for vacation because of the expensive airfare and the costs endured on the visit home, such as gifts for family and get-together parties of family, friends, and relatives, which come at the workers' expense. Some participants repeatedly postponed their visit to their family in order to save money and accumulate capital for building/renovating a house for their family, saving for the children's education, purchasing a plot of land, and starting a business when they return. The separation of domestic workers and their family, more often than not, is prolonged beyond the term of the three-year contract.

In addition to the restrictive immigration policies and economic considerations of domestic workers, the lack of protection of labor laws and sequential rigid practices of employer-employee relation also contributes to the (re)construction of intimate relationships of the workers. In 2015, it became illegal to fire a domestic worker for becoming pregnant, and the pre- and post-pregnancy screening during regular check-ups for female migrant workers were removed in 2015 (Ministry of Health and Welfare, 2015; Taipei Times, 6 August 2016; Taiwan News, 26 April 2017). Further, the employers are not allowed to dismiss domestic workers on account of pregnancy since 2015. Yet, foreign domestic workers still are not placed under the protection of the standard labor act, and so there are multiple contradictions of these laws and regulations on migrant domestic workers. Put clearly, on the one hand, the government attempts to ease the control and improve the work rights of foreign domestic workers by invalidating the pregnancy test and banning employers from laying off pregnant workers, but on the other hand, migrant

domestic workers are not protected with rights such as a living wage, limiting working hours, mandating days off, and receiving overtime pay. Thus, the intention and effect of the improvement of the work rights of migrant domestic workers is problematic, as is the questionable enforcement of these laws and regulations. The reality is that many migrant domestic workers are let go and are repatriated by their employers and their agencies if they are pregnant (Cheng, 1 September 2020; Reuters, 17 December 2019). Thus, to deal with the dilemma on their own, migrant women either restrain themselves from forging intimate relationships and becoming pregnant or, get an abortion or, become a runaway, so long as they want to continue work.

The denial of family reunion to low-skilled foreign labors leaves migrant domestic workers with no option but to encourage/urge their left-at-home husbands to become migrant labors in Taiwan for the sake of a secure intimate relationship. I found that participants seek to safeguard the intimate relationship from the erosion of endured separation associated with their work abroad, and women would encourage/urge their husbands to come to work in Taiwan. Domestic workers' husbands are recruited to work in sectors of manufacturing in which foreign laborers are covered in the standard labor act and have higher levels of spatial mobility in comparison to that of migrant domestic workers. Namely, foreign manufacturing labor is protected by the standard labor act in terms of working hours, minimum wage, days off, and other benefits while domestic workers do not receive this protection. Foreign workers in manufacturing are permitted to arrange the housing for themselves if they do not prefer to stay in the dormitory of the factory, since in either case they pay for food and boarding. For that, migrant women encourage their husbands to come to work in Taiwan which in effect acts as an advantage to their husbands and particularly the migrant women themselves. Migrant women can

see their husbands and stay overnight on their day off, albeit for only one rest day a month. This is practically and psychologically significant to migrant women who take on domestic work in a foreign country.

Migrant domestic workers, in general, have one rest day a month while they are supposed to be given one rest day every week according to the template of labor contract issued by their respective home countries. Further, as I stated earlier, the day off is not a full 24-hours. Women leave their employer's house at 8-9 in the morning of the rest day after she prepares breakfast. She is required to return to employers' house at 5-7 in the evening and is prohibited to spend the night outside on her rest day. Domestic workers actually have a rest day that averages about 8-11 hours. The exception, is for domestic workers who has a husband working in Taiwan too. The workers is then permitted to have a 24-hour day off. In this regard, having the husband employed in the receiving country grants migrant women the moral legitimacy of staying overnight on her rest day which is stipulated in the contract. Additionally, it assures domestic workers the feelings of security in relation to her relationships with her husband when they can meet up face-on-face even just once a month. Ninan considered what it would mean if her husband came to work in Taiwan:

It is worrisome if my husband works in Taiwan and I was in Indonesia. I am worried he will make girlfriends because it is very open in Taiwan. A man and a woman can go to a hotel and no one would say anything behind their back or stop them to do so. But situation is different in Indonesia, you know, a single man and woman are not allowed to stay alone or stay overnight in a place or hotel. People would keep an eye on the thing. So, it is secured for me that my husband is not alone by himself in Taiwan. Of course, the best thing is I work in Taiwan and he is here too.

...I have a couple of friends in Taiwan. But it's different, you know, my husband is with me in Taiwan that makes me feel secured. I don't want to separate from him. He is an important support to me for working in Taiwan... I talk to him about my situation and my feelings, though he also wants to complain his work and employer. However, he is always patient and listen to me and I keep talking and talking until no time for him.

For Ninan, neither her husband working alone in Taiwan nor being by herself in Taiwan comfort her worries of the possibility of her husband having an extramarital affair. Given the temporal and geographical separation of migrant domestic workers and her family at country of origin, the intimacy of migrant women and her husband may be weakened and even damaged due to women's absence from home. The intimate relations are particularly vulnerable to failure when the husband engages in other behavioral vices such as alcohol, gambling, and/or misuse of money sent home by migrant women. Additionally, the socially and spatially isolated work environment of a private household leaves live-in migrant domestic workers with barely any contact with the world outside her employer's house. She is given only one rest day a month, in some cases, the valuable day off is cancelled if her employer is unable to find a substitute of the worker on her rest day. In this sense, whether domestic workers can have rest days, even just one day per month, is dependent on the mercy and convenience of the employers. All these conditions lead migrant domestic workers to a state of emotional stress and loneliness, in addition to being physically exhausted. Having a family member to meet physically in-person is an important source of support to women migrants. After all, nothing can substitute the meeting of face to face and the physical contact between intimate partners.

Apart from the maintenance of intimacy between migrant women and their husbands, motivating the husband to work together in destination country also acts as an economic advantage to migrant women and the family. Two family members venturing into overseas employment means that there are dual-earners for the family which means, it takes a shorter period of time to repay the debt, and faster accumulation of capital and savings to invest in property and/or business. Aya narrates how costly it is to build their own house paid by both her husband's and her salary:

Yes, I build my own house the fifth year I was in Chiali. It costs very much to build a house. It costs the salary of three-year working in Taiwan and does not include buying the land. If you want to buy a land and then build your house on it, it takes probably 5 years of working. It costs very much to build a house in Indonesia. If you have a job in Indonesia, like work in a company or factory, it takes life-long of working to build your house... It takes not only the salary of my two-year working in Taiwan but also my husband's salary. My husband works in Chiali for four years. It takes the money of two persons working for two years to build a house. It costs really much.

Though it seems to be beneficial to migrant domestic workers in many ways to persuade her husband to become a migrant workers and being with her in the host country, it is by no means free to go work overseas for the husband. As discussed in the prior chapter, migrant domestic workers pay little or no placement fees and pay for training fees, documents, and fly ticket due to the promotion of recruiting agency for domestic work in Taiwan. There is no promotion for employment in sectors of manufacturing. Migrant workers of manufacturing have to pay placement fee in addition to all the other fees required to be paid by migrant domestic workers. The agency fees in total add up to in average twice the amount a migrant domestic worker would pay. Thus, it takes extended periods of time to repay the loan for migrant workers of manufacturing than compare to migrant domestic workers. Luckily, migrant workers of various sectors of industry are put under the coverage of standard labor act and are protected. Nonetheless, migrant workers in manufacturing are not free from the constraints of immigration policy as well as the discrimination and exploitation of the hierarchical labor market in the receiving country. They are defined as temporary contract labor and prevented from settlement and they are appointed to jobs which are adverse and refused by the locals.

Tatini, an Indonesian in her late 30s, has been working for her employer for 10 years. Her husband followed her to become a migrant worker in Taiwan during the second term of Tatini's contract with her employer. Her husband works in a tire plant and he is assigned to the rubber chemical department where, just like many other foreign workers, he is exposed to toxic

chemicals. These 3D jobs, as they are called- demeaning, dangerous, and dirty including many of those in manufacturing, are rejected by locals, and thus is a high demand for foreign laborers to take on this work. Both Tatini and her husband are concerned with the possible risk of long-term exposure to these chemicals. Thus, for health reasons, Tatini wants her husband to transfer to a new employment when the second term of his contract comes to an end. Her husband has been working in the tire plant for six years. Her husband went to several interviews in cities in the north of Taiwan even though he prefers jobs in Taichung city, or at least cities and counties around Taichung since he is closer to Tatini's employer's residence. Tatini's husband successfully secured a job in New Taipei city (in the northern Taiwan), two weeks before the expiration of her husband's work permit. However, if Tatini's husband does not find a new employer and renew his work permit within the deadline, then her husband has to go through everything again from the very beginning. Namely, her husband has to leave for Indonesia and go to recruiting agency, go through training, wait for an uncertain period of time to locate new employment, process papers, and buy a ticket to fly to his new job in Taiwan. That Tatini's husband did secure new employment was not an act of faith, but rather was the result of the cost equivalent to about Tatini's three month salary which they currently pay to placement agency.

***I want economic security and a romance here***

When it costs too much effort and money in order to keep the intimate relationship alive by motivating the marital partners to be employed in the receiving country, migrant domestic workers may seek an alternative, which is creating an intimate relationship in the destination country. Women migrant workers with husbands strive to keep the relationships with their husbands unimpaired, however, their counterparts who are single feel a longing for intimate relations with local men in the destination country. Women migrants set their mind on finding a

boyfriend or husband who is citizen of Taiwan. They attempt this by using Internet dating sites and finding Taiwanese men to chat with. Then, they begin to date in person on her rest days. Given that Taiwan is a small island country, it is not a problem for two people living apart in the north and south of Taiwan to see each other by public transportation. If the residence of the man is in the same city where the migrant women's employers' house are located, he can easily visit the migrant women when she is at work, such as when she is walking the elderly to the park or going on a grocery errand. Migrant domestic workers' desire to have a Taiwanese boyfriend/husband result from the assumptions that Taiwanese men have better earning power to provide for her and her family in the home nation. Perhaps the ultimate goal is that migrant women hope to gain permanent residence so that her family members in the country of origin are allowed to reunite with her in Taiwan.

Rena, a Filipina in her late 40s, had been separated from her husband for about eight years and her husband already had a new family with another woman. Rena continued to work to support her two young daughters and her mother. She was determined to find a Taiwanese man to be her marital partner and to have the prospective partner provide for her and her family back home. She soon found a partner who like her, wanted to be serious in a relationship and get married. Rena's relationship with this man moved quickly and he even proposed to her one month after they began seeing each other. When her boyfriend told her that he hopes to marry her as soon as possible, Rena became excited and looked forward to transferring her position from a domestic worker to the wife of a citizen. However, the rushed relationship soon came to a halt. At that time, Rena was having financial difficulties and had failed to repay her loan in the Philippines on time. She asked for help from her boyfriend, she hoped to borrow money from him and return the money back later. Yet, Rena's boyfriend did not give her his word that he



would help her to get through it, even Rena requested for help many times. Additionally, the promise of getting married never went beyond the words. Rena realized that her boyfriend did not trust her, nor did he try to understand her situation and the difficulties that a foreign domestic worker encounters in Taiwan. So, Rena decided to break up with her boyfriend about five months after they matched on the dating site. Rena lamented that she is not young anymore and she has no time to play around with men.

...nothing he can do for me. it's useless I go with him...I don't know what he thinks. Maybe he doesn't trust me that I have a debt until now. He cannot help me. If he really wants me to be his wife, he can help me just a little amount of money I want, and to end my debt...because I think my debt gets me stress...if he can't just give me help I need, what he likes, just sex?... I don't like a man who cannot help...I don't want to tell about my debt again and again to beg him... So, I decide to break up him. I'm not younger anymore to play with the man who wants his lust only...

Migrant domestic workers who look for their intimate partners in the pool of Taiwanese men are more concerned with economic power and citizenship over romantic love in the relationship. Once migrant women find themselves unable to acquire economic benefit and permanent residence, they put an end to the relationship because, as a single migrant working mother, they are obligated to provide for their children at their home country. They have to be pragmatic to fulfill their responsibilities rather than be showered with sweet talk and sexual activities. In other words, migrant women, particularly those who are the sole breadwinner of their families like Rena, are forced to deny themselves of true intimacy when they seek to establish a relationship in Taiwan.

Migrant domestic workers who are never married and have no children have lower pressures of financial commitments to their family in their home country. Yet, abiding by the notion of filial piety she is still obligated to support her parents at home, and in many cases also her siblings, nieces, and nephews. Single migrant women, particularly those of an older age, are

more likely to accumulate higher amount of savings compare to other group of migrant women (Oishi, 2005; Tacoli, 1996). For that, migrant domestic workers may prioritize other motives over economic gain in the creation of an intimate relationship with Taiwanese men since they bear fewer responsibilities of their family's financial needs and have a more secure economic position. Moreover, many of them have savings invested in the purchase of land in their rural hometown and/or take part in entrepreneurship in their home nation. Noria was a single Filipina in her mid-40s, who had been working in Taiwan for about 11 years. Noria just broke up with her Taiwanese boyfriend and was currently seeing another man, both of whom she met on internet dating sites. Her ex-boyfriend was a real estate agent and barely had time to date her. They only can have time for a meal on Noria's day off, and sometimes Noria had to tag along with her boyfriend on meetings with clients. Noria is unsatisfied and complains about the little time her boyfriend was able to spend to connect with her, even though a rest day is so scarce to her. Noria shared her desires of having a Taiwanese boyfriend who can spend quality time with her and take her around to many attractions on her rest days because she longed to visit many places with a man's company and learn about Taiwan. Even though she had been here for many years, she was unfamiliar with places other than Tainan city, or more precisely than Tainan city center.

...You know, money is not a problem because I have my salary every month. I just want to see many beautiful places of Taiwan and get to know more about Tainan, and Taiwan. I never go to other places and attractions in Taiwan...My "good friend" took me to a couple of attractions along the seashore of Tainan last month. It's beautiful and popular attractions... we were riding scooter to these places. I hope my good friend takes me to some other attractions on my next day off.

Noria is becoming an experienced domestic worker and has adjusted to the work environment of her employer's house. Even though, she is well versed in the job, Noria feels bored and lonely especially on her rest days. She does not often hang out with other migrant

domestic workers and returns back her employer's house earlier than required due to having nothing to do to on her day off. Therefore, she desires to have a man to keep her company and to accompany her to see Tainan city and Taiwan. Further, as Ueno (2013) argued, an intimate relationship with men is derived from the feelings of loneliness and isolation of migrant domestic workers, but also the relationship has a "massage effect" to migrant women. A boyfriend may gratify migrant women with abundant pleasant words and gifts as well as physical touch of affectionate which are in drastic contrast to the harsh treatment of her employer she experiences daily in her work. In this respect, at some point of time in an intimate relationship of migrant women, the desire of love, genuine care and company are given priority over economic considerations.

Despite the fact that romantic love and emotional attachment are an indispensable part of intimate relationships for migrant domestic workers, there is by no means a lack of economic motives in the relationship. Given that migrant women set their mind on finding a Taiwanese man as an intimate partner, the consideration of income and permanent residency is inextricable to the relationship. Taiwanese citizens earn more than minimum wage which is stipulated in the standard labor act and more importantly, they have the freedom of job options and are free of restraints in seeking employment in one way or another. Conversely, foreign lower-skilled labor is subject to constraints of immigration policies, laws and regulations and foreigners are limited in their freedom to move between occupations. Even if migrant women do not seek to rely on the earnings of a Taiwanese male partner in a relationship, permanent residency has significant effects on remunerations and freedom of choosing an occupation for migrant domestic workers. This is exemplified when Noria pointed to the enormous difference in earnings and work patterns between a Filipina countryman and herself. The Filipina compatriot had worked as a caretaker in

a nursing home in Taiwan for 12 years and she later married a Taiwanese man in Manila. She lives and works as a part-timer now in Taiwan. She shared:

A daily-wage care worker asks for \$2,000 NTD per day to do the work and they are only responsible for care work but not house cleaning. Like Jecebel, she begins to work as a daily-wage care worker and she asks for \$2,000 per day. Jecebel married to a Taiwanese man and she can do a part-time work like this. A daily-wage care worker earns more than I do while they do less work. I have to do cleaning and all other things and on duty for 24 hours. I don't think my employer will hire a daily-wage care worker when I go home for vacation. So, grandpa asks me to have my vacation for two weeks but not three weeks. I plan to have my vacation for three weeks as usual at the beginning. However, grandpa tells me that three-week vacation is a long time and he asks me to shorten the days of my vacation to two weeks. Because grandpa is afraid that he and my ma'am (grandpa's daughter-in-law) cannot take a good care of grandma during the time of my vacation.

Olive, a Filipina domestic worker, introduces Jecebel to Noria and they often meet up in park where Olive and Noria regularly walk their respective cared in the afternoon. Noria learned from Jecebel how great the earnings gap and work pattern was between them. Specifically, Noria came to learn that a migrant wife, who used to be a migrant domestic worker, is privileged to higher earning power and the freedom of work pattern, even though they have same title at work, a home-based caretaker. In practice, a Taiwanese citizen who works as a part-time domestic caretaker is in charge of looking after the cared but nothing else in addition to the tasks of care. Further, a citizen who works part-time for domestic care receives a daily wage and the working day is 8 hours, and the employers are legally required to pay overtime when necessary. The considerable difference in payment and the freedom to opt for full-time or part-time domestic service lies in the possession of citizenship which is only attainable to migrant domestic workers through marrying a local citizen.

My findings highlight the point that the conventional framework of migration scholarship which defines migrant women either as wives or as workers, where each category is seen as independent and different phenomenon of migration is flawed (Piper, 2003; Piper and Roces,

2003). As Piper (2003) demonstrated, women enter cross-border marriages due to the desire to get away from the status of being a migrant laborer, and once married, migrant wives may take their part or reenter the labor market in the destination country. Some scholars (Constable, 2006; Lan, 2008b) have called on and examined the significance and centrality of looking into the various and fluid social locations of migrant women as wives, mothers, workers, and citizens in order to better understand the complexity of migrant women's experiences. My research is a response to this call.

## **Chapter 6. Home Bound or Trapped in Circular Migration?**

While there are specific and clear motives for which women migrate for paid domestic work abroad, migrant women are far less certain when and whether they will put an end to the economic pilgrimage as well as their future plans upon their return. Most receiving countries in Asia including Taiwan, treat foreign workers in general, and women migrant workers in particular, as no more than temporary contract labor. These host countries in effect do not welcome migrant domestic workers to obtain permanent residency and prevent them from putting down their roots, which is justified in the immigration policy and labor ordinances of the host countries (Constable, 2020; Tan, 2010, 2014; Ueno, 2013). As discussed in the prior chapter, the access of becoming permanent residents and citizens for foreign domestic workers in Taiwan is through marriage with local citizens. Migrant domestic workers are fully aware of their status as temporary foreign labor before their entry in Taiwan. However, some migrant domestic workers may or may not know they are permitted to a maximum 14-year duration of their stay in Taiwan.

Migrant domestic workers do not expect to stay for 14 years when they set out to undertake their jobs in Taiwan. However, they sometimes find themselves engaged in overseas employment for a prolonged period of time than initially anticipated. As scholars of women's migration have observed, foreign domestic workers repeatedly extend or renewed their contract either with the same employer or they transfer to a new employer in the same country or, they migrate to another destination country (Asis etc., 2004; Constable, 2007; Oishi, 2005; Yeoh and Huang, 2000). In other words, migrant women spend a lengthy period of their adult life in paid domestic service in one or more foreign countries. This is also identified in this study. All

participants, except one, worked for more than one term of labor contract in Taiwan or first worked in other host countries in Asia and then, migrated to work in Taiwan.

In contrast to Yeoh and Huang's (2000) observation about foreign domestic helpers in Singapore, where some migrant women saw their work as a "stepping stone" to ideal destination countries such as The United States, Canada and European countries, migrant domestic workers in this study tended to treat Taiwan as the ultimate destination. More precisely, participants did not project the fulfillment of diasporic dreams onto these advanced industrialized countries in the Western hemisphere. Rather, all of them displayed a preference to continually work in Taiwan and accumulate enough savings upon their return, except two of them. Even these two migrant domestic workers expressed their wish to pursue more generous remunerations through overseas employment, one in Japan and the other in United States. However, the reality did not necessarily reflect these plans. One still stayed in the Philippines after early termination of her third contract in Taiwan and the other renewed her contract and transferred to a new employer in Taiwan.

The reasons for this are multiple. For one, there are numerous uncertainties of their family and the women themselves which were beyond their control. In addition, there are the broader and larger structural forces in which their overseas employments are embedded and shaped. For example, the participant who is longing to work in United States, left for home before the term of her contract concluded owing to a family emergency. Her boyfriend had severe cardiac disease and needed an operation as soon as possible, and wished to see her, maybe for the last time, so she immediately decided to quit her job and head for home three weeks after she gave notice to her employer.

Moreover, their plans and decisions are also subject to the shifts and changes of immigration policies, labor laws and regulations related to them. For example, in my field research, all participants had no idea of the amendment of the Employment Service Act that extended the duration of stay up to 14 years from 12 years for foreign domestic workers in 2015 (Ministry of Labor, 2015). Upon hearing the news when I told them, most of them were happy to know this change to the law because they said they can work for a longer time. In fact, some of them and their compatriots had just left or were about to leave for home after 12 years.

### **Serialized Migration**

Although there are unexpected turns and uncertainties regarding migrant domestic workers' plans and decisions on their pursuits of economic achievement abroad, a clear pattern emerged- migrant women spend a prolonged period of time of their adult life engaging in a serialized migration throughout the globe. These findings echo what Aguilar (1996) found of Filipino labor migrants. For retaining themselves on the track of overseas employment, in many cases, migrant women have to be flexible enough to transfer between jobs in different sectors of industry in one destination country or, across different host countries. These jobs mostly, if not exclusively, favor the demand side but not the supply side associated with contract labor migration in Asia.

Diana, a Filipina in her early 40s, had worked in a Japanese garment factory in Manila for thirteen years. When the garment factory was relocated to Japan, Diana moved with the factory and continued to work there from 2012 to 2015. However, she was not allowed to extend the three-year labor contract nor was she able to work in the garment industry due to labor regulations on foreign workers. According to Diana, there is an age restriction on female foreign workers in the garment industry and a female foreign worker older than 38 years old is disqualified from the job. Therefore, Diana went back the Philippines in 2015 and applied to



work in domestic service in Taiwan the next year. I met Diana on her first three-year contract in Taiwan, and she revealed to me that she hoped to apply to work as a housekeeper in Japan after she completed her present contract in Taiwan. In a meeting with Diana, she introduced me to a compatriot, a girl who was a colleague when they were in Japan who also applied to work in domestic service in Taiwan like Diana. But the girl did not extend or renew her contract and went home after the completion of her first contract. Diana now is with her second employer in Taiwan.

Another case is Rena, a Filipina in her late 40s, who was also on her first contract with her employer in Taiwan. Rena stayed and worked in Japan for over two decades before she secured a job in domestic service in Taiwan in 2017. Rena is fluent in Japanese. However, Rena entered Japan on a visitor visa rather than a work visa and she lived in her younger sister's house who married a local citizen. On the status of a visitor, Rena can only stay for up to 6 months in Japan and then she had to leave for the Philippines. She maintained a pattern of which she spent six months in Japan and the other six months in her home country. Rena had worked either as a housekeeper in a hotel or as a cleaner in private houses. After her younger sister divorced her husband, Rena was unable to stay in Japan and the pattern of traveling back and forth between Japan and the Philippines was not feasible anymore. She then applied to domestic service jobs in Taiwan.

Oishi (2005) refers to the phenomenon of the serialized migration prevalent for migrant domestic workers in Asia destinations as being “trapped in circular migration.” According to Oishi (2005), circulation migration is a phenomenon which migrant domestic workers returned home after the termination of their overseas contract and then migrated again. These migrant women either returned to the country where they previously worked or moved to a new country

and they stayed for unexpectedly long periods of time overseas. Oishi identified forces at different levels which “trapped” migrant women and caused them to engage in repeat migration. These “trapping mechanisms” included abusive employment practices, the mismanagement of remittances and rising consumerism, and problems of family relations. As I detailed in an earlier chapter, migrant women were charged exorbitant placement fees and other fees and costs induced by migration which forced them to repay the debt by 6-10 months deduction of salary. Women found themselves with little savings upon the completion of a contract, particularly in the host countries like Singapore and Hong Kong where the statutory term of a contract is 2 years. Therefore, this often motivates women to migrate overseas again. This is echoed in my study, in that I found migrant domestic workers hardly had any savings after their first year of employment due to the payment scheme of the debt in their home countries. In this respect, the overcharged agency fees left migrant women with no choice but to take on repeat migration in order to support their family back home and accumulate savings.

However, in my study, there was a significant additional contributor to serialized migration, other than the “trapping mechanisms” argued by Oishi. Approximately one-fourth of my participants were separated, divorced, or widowed and became the sole breadwinner of their family in their country of origin. Many of these same women also had to support their parents and siblings. Migrant women can barely make ends meet through overseas employment if they have many dependents in their home nations, let alone accumulate their own savings. Even those migrant women who had marital partners who worked full-time or part-time in their countries of origin, it was difficult to have leftover money in the budget for necessities and children’s education if there was a big family to support. The payments of migrant women’s husbands were menial and contributed little to the family income. Aya, an Indonesian in her late 30s, has been

working in Taiwan for about 12 years. She only began to build up her house during her eighth year of her employment here. She had to provide for a big family including her two young children, her mother and younger sister, and her mother-in-law. Her salary was meager, as her monthly salary was under the average amount of payment for foreign domestic workers in my study. To save money, she even did not go home for vacation when she finished her first and second terms of a 3-year contract. Though Aya may represent an extreme case, it was not uncommon for my participants to begin to set aside some money to fulfill the goals of building their houses, purchasing a plot of land, and being able to afford other investments upon the completion of two contracts. For migrant women with these long-term goals, it was inevitable that they had to undertake serialized migration overseas.

### **Barriers to Saving Money**

Despite the fact that migrant women strived to secure their families' future beyond the satisfaction of daily necessities and children's education by prolonging their stay in the destination country, there was an emerging change to women's identity as customers/visitors in destination country which may act to counterbalance this effort of building up savings. Specifically, I found that many migrant women redefined themselves as customers/tourists on their precious days off which released them from the domination of their employers. Overspending on consumption and trips on their rest days could undermine their plans of accumulating savings.

As discussed earlier, many migrant domestic workers engaged in tourist activities in Taiwan on their rest days. These tourist experiences not only enabled foreign domestic workers to temporarily suspend the surveillance and confines of their employers but also to diminish the exclusive privilege of the elites' tourist experiences which was denied to them prior to their

migration. In some cases, migrant women indulged their desires for seeing the world outside of the confines of their employers' private territory, and were willing to pay for it, even when it accounted for a high proportion of their monthly salary. This was particularly evident among those women who told me they were seeking adventure and soon found that they were given little to no days off of work to explore. For example, Ani's experiences exemplified this situation. Ani, a Filipina in her late 30s, expressed her desire to see the world in addition to achieving economic gains through taking on paid domestic work overseas. However, she was not granted rest days until almost a year after her arrival in Taiwan for her first contract. Ani's employers lived in Tainan city, located in southern Taiwan. On her first day off, Ani decided to take a trip to a popular flower farm in Taichung city which was about a two-and-a-half-hour drive on a freeway from Tainan to Taichung. She invited her cousin and a friend to visit the attraction with her. However, both her cousin and the friend had curfews on their days off and had to go back their employers' house before 6 p.m. Ani promised her cousin and the friend that she would pay for their taxi fare home, instead of them taking the more affordable train and bus, to allow her friend and cousin to spend as much time in the flower farm as possible. In the end, it cost Ani almost one-third of her monthly salary for that trip. She recounted that, "I didn't care about how much has to spend but just wanted to have a real travel and have fun on my day off. This was my first day off here. I can pay for the taxi back to Tainan."

Besides allowing themselves the pleasure of going for costly trips, engaging in increasing consumerism also lead migrant domestic workers to deplete all of their salary. Consequently, migrant women extended their stay overseas when they found there was little left in their bank account. For example, Ninan, an Indonesian in her mid-30s, told me that she migrated to work in Hong Kong upon the completion of her first contract in Taiwan. She went back Indonesia and

stayed there for one year after her contract finished in Hong Kong. She then initiated work again in Taiwan. When I asked why she came back to work in Taiwan instead of remaining in Hong Kong, Ninan related:

I don't have any savings if I continue to work in Hong Kong. We have day off every Sunday and will go spending money on days off. So, I decide to come back Taiwan and hope to save more money. Then, I can go home sooner as long as I have enough savings. I build my house step by step after I come back working in Taiwan.

Taking pleasure in various activities on her days off, particularly shopping and hanging out with fellow countrywomen in Hong Kong, meant that Ninan could barely accumulate savings over the period of contract. Thus, she decided to migrate to work in Taiwan again to save enough money sooner and shorten the duration of her economic pilgrimage overseas since she has already been working abroad for 10 years. Ironically, the exploitative working conditions for migrant domestic workers in Taiwan, specifically the policy of employers to only grant domestics one day off a month is what appealed to Ninan about Taiwan. In other words, Ninan chose to work in Taiwan because foreign domestic workers in general are granted only one rest day per month which helped to refrain herself from her increased spending on rest day activities. This is opposed to the one day off every week that migrant workers are given in Hong Kong. By migrating to the more exploitive Taiwan, she could build up her savings more quickly and then, go home sooner. In this respect, despite days off enabling migrant domestic workers to escape the control and the confines of their employers and to gain relief and pleasure, it could act to countervail the effort of migrant women to amass enough savings for their long-term return plan. And this could prompt migrant women to further prolong their stay abroad.

### **Homeward Bound**

Migrant domestic workers who engaged in repeat migration, to some extent, did not necessarily perceive themselves as trapped and were inflicted by the constant status of diaspora

in their destination country. However, they missed their families back home, particularly their children. Many participants did not express sadness or disappointment for embarking on their economic journey, even when this often entailed a long duration of stay in the destination country. Many women stated that because of their paid domestic work in Taiwan they could support and improve the financial conditions of their families in their countries of origin, particularly putting their children or siblings through college. The majority of my participants accumulated savings for building or renovating their houses, purchasing a plot of land, investing in livestock, and starting small businesses (i.e. a grocery store in the neighborhood). Some expressed intentions to put down their roots and to obtain permanent residency and citizenship by marrying a Taiwanese boyfriend, which was the only access less skilled migrant workers had to permanently settle in Taiwan. Moreover, some migrant women actually were determined to take on repeated migration due to separation, divorce, or an unpleasant relationship with marital partners in their home countries. This was preferred to extended absences from home which was more likely to result in the deterioration of family relationships. In this regard, engaging in serialized migration by itself was not necessarily viewed as negative and problematic by the migrant women in my study. Serialized migration was a way women could maintain a sense of control and agency, as even as they narrated their experiences with difficulties and exploitation, they did not present themselves as poor and powerless victims. They were particularly proud and satisfied with their abilities and the contributions they made to their families in their home countries when they recounted this.

As Yeoh and Huang (2000, 2004) illuminated in their study of foreign domestic helpers in Singapore, “the diasporic trajectory is ridden with too many new beginnings, and few real homecomings.” For my participants, there eventually was an end point to their overseas journey

because most host countries in Asia imposed stringent immigration policies and laws onto less skilled foreign laborers and prohibited them from permanent residency and citizenship. By the time I finished my dissertation, five participants returned home for different reasons. One of these women, Wila, was an Indonesian in her late 30s. Wila was divorced and returned home hoping to stay with her teenage daughter who was only two years old when Wila left for Taiwan in 2008. Wila did not extend her contract with her last employer in Taiwan, even though there were two more years for her to continue working up to 14 years. It was not possible for Wila to come back Taiwan for employment because she was disqualified for a 3-year contract on her reentry. Wila got married about six months after she returned to Indonesia and eventually migrated to work in Hong Kong one year after she entered her second marriage.

Gena, a Filipina in her mid-40s, returned home upon the completion of her first and also her last 3-year contract. She and her husband bought a plot of land and build a house on it on the outskirts of their hometown during Gena's stay in Taiwan. Gena was needed there to handle the construction of the house. Also, Gena related that she wanted to stay with her teenage daughter because her husband was employed in Kuwait.

Olive, a Filipina in her early 40s and windowed, went back the Philippines out of emergency that her boyfriend (and also an old friend of her family) had serious heart disease and had to take an operation when she was on her second contract. Olive then rushed for home and did not complete her second contract. Olive revealed to me that she planned to travel to United States and work in her aunt's nursing home in California in the near future. She is currently still home with her four children.

Sriya, an Indonesian woman in her late 40s returned home after she finished her second contract in Taiwan. She told me that she had enough of her experience working abroad and she

saved a considerable amount of money at the same time. Sriya shared that she really missed her family and was determined to go home upon the completion of her second contract. After all, Sriya did not need to support her family by undertaking employment overseas in the first place, given that both of her sons were adults and served in the military when she headed for Taiwan. One of her sons got married when she was on her second contract. Syria wanted to stay with her family and was very pleased to become the grandmother in the near future after she returned.

Tatini, an Indonesian woman in her late 30s and divorced, returned home after she worked 12 years in Taiwan. The termination of her contract was due to her male employer's demise. Tatini's female employer tried to keep her continually working for the employing family, nevertheless, Tatini felt it was time for home and started a new life with her second husband upon her return. Tatini's second husband also migrated to work in Taiwan and stayed here for seven and a half years. However, her husband did not finish his third contract and returned home. Tatini hoped to follow her husband but she felt guilty because her employing family was kind and the male employer was undergoing treatment for his cancer and badly in need of intensive care. When her male employer died, it was four months after her husband left for home, and Tatini too was ready to return. She had her house built up next to that of her mother's house and purchased a plot of land. She also runs a grocery store in the neighborhood and her husband breeds cattle. Her husband, teenage daughter and aging mother started a new life upon her return. Moreover, Tatini told me that she desires to get pregnant and have another child.

For Tatini and the handful of other women who returned home, coming home signified a conclusion of their economic pilgrimage overseas. However, my findings reveal that the homebound migration was not an end point of diasporic status for some migrant domestic workers. Some women leave Taiwan after the mandated 12 years and then might choose to



migrate to other destination countries in Asia such as Singapore and Hong Kong where there are no exact restrictions associated with the duration of employment for foreign domestic helpers.

This was the case of Wila, who after declining her employer's request that she continually work for him, she returned home to be with her daughter, who has looked forward her mother's return for years, and got married for a second time. However, after going back Indonesia for about one and a half of year, she chose to migrate to Hong Kong for some reasons which I do not know, as I was not able to interview her again.

Regardless of whether returning home or starting a new serialized migration journey, migrant women's experiences were ridden with the unpredictability and uncertainty of their families and their employers, and these things were all too often beyond their control. Their migration choices were also shaped by the structural forces in which the dynamics of their households and their relationships with their families are embedded and shaped. Yet, even in the face of these challenges, migrant domestic workers were able to define their goals, act on them, and negotiate numerous difficulties within their employer-employee relationship. As Kabeer (1999, 2001) has illuminated, it was never easy to measure as well as conclude whether migrant domestic workers were empowered or not because empowerment involved individual, processual, and structural levels.

## **Chapter 7. Conclusion**

Women taking on paid domestic work in foreign countries to support their families in their home nations became a global phenomenon because of the increasing demand for accessible and affordable domestic helpers in developed and newly industrialized countries. Asia is one of the regions that has witnessed large swaths of women migrant workers who embark on economic pilgrimages, both within and across their national borders. Migrant women not only made substantial contributions to their families back home, but also to the overall economic development of both sending countries and receiving countries. However, the experiences of migrant domestic workers are still invisible and all too often, neglected by scholars. In addition, their experiences are also not acknowledged by the nations which benefit and rely on migrant women workers. My dissertation findings contribute to the effort of obtaining a comprehensive understanding of the experiences of migrant domestic workers in Taiwan.

There are also empirical, theoretical, and policy implications of my study. Migration literature tends to treat migrant women either as wives or as workers in which women moved for different purposes and on different migration statuses. However, it was empirically supported by my findings that this presumption was untenable. Rather, women's migration should be treated as a continuity of migratory trajectory in which women move between different social positions at different stages of their lives. My findings also imply to a challenge, empirically and theoretically, to the examination and measurement of women's empowerment and disempowerment in their experiences of migration, one that simultaneously contained negotiation and resistance, and constraints. There are also policy implications based on my findings, specifically that it is important to include migrant domestic workers in labor laws under

which they can, to some extent be free from exploitation and vulnerability vis-à-vis their employers and agencies. On the other hand, the Taiwan government should establish a supportive care system of the elders and disabled which could relieve families in need the burden of care, practically and psychologically, and free employers from exploiting migrant women to meet their needs of home-based care.

There are also issues which require more attention and need to be uncovered with respect to the research on foreign domestics overseas. For one, more research is needed on the implications and impacts of immigration policies and labor laws and regulations of different host countries on the experiences of migrant domestic workers, particularly in those countries with restrictive policies and laws to migrant women. There were some changes that have been made to the policies and laws of some host countries to reduce the vulnerabilities of migrant women, yet there could be some other problems that arise that pose additional challenges to domestic workers like in the case of Taiwan. For instance, tasks assigned to foreign domestic workers were shifted to, and they were only responsible for, providing care to the elders/disabled in the employing family which frees migrant women from overloading by multiple house chores and child care. However, the frequent and abrupt demise of the elderly/disabled with serious diseases subject migrant women to early termination of their contracts and they often have a limited period of time to relocate new employment associated with repatriation requirement. Moreover, migrant domestic workers could be subject to even longer hours and physically demanding work if the cared heavily relied on the help of migrant women to move and perform daily activities, notwithstanding the work required for those who were bedridden and required intense care. Thus, the effects of changes to the policies and laws of the host countries on migrant domestic workers requires further and careful examination.

Another area of further research concerns how migrant women navigate their desire and needs for intimate relationships during their stay in their destination countries. This is particularly overlooked in the literature of women and migration, since host countries treat migrant women as no more than temporary foreign laborers who undertake, at least a share, of the reproductive work of the employing family. Migrant domestic workers are always deemed and defined by their roles as a worker, a mother, and a wife but never a sexual subject in her own right. As demonstrated in my study, a full understanding of the experiences of migrant domestic workers has to include and take seriously the aspect of intimate relationships while migrant women are abroad.

Return migration is also an important issue that requires close attention in the research of women migration. Given that migrant domestic workers were defined as temporary contract labor in the first place by the receiving countries, this implies that migrant women have to return to their home countries sooner or later. Consistent with what Constable (2007) and Oishi (2005) have illuminated in their studies of migrant domestic workers in Asia, many of the women I spoke with engaged in serialized migration and stayed overseas for extended periods of time, in some cases almost two decades. Thus, the experiences and reintegration of migrant women into their original family, community, and the society, particularly those were of retired age on their return, should be taken into concern for future research with women and migration.

The last issue I want to emphasize in my study of migrant domestic workers is how they have the potential to motivate changes in gender relations in women's families in their countries of origin after their economic adventure overseas. Women migrate to do paid domestic work abroad for an extension of time and consequently become the main breadwinner, if not the only breadwinner, in their families in their home countries. Simultaneously, they leave the feminized

work of caring for their children and parents, and various household chores to someone else, either their husbands or other female relatives. The reconfiguration of conventional gender roles and norms due to women's departure for overseas employment brings about changes to the asymmetric power relations of men and women in their families at home. However, how these changes manifest and the long-term consequences of this are significant research questions worthy of attention.

## **Appendix A. Interview Guide**

Interviewer: Li-Yu Liao

Interviewee:

Date:

This interview is about the experience of foreign born domestic workers in Taiwan.

1. So, let's begin by having you tell me some information about you.
  - a. Do you work as a domestic worker of private household?
  - b. What is your sex?
  - c. What is your name?
  - d. What is your age?
  - e. What is your nationality?
  - f. What is the name of your village/town/city? Where is it located in your country?
  - g. What is your marital status?
  - h. How many children do you have?
  - i. What is the gender and ages of your children?
  - j. How many family members in your household in your country of origin?
2. Can you talk to me about some of the factors that led you decide to get a job in Taiwan instead of looking for jobs in other countries?
3. How did you/your family make the decision of coming to work in Taiwan?
4. How did you learn about the job before you come to Taiwan for work?
5. How did you apply to the present job in Taiwan when you were in your home country?
6. Can you describe the process of your application to the job until your arrival in the house of employer?
  - a. How much money did you spend on the process?
  - b. What was the source of money that you spent on the process?
7. What kinds of things do you most remember about the process?
8. How long have you been working in Taiwan?

- a. Did you continually work for the same employer since you came here?
  - b. Do you have experiences with other kinds of job other than that of a domestic worker in Taiwan? If so, can you tell me about these?
  - c. How many times have you returned to your home country and for what reason?
  - d. Can you tell me about how you felt when you returned for the first time?
  - e. How did your family feel? Your children? Your parents? You spouse?
  - f. What were some of the reactions by community members?
9. What is the content of the work that you execute in the household of your employer?
  10. Do you do tasks outside your employer's house? What is the task?
  11. Do you have your own bedroom in the household of employer?
  12. Do you have time off?
    - a. How many days you are off work?
    - b. Is there any break that you can have other than time off?
    - c. What do you do in your free time?
  13. Do you have family member, friends, relatives, or acquaintances in Taiwan?
    - a. How do you contact them?
    - b. How do you meet your friends and acquaintances?
    - c. What do you do when you and your family member, friends, or acquaintances get together? Where do you meet up?
  14. Can you describe a regular day to me as a domestic/care worker?  
 So, let's talk about yesterday, can you tell me what you did from the moment you woke up until the moment you went to sleep?
  15. Can you describe the relationship of you and your employing family?
    - a. What is your relationship with your employer like?
    - b. What is your relationship with the elderly (and/or children) in the family?
    - c. What kind of things do you do with them?
    - d. How do you feel when you help them with their daily tasks or play with them?
    - e. How would you describe your relationship with other members of the employing family (the husband, aunts, uncles, grandparents)?
  16. Now I want to talk about the money you earn while in Taiwan.
    - a. Do you send money back to your family?

- b. Around how much do you send back home?
  - c. How is it important that you send money back to your family?
  - d. Who is the person in charge of the distribution of remittance in your family?
  - e. Who is the person in charge of taking care of your family, particularly children?
  - f. How does your family use the remittance?
17. Can you describe the contact of you and your family in the country of origin?
- a. How do you contact your family in the country of origin?
  - b. How often do you contact your family?
  - c. Who is the person within your family you mostly talk to when you get contact with?
  - d. What kinds of things do you talk about?
  - e. How does it make you feel when you get to talk to your children? Your parents? Your spouse? Other family members?
18. Can you describe your children in the country of origin?
- a. What is the age and gender of your children?
  - b. How much do you know about how your children performing in school?
  - c. Have you heard about any changes in terms of your children's school performance after you left for Taiwan?
  - d. Have you heard about any changes in terms of your children's behavior in school after you left for Taiwan?
  - e. Have you heard about any changes in terms of your children's emotional or psychological state since you left for Taiwan?
19. Can you describe your relationship with your family in your country of origin?
- a. How is the relationship between you and your spouse?
  - b. Have you noticed any changes in your relationship since you have left for Taiwan? Can you talk about some of these changes? How do they make you feel?
  - c. Can you talk about the relationship between you and your children?
  - d. Have you noticed any changes in your relationship since you have left for Taiwan? Can you talk about some of these changes? How do they make you feel?
  - e. How is the relationship of you and other family members? Can you talk about some of these changes? How do they make you feel?
20. Now I want to talk about how you feel about your decision to migrate to Taiwan.



- a. What kinds of changes have you experienced?
- b. What kinds of things do you view as positive for you and your family?
- c. What kinds of things do you view as difficult for you and your family?
- d. If you could do anything differently would you have?
- e. What is your plan after the contract of employment expired?
- f. Can you talk about some of the decision making processes that have gone into this plan?

21. Is there anything you would like to ask me?

22. Is there anything else I should be asking you?

## Appendix B. IRB Form

### Project Report and Continuation Application

(Complete and return to IRB, 130 David Boyd Hall.

Direct questions to IRB Chairman Dennis Landin, 578-8692.)



Institutional Review Board  
Dr. Dennis Landin, Chair  
130 David Boyd Hall  
Baton Rouge, LA 70803  
P: 225.578.8692  
F: 225.578.5983

[irb@lsu.edu](mailto:irb@lsu.edu) | [lsu.edu/research](http://lsu.edu/research)

IRB#: 3648 Your Current Approval Expires On: 2/7/2020

Review type: Full Risk Factor: Uncertain Date Sent: 12/10/2019

PI: Dana Berkowitz Dept: Sociology

Student/Co-Investigator: Li-Yu Liao

Project Title: The Lived Experiences of Migrant Care and Domestic Workers in Taiwan

Number of Subjects Authorized: 45

**Please read the entire application. Missing information will delay approval!**

I. PROJECT FUNDED BY: Self LSU proposal # \_\_\_\_\_

II. Is your project regulated by the FDA? Y/N N

- If unsure, click the [checklist](#)

III. PROJECT STATUS: Check the appropriate blank(s); and complete the following:

- ☒ 1. Active, subject enrollment continuing
- ☐ 2. Active, subject enrollment complete; work with subjects continues.
- ☐ 3. Active, work with subjects complete; data analysis in progress.
- ☐ 4. Project start postponed
  - The IRB office must be notified prior to initiating the project at a later date.
- ☐ 5. Project complete; end date   /  /
- ☐ 6. Project cancelled: no human subjects used.

IV. PARTICIPANT ENROLLMENT

- Number of participants enrolled 20

V. PROTOCOL: (Check one).

- ☒ Protocol continues as previously approved
- ☐ Changes are requested\*
  - List (on separate sheet) any changes to approved protocol.
  - **Reminder:** If your study closes per the new common rule, modification requests will still need to be submitted to the IRB.

VI. UNEXPECTED PROBLEMS: (did anything occur that increased risks to participants):

- State number of events since study inception: N since last report: N
- If such events occurred, describe them and how they affect risks in your study.
- Have there been any previously unreported events? Y/N N  
(if YES, attach report describing event and any corrective action).
  - **Reminder:** If your study closes per the new common rule, unexpected problems (adverse events) will still need to be submitted to the IRB.

Signature of Principal Investigator:

Date 12/10/19

## Bibliography

- Afshar, Haleh (ed). (1998). *Women and empowerment: illustrations from the Third World*. Hampshire: Macmillan Press.
- Aguilar, Filomeno V, Jr. (1996). The dialectics of transnational shame and national identity. *Philippine Sociological Review* 44 (1–4): 101–136.
- Agunias, D. (2006). *Remittances and development: trends, impacts, and policy options*. Migration Policy Institute.
- Ang, Alvin P. et al. (2009). Remittances and Household Behavior in the Philippines. ADB Economics Working Paper Series, No. 188, Asian Development Bank.  
<https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/28401/economics-wp188.pdf>
- Asis, M.B., Yeoh, S., and Huang, B. (2004). “When the light of the home is abroad: Unskilled female migration and the Filipino family.” *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 25(2): 198-215.
- Aspinwall, Nick. (2019). “Baby or a job? stark choice for Taiwan’s migrant workers” Reuters, 17 December 2019.  
<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-taiwan-migrants-workers-idUSKBN1YL0WU>
- Barber, Pauline G. (1997). Transnationalism and the politics of “home” for Philippine domestic workers. *Anthropologica* 34: 39-52.
- Battistella, G and Paganoni, A (eds). (1996). *Asian women in migration*. Quezon City, Philippines: Scalabrini Migration Center.
- Battistella, G., & Paganoni, A. 1992. *Philippine labor migration: Impact and policy*. Quezon City: Scalabrini Migration Center.
- Bendick, Marc. 1989. "Privatizing the Delivery of Social Welfare Service." in *Privatization and the Welfare State*, edited by Sheila B. Kamerman and Alfred J. Kahn. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Beneria, Lourdes and Feldman, S. (eds). 1992. *Unequal Burden: Crises, Persistent Poverty and Women's Work*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Bhadra, Chandra. (2007). “International Labour Migration of Nepalese Women: the Impact of Their Remittances on Poverty Reduction.” Asia-Pacific Research and Training Network on Trade Working Paper Series No. 44, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCP).
- Böcker, A. (1994). ‘Chain migration over legally closed borders: Settled immigrants as bridgeheads and gatekeepers,’ *The Netherlands Journal of Social Sciences* 30(2):87- 106.

- Boyd, M. (1989). "Family and personal networks in international migration: Recent developments and new agendas," *The International Migration Review* 23(3): 638-670.
- Bruce, Judith. (1989). "Homes divided." *World Development* 17(7):979- 91.
- Carling, J. (2005). "Gender dimensions of international migration," Global migration perspectives No. 35, Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM).
- Chant, Sylvia, and Mcilwaine, Cathy. (1995). *Women of a Lesser Cost: Female Labour, Foreign Exchange and Philippine Development*. London and East Haven, CT: Pluto Press.
- Chant, Sylvia. (1997). *Women-headed households: diversity and dynamics in the developing world*. New York: St. Martin's.
- Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing grounded theory*. Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Cheng, Isabelle. (2020). "We want productive workers, not fertile women: The expediency of employing Southeast Asian caregivers in Taiwan," *Asia Pacific Viewpoint*, 61(3): 453-465.
- Cheng, Isabella. (2020). "Desire female care labor, undesirable migrant care workers, and their unwanted production" Taiwan Insight, 1 September 2020. <https://taiwaninsight.org/2020/09/01/desired-female-care-labour-undesirable-migrant-care-workers-and-their-unwanted-reproduction/>
- Chin, Christine B. N. (1997). "Walls of Silence and Late Twentieth Century Representations of the Foreign Female Domestic Worker: The Case of Filipina and Indonesian Female Servants in Malaysia," *International Migration Review* 31(2):353-385.
- Chin, Christine B. N. (1998). *In Service and Servitude: Foreign Female Domestic Workers and the Malaysian "Modernity" Project*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Chin, Christine B. N. (2003). Visible Bodies, Invisible Work: State Practices toward Migrant Women Domestic Workers in Malaysia. *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal* 12(1-2): 49-73.
- Choldin, H.M. (1973). "Kinship networks in the migration process", *International Migration Review*, 7(2): 163-76.
- Collins, P. H. (1994). "Shifting the center: race, class, and feminist theorizing about motherhood," in Glenn, E. N., Chang, G., and Forcey, L. R.(eds) *Mothering: Ideology, experience, and agency*. New York: Routledge.
- Connell R. (2009). *Gender: in world perspective*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Constable, N. (1997). *Maid to order in Hong Kong: Stories of Filipina workers*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

- Constable, N. (2006). "Brides, Maids, and Prostitutes: Reflections on the Study of 'Trafficked' Women," *PORTAL: Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies* 3(2): 1-25.
- Constable, N. (2007). *Maid to order in Hong Kong: Stories of Migrant workers*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Constable, N. (2014). *Born Out of Place: Migrant Mothers and the Politics of International Migration*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Constable, N. (2015). "Obstacles to Claiming Rights: Migrant Domestic Workers in Asia's World City, Hong Kong." In *Care Migration and Human Rights*, edited by Siobhan Mullally, and Sarah van Walsum, 96–115. London: Routledge.
- Constable, N. (2020). "Tales of two cities: legislating pregnancy and marriage among foreign domestic workers in Singapore and Hong Kong" *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 46(3):1-17.
- Costa, Dora L. (2000). "From Mill Town to Board Room: the Rise of Women's Paid Labor." *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 14(4): 101-122.
- Dennecker, Petra. (2005). "Transnational Migration and the Transformation of Gender Relations: The Case of Bangladeshi Labour Migrants." *Current Sociology* 53(4):655-674.
- Devasahayam, T.W., Huang, S., and Yeoh, B. (2004). Southeast Asian migrant women: Navigating borders, negotiating scales. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography*, 25(2): 135-140.
- Dwyer, Daisy and Bruce, Judith (eds). (1988). *A Home Divided: Women and Income in The Third World*. CA: Stanford University Press.
- Ehrenreich, B. and Arlie Hochschild, A. (ed). (2003). *Global woman: nannies, maids, and sex workers in the new economy*. New York: Metropolitan Books.
- Gamburd, M. R. (2000). *The kitchen spoon's handle: transnationalism and Sri Lanka's migrant housemaids*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Giaccone, Mario. 2010. "Migrant women workers receive less pay than men." Report of European Working Conditions Observatory (EWCO), European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound).  
<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/ewco/2010/01/IT1001049I.htm> (09 July 2010)
- Glenn, E. N. (1994). "Social constructions of mothering: a thematic overview," in Glenn, E. N., Chang, G., and Forcey, L. R.(eds) *Mothering: Ideology, experience, and agency*. New York: Routledge.
- Glenn, Evelyn Nakano. (1986). *Issei, Nisei, Warbride*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Go, S. (2009). "Working in Italy: the experience of Filipino migrant workers and their families," in IOM (ed.) *Gender and Labour Migration in Asia*, Geneva, Switzerland: IOM.

- Gonzales, Joaquin L. (1998). *Philippine labour migration: critical dimensions of public policy*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
- Gurin, Arnold. (1989). "Governmental Responsibility and Privatization: Examples for Four Social Services." in *Privatization and the Welfare State*, edited by Sheila B. Kamerman and Alfred J. Kahn. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Heyzer, Noeleen. (1986). *Working women in South-East Asia: development, subordination, and emancipation*. Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Hochschild, A. R. (2000). "Global Care Chains and Emotional Surplus Value," in Hutton, W. and Giddens, A. (eds) *On the Edge: Living with global capitalism*. London: Jonathan Cape.
- Hochschild, A.R. (2000). "The nanny chain" *The American Prospect* (Online edition), 11(4).
- Hodson, Randy, and Robert L. K. (1981). "Circularity in the dual economy: A comment on Tolbert, Horan, and Beck, 1980." *American Journal of Sociology* 86:881-887.
- Hondagneu-Sotelo, Pierrette. (2007). *Doméstica: immigrant workers cleaning and caring in the shadows of affluence*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press.
- Hondagneu-Sotelo, Pierrette. (1999). "Introduction: Gender and Contemporary U.S. Immigration." *American Behavioral Scientist* 42(4): 565-76.
- Hondagneu-Sotelo, P., and Avila, E. (1997). "I'm here, but I'm there": The meanings of Latina transnational motherhood. *Gender & Society*, 11(5), 548-571.
- Hondagneu-Sotelo, Pierrette. (1994). *Gendered Transitions: Mexican Experiences of Immigration*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Horton, Sarah. (2009). A mother's heart is weighed down with stones: a phenomenological approach to the experience of transnational motherhood," *Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry* 33(1):21-40.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/089124397011005003>
- Huang, Maggie. (2017). "Taiwan's employers can't fire pregnant foreign workers" Taiwan News, 26 April 2017. <https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/3149977>
- Huang, S., Yeoh, B and Rahman, N.A. (eds.) (2005). *Asian Women as Transnational Domestic Workers in Asia*. Singapore: Marshall Cavendish Academic.
- Hugo, G., and Stahl, C. (2004). "Labor export strategies in Asia" in D. Massey and J.E. Taylor (eds.), *International Migration, Prospects and Policies in a Global Market*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hugo, Graeme J. (1981). "Village-community ties, village norms, and ethnic and social networks: A review of evidence from the Third World," in Gordon F. D. and Robert W. G. (eds.)

*Migration Decision Making: Multidisciplinary Approaches to Microlevel Studies in Developed and Developing Countries*. New York: Pergamon Press.

- ILO. (2013). "Facts and figures: Women migrant workers in ASEAN," Policy Brief Series: Women's Labour Migration in ASEAN.  
[https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---sro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms\\_432817.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---sro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms_432817.pdf)
- IPS (Institute of Policy Studies). (2013). Migration Profile: Sri Lanka. Colombo: Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka.
- Jelin, E. (1977). Migration and labor force participation of Latin American women: The domestic servants in the cities. *Signs* 3 (1): 129-141.
- Kabeer, Naila. (1999). "The conditions and consequences of choice: reflections on the measurement of women's empowerment." UNRISD discussion papers No. 108, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD). [https://www.unrisd.org/80256b3c005bccf9/\(httpauxpages\)/31eef181bec398a380256b67005b720a/\\$file/dp108.pdf](https://www.unrisd.org/80256b3c005bccf9/(httpauxpages)/31eef181bec398a380256b67005b720a/$file/dp108.pdf)
- Kabeer, Naila. (2001). Discussing women's empowerment: theory and practice. Sida studies No. 3, The Swedish International Development Agency.  
<https://cdn.sida.se/publications/files/sida984en-discussing-womens-empowerment---theory-and-practice.pdf>
- Katie, McQue. (2019). "How Hong Kong maid became caught in a humanitarian tsunami" The Guardian, July 22, 2019.  
<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2019/jul/22/fired-pregnant-hong-kong-maids-deserted-by-employers-homeless-domestic-workers>
- Kossoudji, S.A., Ranney S. I. (1984). The labor market experience of female migrants: the case of temporary Mexican migration to the U.S. *International Migration Review* 18(4): 1120-43.
- Lan, Pei-Chia. (2003). Negotiating Social Boundaries and Private Zones: The Micropolitics of Employing Migrant Domestic Workers." *Social Problems* 50(4): 525-549.
- Lan, Pei-Chia. (2006). *Global Cinderellas: migrant domestics and newly rich employers in Taiwan*. N.C.: Duke University Press.
- Lan, Pei-Chia. (2007). "Legal Servitude, Free Illegality: Migrant "Guest" Workers in Taiwan." in Parrenas, R. and Siu, Lok (eds) *Asian Diasporas: New Conceptions, New Frameworks*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Lan, Pei-Chia. (2008). Migrant Women's Bodies as Boundary Markers: Reproductive Crisis and Sexual Control in the Ethnic Frontiers of Taiwan," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 33(4): 833-861.

- Lawson, Victoria A. (1998). "Hierarchical households and gendered migration in Latin America: Feminist extensions to migration research," *Progress in Human Geography* 22 (1): 39-53.
- Lin, S. and Bélanger, D. (2012). "Negotiating the social family: migrant live-in elder care-workers in taiwan," *Asian Journal of Social Science* 40(3): 295-320.
- Massey, Douglas et al. (1993). "Theories of International Migration: A Review and Appraisal," *Population and Development Review* 19(3): 431-466.
- Massey, Douglas, Arango, Joaquín, Hugo, Graeme, Kouaouci, Ali, Pellegrino, Adela and Taylor, Edward J. (1998). *Worlds in Motion: Understanding International Migration at the End of the Millennium*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Massey, Douglas. (1990a). "The Social and Economic Origins of Immigration ," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 510(1): 60-72.
- Massey, Douglas. (1990b). Social Structure, Household Strategies, and the Cumulative Causation of Migration, *Population Index* 56(1): 3-26.
- Ministry of Health and Welfare. 2015. Regulations Governing Management of the Health Examination of Employed Aliens. <https://law.moj.gov.tw/ENG/LawClass/LawAll.aspx?pcode=L0050018>
- Ministry of Labor, Workforce Development Agency. (2020). *The Handbook for Foreign Workers in Taiwan*. [https://www.wda.gov.tw/News\\_Content.aspx?n=8DC97C01DCF594B0&sms=B765994FC1B39759&s=4BB78932A92B4CB7](https://www.wda.gov.tw/News_Content.aspx?n=8DC97C01DCF594B0&sms=B765994FC1B39759&s=4BB78932A92B4CB7)
- Ministry of Labor. (2004). The Reviewing Standards and Employment Qualifications for Foreigners Engaging in the Jobs Specified in Subparagraph 8 to 11 , Paragraph 1 to Article 46 of the Employment Service Act. <https://law.moj.gov.tw/LawClass/LawAll.aspx?pcode=N0090029>
- Ministry of Labor. (2015). Employment Service Act. <https://law.moj.gov.tw/ENG/LawClass/LawAll.aspx?pcode=N0090001>
- Ministry of Labor. (2019). International labor statistics, Statistics. <https://statdb.mol.gov.tw/html/mon/i0120020620e.htm>
- Ministry of Labour, Workforce Development Agency. (2017). Pregnancy and items of health examination. [https://www.wda.gov.tw/News\\_Content.aspx?n=8DC97C01DCF594B0&sms=B765994FC1B39759&s=7322BDD52B25D100](https://www.wda.gov.tw/News_Content.aspx?n=8DC97C01DCF594B0&sms=B765994FC1B39759&s=7322BDD52B25D100)
- O'Neil, Kevin, (2004). *Labor Export as Government Policy: The Case of the Philippines*. Migrant Policy Institute. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/labor-export-government-policy-case-philippines>



- Oishi, Nana (2002). "Gender and Migration: An Integrative Approach", Working Paper, The Center for Comparative Immigration Studies, University of San Diego, California, USA.
- Oishi, Nana. (2005). *Women in motion: Globalization, state policies, and labor migration in Asia*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.
- Parreñas, Rhacel S. (2005). *Children of global migration: transnational families and gendered woes*. California: Stanford University Press.
- Parreñas, Rhacel S. (2015). *Servants of globalization migration and domestic work*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press.
- Piore, Michael J. (1979). *Birds of Passage: Migrant Labor in Industrial Societies*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Piper, N. (2003). "Wife or worker? worker or wife? marriage and cross-border migration in contemporary Japan," *International Journal of Population Geography* 9 (6): 457-469.
- Piper, N. and Roces, M. (2003). *Wife or Worker?: Asian Women and Migration*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Pratt, Geraldine. (2012). *Families apart: migrant mothers and the conflicts of labor and love*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Rahman, N. A., Yeoh, B., and Huang, S. (2005). "Dignity overdue": transnational domestic workers in Singapore," in Huang, S., Yeoh, B., Rahman, N. A. (eds). *Asian Women as Transnational Domestic Workers*. Singapore: Marshall Cavendish Academic.
- Rollins, Judith. (1985). *Between Women: Domesticity and Their Employers*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Romero, Mary. (1992). *Maid in the U.S.A.* New York and London: Routledge.
- Russell, S. S., & Teitelbaum, M. S. (1992). *International migration and international trade*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank.
- Sassen, Saskia. (1984). "Notes on the Incorporation of Third World Women into Wage Labor through Immigration and Off-shore Production", *International Migration Review*, 18(4):1144-1167.
- Sassen, Saskia. (1988). *The Mobility of Labor and Capital: A Study in International Investment and Labor Flow*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Scott, James C. (1985). *Weapons of the weak: everyday forms of peasant resistance*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

- Scott, James C. (1990). *Domination and the arts of resistance: hidden transcripts*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Sen, A. (1990). Gender and cooperative conflicts. In Tinker, Irene (eds) *Persistent inequalities: women and world development*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Seow, Joanna. (2015). "Maids fear losing jobs when they get pregnant" The Straits Times, December 3, 2015.  
<https://www.asiaone.com/singapore/maids-fear-losing-job-when-they-get-pregnant>
- Siddiqui, Tasneem. (2008). "Migration and Gender in Asia." Presentation to United Nations Expert Group Meeting on International Migration and Development in Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, September 20–21.
- Silvey, Rachel. (2006). "Consuming the Transnational Family: Indonesian Migrant Domestic Workers to Saudi Arabia," *Global Networks* 6(1): 23-40.
- Sim, Amy. (2009). The sexual economy of desire: girlfriends, boyfriends and babies among Indonesian women migrants in Hong Kong.  
<https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Chapter-title%3A-The-Sexual-Economy-of-Desire%3A-and-in-Sim-Kong/bfd44f15e38b60124c7d86816e15ef1431a62319>
- Stark, Oded, and David E. Bloom. (1985). "The new economics of labor migration." *American Economic Review* 75: 173-178.
- Stark, Oded, and J. Edward Taylor. (1989). "Relative deprivation and international migration." *Demography* 26: 1-14.
- Stark, Oded, and Shlomo Yitzhaki. (1988). "Labor migration as a response to relative deprivation." *Journal of Population Economics* 1: 57-70.
- Stark, Oded, J. Edward Taylor, and Shlomo Yitzhaki. (1986). "Remittances and inequality." *The Economic Journal* 96: 722-740.
- Stark, Oded, J. Edward Taylor, and Shlomo Yitzhaki. (1988). "Migration, remittances, and inequality: A sensitivity analysis using the extended Gini Index." *Journal of Development Economics* 28: 309-322.
- Stark, Oded. (1991). *The Migration of Labor*. Cambridge: Basil Blackwell.
- Tacoli, C. (1996). Migrating 'For the Sake of the Family'? Gender, Life Course and Intra-Household Relations Among Filipino Migrants in Rome. *Philippine Sociological Review* 44(1-4): 12-32.
- Tacoli, C. (1999). International Migration and the Restructuring of Gender Asymmetries: Continuity and Change among Filipino Labor Migrants in Rome," *International Migration Review* 33(3): 658-682.

- Taipei Times. (2003). "Foreign caregivers seek labor protection." Taipei Times, February 17, 2003.  
<https://www.taipeitimes.com/News/front/archives/2003/02/17/0000194873>
- Taipei Times. (2003). "Liu Hsia dies after an alleged assault." Taipei Times, February 9, 2003.  
<https://www.taipeitimes.com/News/front/archives/2003/02/09/193886>
- Taipei Times. (2016). "Firing pregnant migrant workers illegal: ministry." Taipei Times, August 6, 2016.  
<https://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2016/08/06/2003652560>
- Taiwan News. (2016). "Ministry warns illegality of firing pregnant migrant workers" Taiwan News, 5 August 2016.  
<https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/2962576>
- Tan, Eugene K. B. (2010). Managing female foreign domestic workers in Singapore: Economic pragmatism, coercive legal regulation, or human rights. (2010). *Israel Law Review*. 43(1): 99-125.  
[https://ink.library.smu.edu.sg/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=4339&context=sol\\_research](https://ink.library.smu.edu.sg/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=4339&context=sol_research)
- Tan, Eugene K. B. (2014). "Troublesome women and the nanny state: Drawing boundaries and legislating bifurcated belonging in patriarchal Singapore," *Intersections: Gender and Sexuality in Asia and the Pacific* 36.  
[https://ink.library.smu.edu.sg/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=4344&context=sol\\_research](https://ink.library.smu.edu.sg/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=4344&context=sol_research)
- Taylor, J. Edward. (1986). "Differential migration, networks, information and risk," in Oded Stark (ed.), *Research in Human Capital and Development, Vol. 4, Migration, Human Capital, and Development*. Greenwich, Conn.: JAI Press, pp. 147-171.
- Taylor, Lin. (2017). "Sacked for being pregnant, Hong Kong maids called 'dogs', left homeless" Reuters, November 8, 2017.  
<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-hongkong-maids-pregnant-idUSKBN1D800V>
- The ASEAN Secretariat Jakarta. (2017). Women Migrant Workers in the ASEAN Economic Community. UN Women, Asia and the Pacific.  
<https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2017/06/women-migration-workers-in-asean>
- Tierney, R. (2007). "The guest labor system in taiwan- labor market considerations, wage injustices, and the politics of foreign labor brokerage," *Critical Asian Studies* 39(2): 205-228.
- Tierney, R. (2011). "The class context of temporary immigration, racism and civic nationalism in Taiwan," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 41(2): 289-314.
- Tilly, C. and Brown, C.H. (1967). 'On uprooting, kinship, and the auspices of migration,' *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 8(2): 139-64.
- Tinker, Irene (eds). (1990). *Persistent Inequalities*. NY: Oxford University.

- Tseng, Yen-Fen and Wang, Hong-Zen. (2011). "Governing migrant workers at a distance: managing the temporary status of guestworkers in taiwan," *International Migration* 51(4): 1-19.
- Tyner, James A. (1994). "The social construction of gendered migration from the Philippines," *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal* 3(4): 589-617.
- Tyner, James A. (1996a). "Constructions of Filipina migrant entertainers," *Gender, Place and Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography* 3(1): 77-93.
- Tyner, James A. (1996b). "The Gendering of Philippine International Labor Migration." *Professional Geographer* 48(4): 405-16.
- Ueno, Kayoko. (2009). "Strategies of Resistance among Filipina and Indonesian Domestic Workers in Singapore." *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal* 18(4): 497-517.
- Ueno, Kayoko. (2013). Love Gain: The Transformation of Intimacy among Foreign Domestic Workers in Singapore," *Sojourn: Journal of social Issues in Southeast Asia* 28(1): 36-63.
- UN (United Nations). (2015). *Sri Lankan Migrant Domestic Workers: The Impact of Sri Lankan Policies on Worker's Right to Freely Access Employment*. UN, Sri Lanka.
- UN, DESA. (2019). *International Migration Report*. New York: United Nations.
- United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). (2012). Factsheet domestic work and migration in Asia.  
<https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2012/9/factsheet-domestic-work-and-migration-in-asia>
- Wee, Vivienne and Sim, Amy. (2004). "Transnational Networks in Female Labour Migration," in Ananta, A., and Arifin, E. N. (edit). *International migration in Southeast Asia*. Singapore: Inst. of Southeast Asian Studies.
- Wee, Vivienne and Sim, Amy. (2005). "Hong Kong as a destination for migrant domestic workers," in Huang, S., Yeoh, B., Rahman, N. A. (eds). *Asian Women as Transnational Domestic Workers*. Singapore: Marshall Cavendish Academic.
- Weeraratne, Bilesha. (2018). Migration and Gender Outcomes: Analysis of Selected Policies in Sri Lanka. KNOMAD Working Paper 35. Washington DC: Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development (KNOMAD) of World Bank.
- Wille, Christina and Passl, Basia (eds). (2001). *Female labour migration in South-East Asia: change and continuity*. Bangkok: Asian Research Centre for Migration.
- Wong, Sau-ling. (1994). "Diverted Mothering: Representations of Caregivers of Color in the Age of 'Multiculturalism.'" in Glenn, E. N., Chang, G., and Forcey, L. R. (eds). *Mothering: Ideology, experience, and agency*. New York: Routledge.

- Wongboonsin, Patcharawalai. (2003). "Comparative migration policies in the ESCAP region", Migration patterns and policies in the Asian and Pacific region, Asian Population Studies Series No. 160 (Bangkok, UNESCAP).  
<http://www.unescap.org/esid/psis/population/popseries/apss160/index.asp>.
- Wood, Charles. (1982). "Equilibrium and historical-structural perspectives on migration," *International Migration Review* 16(2): 298-319.
- Wright, Caroline. (1995). "Gender awareness in migration theory: Synthesizing actor and structure in southern Africa," *Development and Change* 26 (4): 771- 791.
- Yamanaka, K., Piper, N. (2006). Feminized migration in East and Southeast Asia: Policies, actions and empowerment. Geneva: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development.  
[https://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BCCF9/httpNetITFramePDF?ReadForm&parentid=06C975DEC6217D4EC12571390029829A&parentdoctype=paper&netitpath=80256B3C005BCCF9/\(httpAuxPages\)/06C975DEC6217D4EC12571390029829A/\\$file/OP11+web.pdf](https://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BCCF9/httpNetITFramePDF?ReadForm&parentid=06C975DEC6217D4EC12571390029829A&parentdoctype=paper&netitpath=80256B3C005BCCF9/(httpAuxPages)/06C975DEC6217D4EC12571390029829A/$file/OP11+web.pdf)
- Yarova, Olha. (2007). "The Migration of Ukrainian Women to Italy and the Impact on Their Family in Ukraine." Published on Changing Europe Summer School II , "Crises and Conflicts in Eastern European States and Societies: Stumbling Blocks or Stepping Stones for Democratization?" Warsaw, 2-8 September 2007.
- Yeoh, B. and Huang, S. (1998). Negotiating Public Space: Strategies and Styles of Migrant Female Domestic Workers in Singapore, *Urban Studies* 35(3): 583-602.
- Yeoh, B. and Huang, S. (1999). Spaces at the Margins: Migrant Domestic Workers and the Development of Civil Society in Singapore, *Environment and Planning A* 31(7): 1149-1167.
- Yeoh, B. and Huang, S. (2000). "Home" and "away": Foreign domestic workers and negotiations of diasporic identity in Singapore." *Women's Studies International Forum* 23 (4): 413-429.
- Yeoh, B.S., Huang, S., Gonzalez III, J. (1999). "Migrant female domestic workers: debating the economic, social and political impacts in Singapore" *International Migration Review* 33(1): 114-136.
- Yeoh, S., and Huang, B. (2010). "Foreign Domestic Workers and Home-Based Care for Elders in Singapore." *Journal of Aging and Social Policy* 22(1): 69-88.
- Zlotnik, Hania. (1995). "Migration and the family: The female perspective," *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal* 4(2-3): 253- 271.

## **Vita**

Li-Yu Liao, born in Taichung City of Taiwan (R.O.C.), taught civic courses in high school for several years after receiving her master degree from the National Chi Nan University where she majored in Public Administration and Policy. She observed the increasing presence of migrant domestic workers in Taiwan and grew interest in the phenomenon of Taiwan society. She then decided to enter the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work at Texas Tech University. Upon completion of her master degree in Sociology, she continued to work on her doctorate.