

“Manufacturing” Domestic Workers: Examining the differences in patterns of recruitment in
Taiwan and Hong Kong

An analysis of political factors: civil society, diplomacy, and labour management

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Abstract

Filipinos comprise one of the largest groups in today's migrant labour. Although they are employed in a wide range of occupations, Filipinos are well-known for their reputation as care workers. In fact, Filipino nurses, caregivers, and domestic workers can be found in just about every part of the globe. However, in recent years, despite their qualifications and skills, the number of Filipina domestic workers in Taiwan has considerably diminished meanwhile it has remained stable in Hong Kong. This paper will then examine why Taiwan has decreased the number of Filipina domestic workers it employs in comparison to Hong Kong where the number of Filipina domestic workers remain constant. It will focus on two elements, the state of civil society and the political relationship of the Philippines with the two nations. The civil society in both territories has stepped in to assist Filipino domestic workers, providing various services and advocating for the rights of migrant workers. However, due to the influence of civil society, Taiwanese employers and agencies have been wary about employing Filipinas. Meanwhile, in Hong Kong Filipinas domestic workers actively engage in protests and collective action. Although civil society may have an influence on the choices of Taiwanese employers, it still cannot completely explain why the situation in Taiwan and Hong Kong differs. As for diplomatic relations, the Philippines and Taiwan have been involved in a number of confrontations which has affected the hiring of Filipina domestic workers. However, the lack of formal relations between the Philippines and these two labour-receiving nations, as well as the minimal interactions between them show that diplomatic relations cannot explain the difference in the situations of Filipino domestic workers. This points then to the role of recruitment agencies in segregating the labour market based on the nationality of domestic workers, thereby affecting the difference in the number of Filipinas working as domestic workers in Taiwan and Hong Kong.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AMCB	Asian Migrant Coordinating Body
APMM	Asia-Pacific Mission for Migrants
CLA	Council of Labour Affairs
FDH	Foreign Domestic Helper
HKSAR	Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
ILO	International Labour Organization
MDW	Migrant Domestic Worker
MFMW	Mission for Filipino Migrant Workers
OFW	Overseas Filipino Workers
OWWA	Overseas Workers Welfare Administration
POEA	Philippine Overseas Employment Agency
PSA	Philippine Statistics Authority
UNIFIL	United Filipinos in Hong Kong

Introduction

Due to their skills and educational background, Filipinos are well-known for being care providers. In fact, many Filipinos now work abroad as nurses, caregivers, or domestic workers. Every year, the number of migrant workers coming from the Philippines increase just as the demand for care workers in developed countries continue to rise as well. Although Filipino migrant workers are employed in a broad range of occupational categories, 33.2% of the total OFWs (Overseas Filipino Workers)¹ in 2015 were working either as labourers or unskilled workers. Filipina migrant workers compose more than half of this group of labourers and unskilled workers at 54.5% (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2015). In the 1970s, Filipinas started out as a small group of overseas workers. However, by the 1990s Filipino women have outnumbered male overseas workers among the new hires deployed yearly by the Philippine government (Huang et. al., 2005: 22). But despite of the growing number of Filipinas working abroad, their jobs remain concentrated in care work. In most countries, they migrate to do care work, as domestic workers, nurses, or entertainers while only some are able to do other types of labour such as office work or manufacturing work (Parreñas, 2008). They are largely employed in domestic service in different countries in Asia, the Middle East, Europe and also North America. This ubiquity has then resulted in Filipino women being stereotyped as domestic workers. In fact, there have been instances where the word “Filipino” has come to mean domestic worker, such as the Oxford dictionary meaning that was later changed after it had outraged Filipinos (Asis, 2005). The word “Filipina” also has negative connotations, becoming synonymous with “maid” in Hong Kong or “nanny” in some urban neighbourhoods in Canada (Barber, 2000). Meanwhile, the Philippines has come to be

¹ Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) is the official term used by the Philippine government agencies to refer to Filipinos working abroad on a contract.

known as a “nation of servants,” with Filipina domestic workers being perceived as a significant representation of the Filipino national identity (Cheng, 2006: 32).

However, despite of their reputation as well as the availability of Filipina domestic workers, the number of Filipinas employed as domestic workers in Taiwan has been decreasing steadily. For example, in the year 2000, Filipino women composed 32.7% of the total number of foreign care workers employed in Taiwan. By 2015, their number has decreased to 12.3%. During the same period, the number of their Indonesians and Vietnamese counterparts employed in Taiwanese households has grown by 19.3% and 6% respectively (Taiwan Ministry of Labour, 2015). Meanwhile in Hong Kong, the number of Filipina domestic workers has remained stable. In 2015, Filipinas represented 53% of the total number of foreign domestic helpers in the territory, a slight increase from their 48.4% number from a decade earlier (Census and Statistics Department, HKSAR, 2015). Due to the deficit in care workers in both societies, they have turned to migrant workers to address this shortage (Huang et. al., 2005). But Taiwanese employers have increasingly been hiring women from other neighbouring Asian countries to fill their need for domestic workers. When they began hiring migrant domestic workers in 1992, Filipinas were among the largest group of hires. However, in the last fifteen years, they have been overtaken by their Indonesian counterparts (Lan, 2005; Cheng, 2006). In comparison, the situation in Hong Kong remains unchanged. Filipinas are still the biggest group of foreign domestic workers employed by the Hong Kong government. This paper will then examine the difference between these two labour-receiving territories. It will look at the civil society and diplomatic relations and determine which has had a significant effect on the changing situation in Taiwan and the stability in Hong Kong. Firstly, the involvement of civil society has been very important especially in advocating for changes in the rules and regulations that govern the lives of migrant workers. By looking at the

state of civil society in Taiwan and Hong Kong, it will determine whether their actions can explain the difference in the situations between these two nations. On the other hand, the diplomatic relations between sending and receiving governments is also an important factor since the recruitment of migrant workers are subject to bilateral agreements. Such agreements are contingent on the political relations between the governments as well, which is why they can sometimes change in times of conflicts. A review of the conflicts that have occurred between these two labour-receiving territories and the Philippines will then be undertaken to illustrate whether they have a significant effect on the recruitment of domestic workers. Aside from these two factors, the labour management practices that recruitment agencies use will also be analyzed to understand the role they have in the foreign domestic labour industry.

Since many Filipinas are still choosing to work as domestic workers abroad, it is worth examining the situations they experience in their country of employment. Based on the most recent report published by the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, 155,795 Filipinas were deployed in 2012 as domestic workers. This is a significant increase from the 66,890 Filipinas who were deployed back in 2000 and the 47,841 in 2008, which is the lowest number of deployments in the last decade (POEA, 2012). Looking at the civil society, the diplomatic relations between the labour sending and receiving governments, and the recruitment agencies and brokers can possibly shed some light on the factors that affect the lives of migrant domestic workers. These factors differ from the usual focus of the literature on issues such as the demand for care workers and the pull of the economic benefits of working abroad. An examination the civil society, the diplomatic relations, and the agencies and brokers, is more concerned about the elements that affect domestic workers during their employment as opposed to factors that pushed them to perform this job. Furthermore, concentrating on these aspects will be useful in understanding how the situations

faced by migrant domestic workers can vary based on their nationality as well as how their experiences in the society where they are employed can change.

Chapter One: Labour Migration and the Globalization of Care

Global labour migration, facilitated by the interconnectedness of today's world, has become a common occurrence. The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that there are 150.3 million migrant workers in 2013. Among these migrant workers, 83.7 million are men and 66.6 million are women, which corresponds to 55.7% and 44.3% of the total respectively (ILO Global Estimate on Migrant Workers, 2015). High unemployment rates and the lack of job opportunities are some of the main reasons given by migrant workers for seeking employment outside of their native countries. The movement from poor, developing countries to richer, developed nations has become more pronounced due to this. According to the data gathered by the ILO, 74.7% of the total number of migrant workers are employed in countries classified as high-income. They are mainly concentrated in two broad sub-regions, Northern America and Northern, Southern and Western Europe. The following sub-regions with the most number of migrant workers is the Arab States comprising 11.7% of the total migrant workers, next is Eastern Europe at 9.2%, and then South-Eastern Asia and the Pacific at 7.8% (ILO, 2015).

The Care Deficit

The globalization of the market economy has also resulted to the extension of the politics of reproductive labour to an international level (Parreñas, 2015). Reproductive labour is “the labour needed to sustain the productive labour force. It includes household chores; the care of elders, adults, and youth; the socialization of children; and the maintenance of social ties in the family” (Brenner and Laslett, 1991; Glenn, 1992 as cited in Parreñas, 2015: 29). Since reproductive labour is relegated to women, the resulting unequal gender relations has prompted domestic workers to leave home creating transnational care links that exhibit race and class

hierarchies among women and nations (Parreñas, 2008: 46). As the demand for migrant domestic workers in wealthier countries increase, the supply of domestic workers by less wealthy ones will continue to grow as well, thereby propelling the recasting of these hierarchies nationally and globally (Yeates, 2009: 21). The globalization of reproductive labour is also structured along ethnic and racial lines as well as by class and gender, since many employers express their preference for care workers with specific behavioural, cultural, linguistic, or religious traits. These traits, whether assumed or real, create discourses about certain ethnic groups being more suited for care work due to their natural inclination as “nurturing mothers” or “submissive workers” (Yeates, 2009).

Due to aging populations, changing family structures, the feminisation of the labour force, the masculination of women’s employment patterns and a shortage in public care services, it has been difficult for women family members to perform reproductive labour. Therefore, for those who can afford it, purchasing migrant domestic labour has relieved women from performing this work (Yeates, 2009). As more families have turned to employing migrant domestic workers, the number of men and women choosing to leave their homes and taking up these jobs have steadily risen as well. Based on ILO (2015) estimates, there are 67.1 million domestic workers in the world, of whom 11.5 million are international migrants. This represents 17.2% of all domestic workers and 7.7% of all migrant workers worldwide. In other words, almost every sixth domestic worker in the world was an international migrant in 2013. Women comprise about 74.3% or around 8.5 million of all migrant domestic workers and in 2013, there was a recorded 53.8 million female domestic workers, of which over 8.45 million are migrants. South-Eastern Asia and the Pacific hosts the largest share, with 24% of the world’s female migrant domestic workers (ILO, 2015).

Because of this phenomenon, various perspectives have emerged to explain the effect of globalization on care relations. One analysis involves looking at the international division of labour together with what scholars call the international division of reproductive labour. They observe how female migrant workers are recruited from poor countries to do care work in wealthier ones. These female migrant workers, who are viewed as minorities in the societies where they work, disproportionately bear the impacts of the persistent gender and racial inequalities resulting from the devaluation of care work (Romero et. al., 2014). For example, Hondagneu-Sotelo argued that “the increasing presence of women crossing national borders and laboring within private households constitutes a form of new world domestic labour” (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001 as cited in Cheng, 2003: 169). Rhacel Parreñas (2000) adds that this globalization of domestic labour involves a form of “transnational transfer of reproductive labour” that results to an unequal yet interdependent relationship between women from different countries (p. 577). Meanwhile, scholars of care regimes claim that the neo-liberal policies and tendencies that have stimulated a growing demand for care workers in general, are reinforcing the need for migrant domestic workers (Lindio-McGovern, 2012). As the gap between the supply and demand of affordable institutional child and elderly care grows, the care deficit in countries that lack an extensive welfare system also worsens (Hochschild, 1995 as cited in Yeoh et. al., 2005: 2). Lastly, scholars point to the decline in government funding for paid care work, rendering many of these jobs so poorly paid and insecure, making them unappealing to local workers. The demand for privately provided care workers to assist patients and clients in hospitals and other institutional settings has also risen due to reduced government funding (Mahon et. al. 2012; Michel and Peng, 2012 as cited in Romero et. al., 2014: 4). Although there are varying perspectives seeking to explain this occurrence, it is

apparent that reproductive labour has become a commodity that some women can purchase and other women can sell.

As states have turned to foreign labour to sustain the care deficits in their territories, the approaches that each has taken have varied. One factor which Michel and Peng (2012) have found to explain the approaches that governments adopted in their recruitment of foreign labour is the labour-receiving country's self-perception as a nation (p. 411). In their investigation of the care regimes of Japan, South Korea, Canada and the United States of America, they look at how each country's self-perception as a nation shapes its immigration policies and in turn, its care regime (Michel and Peng, 2012). They note for example that Japan and South Korea have created national narratives around unity through racial, ethnic and cultural homogeneity in order to pursue their nation-building objectives. Although both countries have been forced to open their doors to foreign workers, the "public and political apprehensions about opening immigration have limited recruitment of care workers to bilateral care worker programs and restricted temporary foreign worker visa policies" (Michel and Peng, 2012: 412). Meanwhile, the US and Canada, due to their heterogeneous and multicultural societies, are more open to immigration. Their immigration policies, as Michel and Peng (2012) observe, have often been calibrated according to the demands of the labour force (p. 413). For example, due to the care deficit in the country, Canada instituted the Live-In Caregiver Program which targeted immigrants who can fill care work positions. Meanwhile, the United States offer temporary visas to au pairs. Altogether, the examination of these countries show that long-held ideas about national identity are ultimately not immutable and in some cases, can also be bent. As these four countries continue to face deepening care deficits, their ability to reconcile concepts of national identity with the need for migrants will ultimately shape their care regimes (Michel and Peng, 2012). In the case of Taiwan and Hong Kong, the

notion of a homogenous national identity is less present in comparison with Japan and South Korea. Both Taiwan and Hong Kong have a pre-existing multi-ethnic character, making their cases different from their East Asian neighbours and that of North America. They also face issues regarding their national identity. The uncertainty about the national identity of Taiwan continue to persist due to a clash of nationalist visions. Meanwhile a national identity has emerged only recently in Hong Kong and it is still changing with the different occurrences it faces (Wachman, 1994; Kit, 2014). It will be worth noting then if and how these two societies will be reconfiguring their immigration regime to accommodate their need for care workers.

Exporting Filipino Labour

The Philippines, with a population of 100.98 million as of August 2015, has become one of the major exporters of labour (Philippine Statistic Authority, 2015). It is one of the biggest labour-exporting country in Asia and is among the top countries in the world (Lan, 2006).² In 2015, the Philippine Statistics Authority reported that there were 2.4 million overseas Filipino workers (OFWs).³ The majority of them are working abroad on temporary contracts, with 83% of the total OFWs being employed in Asia. Although many Filipinos are increasingly choosing to work in neighbouring Asian countries because of their proximity to the Philippines, North America remains to be the number one destination for migrant workers. Presently, a huge percentage of OFWs are also being deployed in the Middle East to work in the service and health sectors (PSA, 2015).

The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) reports that approximately one million Filipino overseas contract workers are deployed in any given year, which in turn

² According to the PEW Research Centre, India is the top labour exporter in 2015.

³ See Appendix for Table

generates about 10USD to 12USD billion in foreign currency per annum. The Philippines has continually relied on the growing need in rich nations for the low-wage services of women from poorer nations to meet its need for foreign currency (Parreñas, 2008). The country's dependence on labour export has largely been attributed to its earlier efforts to curb the unemployment faced by many of its citizens. The Philippines began to send workers abroad as labourers in the early twentieth century to work in plantations in Hawaii. Following this, private agencies took interest and began hiring single illiterate men from the Ilocos region for employment in farm labour in California, Washington, Idaho and Montana (Guevarra, 2010: 28).

A notable program instituted by the Philippine government to facilitate labour migration was the “man power exchange program.” It was a labour exportation program introduced in the 1970s under the Ferdinand Marcos administration. The program was intended to help workers generate foreign currency as well as acquire skills and technological knowledge which would otherwise be unavailable to them in the domestic labour market. Moreover, it was intended to capitalize on the labour demands created by the economic growth in neighbouring Asian countries, as well as the opening of the US borders to skilled workers in 1965 (Tyner, 2003 as cited in Parreñas, 2008: 5). One of the major outcomes of this program was the sending of thousands of Filipinos to the Middle East to participate in various construction projects. However, although this labour exportation programs were initially announced as a temporary measure, it eventually became “permanently temporary” in the following decades as succeeding administrations decided to continue them (Lan, 2006: 45).

The debt debacle in the 1970s, caused by the structural adjustment policies of the IMF, along with the massive unemployment rate in the country was the first factor that prompted the Philippine government to adopt a labour export policy. At this time, the Marcos government

engaged in the training and recruitment process of the migrant workers while at the same time regulating private actors to capitalize on out-migration as a means of generating foreign exchange (Rodriguez, 2010: 9). Two years after declaring martial law, Marcos passed by executive order the Labour Code of 1974. It was an effort intended to reorganize the labour policies of the Philippines to mitigate the country's escalating unemployment at that time. A critical aspect of the labour code was that it formally instituted the country's labour export policy as it firmly established government participation in labour recruitment through the creation of three agencies including the Overseas Employment Development Board (OEDB), the Bureau of Employment Services (BES), and the National Seaman's Board (NSB) (Guevarra, 2010: 31). These agencies were tasked with developing, promoting, regulating, and implementing the labour export program. The OEDB and the NSB served as the government's placement agencies for workers. Meanwhile, the BES oversaw the regulation and supervision of private recruitment and placement agencies that were allowed to play a role in facilitating overseas employment as the state increasingly lacked the capacity to fully handle this aspect of migration (Rodriguez, 2010).

In addition to this, the labour code also banned the direct hiring of Filipinos by foreign employers and instead they were mandated to go through the Government Placement Branch. Overseas workers were also mandated to remit a specified percent of their earnings through official financial institutions (Guevarra, 2010). The remittances that migrants sent back to the Philippines proved to be economically beneficial as it strengthened the country's foreign exchange reserves thereby helping the government to maintain its debts repayments. After 1978, the government relinquished most of the recruitment activities to private agencies and instead undertook a regulatory and supervisory role. It consolidated the existing agencies to form the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) (Rodriguez, 2010). Meanwhile, growing concerns

regarding the welfare of overseas workers brought about the establishment of the Welfare Fund for Overseas Workers. This administrative body, which was later renamed as the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), was tasked with dealing with welfare issues faced by workers as well as providing support to their families and dependents (Guevarra, 2010).

Migrant Labour and the Philippine Economy

In 2014, the *Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas* (BSP)⁴ reported that OFW remittances totalled to USD 27.2 million, exhibiting a 7% growth from the previous year's remittances. Remittances were then said to be at a record high during the following year at USD 28.3 million. OFW remittances for 2015 accounted for 9.8% of the country's GDP (BSP, 2015). The World Bank (2014) reported that the Philippines is the third in the world at receiving personal remittances, coming behind India and China at first and second, respectively. A majority of the remittances came from North America, corresponding to 34% of the total remittances. Middle Eastern countries, particularly Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates also rank high, as well as other Asian countries (BSP, 2015). Because of the significant economic contribution of migrant workers to the Philippines, migrant labour has evolved from a stop-gap measure to being a vital lifeline for the nation (AMC, 1992 as cited in Constable, 2007). Overseas workers are also considered to be the new economic heroes whose toil and remittances sustain and transform the national economy (Huang et. al., 2005: 4). Aside from their remittance, OFWs are "heroes" for their role in promoting amicable relations with foreign nations and enhancing the image of the Philippines as a reputable source of labour. Indeed, the government has continually emphasized the role of OFWs as representatives of the nation and as such how essential it is that Filipinos continue to be competitive in the labour market.

⁴ The central bank of the Philippines

Former president Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, in fact, stressed during her administration the need for state colleges and universities to train students and equip them with the necessary skills that would help them excel in the global field, making them highly qualified prospects for overseas employment (Guevarra, 2010). She specifically mentioned in her speech before the 10th National Convention of Government Employees the need to “tweak the school curriculum” to prepare the students to become better overseas workers (Lindio-McGovern, 2012). In addition, the Arroyo administration’s 2004-2010 development plan focused on skill building which was more directed to meeting the demands of the global labour markets. Even until today, Filipino workers serve as invaluable resources and commodities that the Philippines “shares” with global markets (Guevarra, 2010).

Filipina Domestic Workers

Although the Philippine government promotes labour migration to acquire foreign currency, Filipinos themselves have also become dependent on labour migration in order to fulfill their needs and provide for their families. The lack of job opportunities is one of the main reasons given by Filipinos for their decision to work abroad. Filipino women believe that the opportunity of working abroad, despite of the pain of family separation resulting from this choice, is better than staying in the country where they have difficulties getting jobs. More than the lack of jobs, Filipino women also stress the lack of “good jobs” that provide a stable and sufficient salary (Lan, 2006: 127). Since the mid-1980s, due to the devaluation of the peso, wages in the Philippines have deteriorated. It has made it difficult for Filipino families to make ends meet as declining household incomes are coupled with rising living expenses in urban areas. Overseas wages are becoming more and more attractive to many Filipinos as the exchange rates of local currency depreciates steadily. Parreñas (2008) adds that labour migration has also become one of the viable means for

many Filipino parents to secure a solid education and quality healthcare for their dependents (p. 54). She gives the example of the poor quality of public schools in the country which often pushes families to send an able-bodied member to work outside of the country in order to guarantee the private education of younger household members (Parreñas, 2008). Barber and Bryan (2013) further mention that assuming economic responsibility for the family has become a facilitating cultural practice for the migration of Filipino women (p. 33). Framed by discourses of familial obligation, remittance-sending is now perceived as an extension of women's responsibility to their families. There is also an apparent social pressure placed on women and other migrant workers, to contribute to the remittance process, evident in the recruitment strategies of the state that links labour migration to national identity and loyalty. Parreñas (2015) offers another explanation for the migration of Filipino women. She maintains that patriarchy is also a cause of migration, albeit hidden as it operates within a discrete system in the Philippines (p. 37). The system of gender inequality in the country is observed in the limited options of women for divorce and the double standards in male and female sexual activities. Some Filipino women provide disturbing reasons for choosing to work abroad such as domestic violence or their husband's infidelity. Meanwhile, other women claim to have irresponsible partners and could no longer afford to raise dependents as single mothers and as such, they have to resort to working abroad. These women are forced to resort to emigration rather than face ostracism in the community for getting a divorce or separation, as they are more often blamed for it. Moreover, there are legal restrictions and cultural expectations that constrain the options that women have for leaving their abusive spouses permanently (Parreñas, 2015).

Despite of the struggles that migrant workers face while working abroad, many Filipino women are still choosing to become domestic workers in other countries. The economic gains, as

well as the autonomy and “power” that it affords them, are compelling factors that have convinced many to take the risk of leaving home with the promise of a better future. Scholars have noted the significant consequences of labour migration on the lives of these women, as well as the whole nation. Mothers who have to work as nannies often face the painful prospect of caring for other people’s children while being unable to tend to their own. Meanwhile, daughters and sisters who work as foreign domestic workers have to shoulder the burden of financially supporting their families, sometimes at the cost of losing the chance to live their own lives and having families of their own (Parreñas, 2008; Lindio-McGovern, 2012; Romero et. al., 2014). Furthermore, returning migrants often fail to realize their aspirations of starting their own businesses with the financial capital from overseas wages. Instead, capital is exhausted through paying debts that were incurred during the migration process, meeting emergency needs, and requests for consumer goods from kin, resulting to taking sequential labour contracts. As for the beneficiaries of remittances, they are often enticed by the economic gains of their migrant family members, choosing to become overseas workers themselves. At the same time, the Philippines is losing most of its talented and educated citizens. Teachers, nurses, doctors, engineers, and other professionals leave the country every year to become migrant workers, oftentimes experiencing downward occupational mobility. However, despite of these, the ongoing need for domestic workers in developed countries still attracts a number of Filipinas.

Chapter Two: Filipinas Domestic Workers in Taiwan and Hong Kong

According to the POEA, Taiwan and Hong Kong are among the top ten destinations for new hires of Overseas Filipino Workers in 2014, coming at third and sixth respectively (POEA, 2014). Their proximity to the Philippines has made them ideal sites of employment for migrant workers who wish to minimize the distance between them and their families. In addition, these countries are perceived to be rich, modern, and beautiful, making them even more appealing to many Filipinos. The phenomenal capitalist growth, the high standard of living, and the relatively low unemployment rate in these countries are often contrasted with the economic instability, huge international debt, high unemployment rate, and poverty in the Philippines (Constable, 2007: 30). Indeed, as two of the Four Asian Tigers, the developed economies of these countries are simply not at par with that of the Philippines.

In order to understand the situation of Filipina domestic workers in Taiwan and Hong Kong, it will be useful to look at the role of migrant labour in the two societies. In addition to this, examining the regulations concerning migrant domestic workers in Taiwan and Hong Kong will demonstrate the constraints that migrant workers face in their place of employment, further demonstrating the difficulties that they experience as care workers. Knowing these will then be important in assessing the role of the civil society, the diplomatic relations, and agencies in the different situations in these labour-receiving territories.

Taiwan's Migrant Labour Market

Taiwan is one of the main destinations for migrant workers in Asia. The hiring of migrant labour began in the early 1990s as Taiwan brought in foreign contractors to work in construction projects. The addition of domestic service as a legitimate category in immigration regulation and

a state-sanctioned occupation for foreign workers came about after the ratification of the Employment Service Law in 1992 (Cheng, 2006). At this time, the Council of Labour Affairs began granting work permits to domestic caretakers who are employed to take care of the severely-ill or the disabled. A limited quota was later released for the employment of “domestic helpers” to households with children under the age of twelve or elderly members above the age of seventy (Lan, 2005: 210). To further control the number of migrant workers and their distribution, the CLA has mandated that the qualification for employers be based not on the household income, like Hong Kong and Singapore, but on the “urgent need” for care as defined by the government (Cortés and Pan, 2013).

Although migrant labour is fairly new in Taiwan, domestic service has been a part of its history for a long time. It can be traced back to the practice during the Ching Dynasty of trading women as domestic servants. When Taiwan became incorporated into the Japanese empire, the practice was abolished and servants became free to sell their labour in exchange for wages, and often food and lodging (Lan, 2005). In the 1980s, there was a shift in domestic workers from the usual single girls to middle-waged “obasans.”⁵ “Obasans” who were mostly married or widowed women with families residing close by, preferred not to live with their employers as they still needed to take care of their own families at the same time. Taiwanese employers began to look for foreign workers in the 1990s since it had become hard to find “obasans,” especially those who would accept to work on a live-in basis. Moreover, employers complained that it is difficult to deal with “obasans” when it comes to working hours, job assignments, wages and raises (Lan, 2005). Due to this, employers began hiring foreign workers as they are perceived to be more obedient,

⁵ According to Lan, the Japanese term “obasan” which refers literally to “aunt” or “middle-aged women” in general has become a common expression in Taiwan for middle-aged domestic workers (Lan, 2005: Notes).

deferential and contract-bound. Furthermore, unlike “obasans,” foreign workers tend to be paid lower rates despite of their live-in services which cover an unlimited variety of domestic tasks (Lan, 2006).

As Lan (2005) writes, the influx of foreign domestic workers has not only served to fill the shortage in the local labour supply, it has also emerged as a solution to the growing demand for commercial services for housework, childcare, and eldercare as household patterns and gender relations in contemporary Taiwan has faced recent transformations (p. 212). As women’s waged employment grew in the last decades, dual-income households have become the dominant family model. Aside from being the social norm, dual-income households are also an economic necessity due to the rise of housing prices and living expenses in urban areas. Meanwhile, nuclear households have become the primary residential model. Young married couples from current generations have the expectation of living separately from their parents, especially among younger, well-educated wives as well as among those who have arranged their own marriages (Lan, 2006; Cheng, 2006). However, there remains the social expectation that sons, especially the eldest, should take care of their aging parents. As a result, caregivers for children and the elderly are in serious demand. Due to the absence of cohabiting extended kin in nuclear households, couples require assistance for childcare. Meanwhile, adult children need caregivers to look after their aging parents either to sustain separate residences or to outsource part of their filial duty in three-generation households. Lan (2006) stresses that in the process of modernization, the old custom of domestic service has therefore not diminished but has in fact expanded with the facilitation of modern states and global capitalism (p. 8). Hiring live-in migrant workers has become a convenient and affordable solution to the deficit of care services among many Taiwanese families.

Controlling Migrant Labour

The relatively attractive wages in Taiwan has made it a popular destination for migrant workers. Taiwan, along with Hong Kong, are the only Asian countries that offer a minimum wage to migrant domestic workers. While the minimum wage in Hong Kong is lower, it is legislated, whereas the minimum wage in Taiwan is merely a suggested guideline for contractual agreement between employer and employee (Wee and Sim, 2005). In 2015, Taiwan's Ministry of Labour reported that there were 587,940 foreign workers in the country who were employed in productive industries and social welfare. This has been the highest number of foreign workers since 1992. Based on their records, there were 224,356 foreign workers who were working either as nursing workers or home-maids (Taiwan's Ministry of Labour, Yearly Bulletin 2015). The number of migrant workers in Taiwan is growing every year despite of the high placements fees charged to migrant workers. Lan (2006) mentions that placement fees are usually equivalent to between five and ten months' worth of the migrant's wage in Taiwan and over the last decade this charge has been constantly increasing (p. 51). The exorbitant placement fees in Taiwan is primarily attributed to the supply-demand imbalance in the migrant labour market. Although the high wages are attracting many migrant workers to the country, the opportunities for work are relatively scare due to the quota controls. Labour brokers therefore charge a significant cut from the process of recruitment and placing workers. Although the government has set a maximum placement fee that can be collected from migrant workers, agencies have utilized various means to gain additional profit. They usually disguise added fees as "service fees," to conceal the excess amount charged to migrant workers. In other cases, workers are mandated to purchase nursing uniforms, books or tapes for instruction in Chinese, or hats and jackets with the company logo so that workers can be easily recognizable in the airport. Recruiters also inform workers that their contracts are valid for

two to three years when contracts are supposed to be renewed annually. Those who then fail to extend their contracts are unable to have their placement fees refunded (Sills, 2007; Lan, 2006).

Taiwan has a strict policy for foreign workers, not only for the hiring process but for the duration of their employment as well. The country's labour policy is designed to ensure that the transmutation of labour migration to immigration does not happen. CLA officials have repeatedly announced that the labour policy is meant to strictly prohibit the permanent settlement of migrant workers (Sills, 2007: 9). Taiwan's Immigration Law of 1999 entitles foreigners to permanent residency after residing in the country with legal employment for seven years. Foreigners can also apply to be naturalized after legally residing in Taiwan for five years and if they possess "sufficient property or professional skill, which will enable him or her to make a self-reliant living or a living without worry" (Taiwan Immigration Department as cited in Lan, 2006). However, since migrant workers are prohibited from working in Taiwan for more than six years and are not considered to possess "sufficient property or professional skills," they are excluded from access to naturalization (Sills, 2007; Lan, 2006).

Mobility within the domestic labour market is also limited for migrant workers. As mandated by the CLA, a migrant worker can work for only one employer and is prohibited from being transferred to another employer except for cases when the employer goes bankrupt and cannot pay wages to the worker; if the care recipient of a migrant worker dies or migrates to another country; or if a worker is abused by the employer or illegally placed with an employer different from the one contracting his or her services. By restricting migrant workers and limiting their movement in the labour market, the government aims to monitor the whereabouts of these "ethnic others" (Lan, 2006: 44). These measures are also meant to help employers stabilize the worker-employer relationship and as a consequence, migrant workers who are tied to a contract of personal

subordination, have little bargaining power and are forced to tolerate any hardship or mistreatment. Moreover, due to the risk of repatriation migrant workers do not have the option of openly protesting their working conditions (Lan, 2005; Lindio-McGovern, 2012).

The Declining Number of Filipino Domestic Workers in Taiwan

The dominance of Filipinos in the global labour market has primarily been attributed to their proficiency in English and their level of education. Both male and female OFWs are well-educated with over half having completed college or having at least taken college subjects while one-third of them having completed secondary education. Although this may be boosting the qualifications of Filipinos in the global labour market, it has also contributed to the growing concern that this large outflow of experienced, skilled, and professional human resources is causing a brain drain which can severely affect the development in the Philippines (Lindio-McGovern, 2012; Lan, 2006). Aside from being well-educated, Filipinos are recognized as cost-effective workers due to their work ethic which is perceived to be a result of specific racialized and gendered behavioural attributes. Guevarra (2010) stresses how employment agencies “sell Filipinas” by promoting a discourse of productive femininity rooted in a culturally essentialist logic in which the Philippines is a “natural” source of a cost-effective and desirable workforce that has innate caregiving abilities, is multi-skilled, and is educated (p. 125). As Lan (2006) describes in her study of domestic workers, Taiwanese employers tend to favour Filipinas as childcare workers. In addition to their adequate education, employers emphasize how Filipina caregivers are “affectionate” and “loving” to children. Such images then essentialize Filipinas as “naturally oriented” or “culturally suited” for care work, thereby contributing to the generally held perception about Filipinos as ideal domestic workers (Lan, 2006: 115).

However, despite of their skills and perceived image, the number of Filipino women employed in Taiwan as domestic workers have steadily been declining. Based on the records of the Taiwan Ministry of Labour, there were 34,772 Filipinos employed in social welfare during the year 2000 (Workforce Development Agency, Taiwan Ministry of Labour, 2015). Fifteen years later, the number has decreased to 27,613. Unlike their Indonesian and Vietnamese counterparts, the number of Filipinos employed in the social welfare sector have declined significantly. Filipinos in 2015 represented 12.3% of the total number of foreign workers in the social welfare sector. This is a substantial reduction given that Filipinos composed 32.7% of the total number of domestic workers in 2000. In 2005, it went down to 24.3% it was at the lowest in 2012 at 10.2%. Meanwhile, the number of Indonesian women employed as domestic workers have risen during the same period. In 2000, there were 63,563 Indonesians employed in the social welfare sector and by 2015, it has grown to 177,265 which represent 59.7% and 79% of the total respectively. There is also a notable increase in the number of Vietnamese women in the social welfare sector. Whereas in 2000 there were only 2,634 (2%) Vietnamese employed as domestic workers, by 2015 the number is already 18,919 (8%).⁶ Along with this change, there is a growing perception among employers and the general public of Filipinas as being “aggressive, disobedient, militant but better educated”. Meanwhile, Indonesians are seen as “obedient, docile, loyal yet less intelligent and less educated” (Cheng, 2006: 57). In addition to this, there are also patterns of otherization among domestic workers. For example, Filipinas are thought to be the Westernized other, an optimist, a romantic, and an autonomous person, who is “outgoing, individualistic, opinionated, and difficult to manage (Lan, 2006: 77). As for Indonesians, they are stereotyped as docile women who are trapped in rural villages with Muslim conventions, therefore they are characterized as the “traditional other” who

⁶ See Appendix for table

is obedient, loyal, slow and living a simple life making them naturally suited for hard work and require no days off (Lan, 2006:77). Such ethnic characterizations are observed to be products of a combination of factors including the national background of these women; their educational and linguistic resources; as well as the marketing discourses and recruitment strategies of labour brokers (Sills, 2007; Cheng, 2006; Lan, 2006). Together, these factors magnify the ethnic differences between the two ethnic groups of domestic workers, creating competition between these two groups of migrant workers.

Hong Kong's Foreign Domestic Helpers

Hong Kong is another common destination for Filipino overseas workers. Similar to Taiwan, the high wages in Hong Kong has made it an ideal location of employment for many Filipinos. Historically, Hong Kong has been a destination for migrants from mainland China since the British colonisation of the country in 1981 (Wee and Sim, 2005; Ullah, 2015). It then became a stepping stone for further migration to other destinations as observed in the high rates of emigration of Chinese from Hong Kong which began as soon as it became a British colony. This migration-as-transition via Hong Kong, however, does not only apply to migrants from mainland China. Migrant domestic workers who have intentions to work in a third country such as Canada and European countries are increasingly transiting through Hong Kong as well. This is particularly true for many Filipino domestic workers who were able to qualify for the Live-In Caregiver Program in Canada due to their qualification of having worked as an FDH in Hong Kong (Wee and Sim, 2005).

The entry of foreign domestic workers in Hong Kong was mainly facilitated by the hardening of immigration policies towards Chinese mainlanders who were migrating into the colony during the 1970s. To prevent the recruitment of relatives from the mainland as domestic

workers, the Hong Kong government introduced “racial” profiling as a permanent feature of its immigration and labour policies. It began to adopt the term “foreign domestic helper” (FDH) in order to differentiate these foreign workers from Hong Kong’s Chinese majority (Wee and Sim, 2005; Ullah, 2015). Furthermore, during the nation’s economic restructuring in the 1970s and 1980s, when Hong Kong transitioned from a manufacturing base to a commercial centre providing tertiary services for the operation of global capital, the presence of imported domestic labour allowed women – particularly the middle-class, literate, educated women – to enter the labour force (Wee and Sim, 2005; Constable, 2007). At this time, women’s participation in the labour force rose considerably. A 1988 estimate shows that 40% of mothers in Hong Kong held full-time jobs and as such were dependent on helpers to care for their families. However, it had become difficult to find helpers especially for working-class families who usually depended on family members to help in child-rearing, cooking, and other housework. Native domestic workers were also scarce as many local women preferred working in factories since the wages were higher. Moreover, employers expressed their concern about “amahs” or Chinese servants being “not as good as they used to be” (Constable, 2007). During the 1970s, there was an editorial released claiming that “amahs” were “money-grabbing, unscrupulous and downright difficult” and that they were very particular about the sort of work they were willing to do. Employers echoed the same sentiments, describing how domineering Chinese domestic workers have become (da Costa, 1972 as cited in Constable, 2007: 28). Similar to the situation in Taiwan, the shortage of local labour and the changing needs of Hong Kong households brought about the “logical” entry of migrant domestic workers into the country.

Protecting the Rights of FDHs

According to Justice Centre HK (2016), Hong Kong has one of the highest densities of migrant domestic workers in the world. They note that one in three households with children in Hong Kong employs a migrant domestic worker (Coming Clean, 2016). Foreign domestic helpers compose nearly 9% of the nation's total labour force and they make up 4.4% of the total population. As such, the Hong Kong government has pronounced that it recognizes the significant contribution of FDHs to the Hong Kong society, therefore it places great importance on the protection of their employment rights and benefits.⁷ The Standard Employment Contract sets out the rights and protections of foreign domestic workers. Under this, FDHs are entitled to a minimum allowable wage; food allowance if no food is provided by the employer; free accommodation; free passage to and from their place of origin; free medical treatment including medical consultation, maintenance in hospital and emergency dental treatment; paid or unpaid home leave; and cost of passage at the expense of the employer.⁸

However, a number of research reports have raised serious concerns about the exploitation and abuse of FDHs in Hong Kong, proving that laws and policies on paper do not always translate into practice (Justice Centre HK, 2016: 21). One of the most notable issues is regarding the “two-week rule,” which dictates that foreign domestic workers are required to leave Hong Kong upon completion of their contract or within 14 days from the date of termination of their contract, whichever is earlier (Justice Centre HK, 2016). The Hong Kong government has stressed that this provision was meant to discourage FDHs from “job-hopping” or working illegally after the termination of contracts (Connelly, 2014). They assert that the rule is not meant for finding new

⁷ HKSAR Legislative Council Paper No. CB(2) 1683/14-15(05), 2015: par. 17

⁸ “Foreign Domestic Helpers Rights and Protection under the Employment Ordinance,” 2016

employment but instead, it is designed to allow migrant workers to prepare for their departure from Hong Kong back to their home countries. However, the “two-week rule” places migrant workers in a disadvantageous situation making them prone to exploitation from employers or employment agencies. They then become hesitant to report or leave an abusive situation because of the fear of termination (Justice Centre HK, 2016: 23).

The live-in requirement for FDHs is another provision which has received much criticism. The rule which was introduced in 2003, dictates that FDHs must work and reside in the residence of the employer. This rule was put into place to ensure that migrant domestic workers do not take a secondary or part-time work during their stay in Hong Kong, thereby preventing them from competing with the local domestic workforce (Justice Centre HK, 2016: 23). The problem with this rule is that employers simply do not have enough space to provide decent living conditions for the worker. Although employers are required to provide a representation of the living arrangements to the Immigration Department, many workers find that the conditions they encounter do not match the descriptions that employers present (Connelly, 2014). Since workers are denied proper living quarters and privacy in these situations, the time for work and rest becomes blurred and workers are subjected to abuse and excessive working hours (Justice Centre HK, 2016).

Preference for Filipinas in Hong Kong

Unlike Taiwan, the number of Filipino domestic workers in Hong Kong remains high. In 2015, there were over 335,088 FDHs in Hong Kong with the majority of them coming from the Philippines. Records show that there were 177,619 Filipinos employed as FDHs corresponding to 53% of the total number. Meanwhile, Indonesians constituted 45% of the total FDHs, numbering

at 150,008.⁹ From 2008 until 2015, records from the Hong Kong Department of Statistics show that Filipinos were among the two largest groups of foreign domestic helpers.¹⁰ Although there was a small decline in their numbers from 2008 to 2011, the number still remained at about 48% of the total number of FDHs for the respective years. By 2012, they have regained their numbers coming to 152,007 or 49.4% of the total FDHs for that year. Meanwhile the number of their Indonesian counterparts had diminished by this year coming at 149,072, a 2% decrease from the previous year's number (Census and Statistics Department, HKSAR, 2015).

Similar to the situation in Taiwan, Filipino domestic workers in Hong Kong are valued as carers of children because of their English proficiency, which in some instances allows them to tutor the children in their schoolwork. Due to their greater proficiency in Cantonese¹¹, Indonesian domestic workers are then regarded as less suitable carers of children but more suitable for general housework and as carers of the elderly (Wee and Sim, 2005). This reflects the variation in the competencies of different domestic workers, especially in such a class-specific work, which Wee and Sim (2005) discuss. They explain that the work of domestic workers is not just “domestic work” in a general sense but, more specifically, it is the work of reproducing the everyday life of middle-class households (Wee and Sim, 2005: 195). Indeed, middle-class status is a prerequisite for employing a domestic worker in Taiwan. According to the Immigration Department of the Government of Hong Kong SAR (2003b), “for every helper to be employed, the employer must have a household income of no less than HK\$15,000 (US\$1,925.04) per month,” which is 15 times Hong Kong's poverty line and 1.5 times its lowest taxable income level of HK\$9,000

⁹ HKSAR Legislative Council Paper No. CB(2) 1683/14-15(05), 2015: par. 3

¹⁰ Refer to Appendix – Table 3: Women Foreign Domestic Helpers in Hong Kong.

¹¹ Indonesian domestic workers are required to take training courses prior to being deployed to Hong Kong for their job posting. Aside from learning the proper way to do household chores, they also take mandatory language classes where they learn the language spoken in their country of employment. Filipina domestic workers on the other hand do not have the same intensive language classes.

(US\$1,155.62). Filipino women, therefore are considered as more competent in the middle-class reproduction of the next generation whereas Indonesian women are regarded as more suited for the reproduction of everyday life as well as for filial piety (Wee and Sim, 2005; Constable, 2007).

Due to the demand for domestic workers with English-language skills, Filipinos do not only comprise a majority of the labour market, they are also noted for having higher wages in comparison to other foreign domestic workers. For example, a previous study showed that the number of Filipinos domestic workers receiving the legislated minimum wage far exceeded those of their Indonesian and Thai counterparts. Only 42% of Filipinas were paid below the minimum wage while the number for Indonesian and Thai domestic workers were at 90% and 52% respectively. (Wee and Sim, 2005). Aside from higher wages, the benefits that Filipina domestic workers enjoy far exceed those of any other group, such as their rest days and holidays. It has also been noted that Filipinas have greater autonomy than Indonesian or Thai domestic workers when it comes to choosing non-Chinese employers. Most Filipinas are employed by the expatriate middle-class in Hong Kong, who are specifically looking for domestic workers with English-language skills. According to Filipinas, they prefer non-Chinese employers because they are less likely to abuse or exploit them (Wee and Sim, 2005).

However, the benefits that Filipino domestic workers have are not without consequences. By the mid-1980s, Filipinas were heavily criticized and depicted as “spoiled, overpaid, and more a hindrance than help to Hong Kong residents” (Constable, 2007: 37). Critics also claimed that they did not appear grateful for the privilege of being able to work in Hong Kong. There was also discontent regarding the use of public spaces by Filipino domestic workers. Hong Kong’s financial district, the Central District is marked by towering buildings, popular hotels, and old colonial buildings. During their days off, domestic workers can be found along the area, congregating to

share personal stories and to escape the confines of their employer's home and the dull nature of their weekly routines. By the mid-1980s and early 1990s, the increasing visibility of Filipino domestic workers sparked complaints about their "take-over" of the Central District (Constable, 2007). Newspaper editorials proclaimed that Filipinos are "guest-workers with no divine right to commandeer the Central District for their own use." Others alleged that foreign workers have "invaded," "overrun," or "taken over" parts of Central, thus preventing others from using it (Constable, 2007: 5). Another indication of the discontent was the creation of the Hong Kong Employers of Overseas Domestic Helpers Association (HKEODHA) in 1986, which lobbied to change government policies which they believe favour the rights of the domestic worker over those of the employers (Constable, 2007). As more Filipinas engage in protests and demonstrations, employers have also increasingly expressed their dissatisfaction. They claim that the once submissive and dutiful servants have changed, their once willing "yes" being replaced by bargaining "if" (Constable, 2007: 159).

Examining the Difference

The entry and inclusion of Filipino domestic workers in Hong Kong and Taiwan's labour force appear to have been facilitated by similar factors. Due to the shortage of local domestic labour and changing family patterns, migrant workers have become a convenient solution to the care deficits in both countries. However, despite of the usefulness of migrant workers, employers in Taiwan and Hong Kong have developed negative sentiments about Filipina domestic workers and have sought out migrant domestic workers from other nationalities. It appears that Filipinas do not fit into the mold of a docile domestic worker unlike their counterparts from other nations. Although different employers have expressed such sentiments about Filipinas, it is interesting how the number of Filipina domestic workers have significantly declined in Taiwan whereas it has

remained the same in Hong Kong. Given the similarities that Taiwan and Hong Kong share –their need for migrant labour, their economic status, their regulations on migrant workers, their role as popular destinations for Filipina domestic workers – they provide a case of similar conditions research design that can help identify which factors can best explain the difference between the situation in the two polities.

Chapter Three: The Role of Civil Society

The entry of migrant domestic workers has been beneficial for Taiwan and Hong Kong as it has filled their shortage for labour. However, despite of this, both nations still have a multitude of policies that serve to control the migrant labour in their territories. Furthermore, due to their status in the receiving countries, migrant workers lack the rights, social services, and opportunities that other workers have. Since they lack the material resources, civil society has taken up the discussion of migrants' rights. Although the involvement of NGOs has been uneven in the region, their presence has still helped improve the conditions that migrant domestic workers are currently facing (Asis, 2005). Moreover, the presence of NGOs has contributed to an increasing awareness among migrant workers that public campaigning for their rights is not wrong or disrespectful. It has also given them a sense of confidence in demanding recognition of their human rights (Sim, 2003: 503). Aside from advocating for the rights of migrant workers, NGOs and church-based groups have also set up various offices where migrant domestic workers can avail themselves of a variety of services such as legal assistance, counselling, and even workshops where they can learn about their rights as migrant workers (Lan, 2006; Lindio-McGovern, 2012). An examination of the civil society in Taiwan and Hong Kong will then be undertaken to determine if differences in the civil society of each area have influenced the different status of Filipina domestic workers employed in their jurisdiction.

Civil Society in Taiwan

Following the end of martial-law in Taiwan, numerous NGOs concerned with a variety of issues have emerged signalling the vibrancy of the nation's civil society. Although migrant-oriented NGOs face some limitations when it comes to resources and influence, they do offer some

services for migrant workers, with some of them providing systemic assistance to migrants (Lan, 2005: 224). Notable church-based NGOs in Taiwan, which are mainly service-oriented but who do advocacy work and lobbying on the side, include the Catholic Hope Worker Centre, the Migrant Workers' Concern Desk, Rerum Novarum Centre, and Stella Maris International Service Centre. There are also NGOs established by local activists without religious affiliation such as the Taiwan International Workers' Association which deals with labour issues and the International Action and Cooperation Team that is concerned with health-related problems (Lan, 2005: 224).

The Catholic churches in Taiwan also play an important role as they allow migrant workers to create networks among them, where they usually share their experiences and gain insight about their rights as domestic workers. This is significant since some women usually lack the knowledge of their rights making them susceptible to abuse (Lindio-McGovern, 2012; Lan, 2006). Since the majority of Filipinos are Catholics, churches also serve as a place of familiarity in a foreign land. Moreover, through the church Filipina domestic workers are able to escape the cultural alienation and practice an element of culture that is familiar to them, religion (Lindio-McGovern, 2012: 87). Many Filipino domestic workers then find refuge in these churches, where they can gain guidance from priests and other church officials. Sunday masses and the social gatherings that follow them, offer Filipinas the chance to compare with their fellow domestic workers their experiences under their employers. They then tend to offer mutual advice and at times exchange tactics of resistance. These friendship networks also serve as an informal support system that aid Filipinos in alleviating their loneliness or homesickness (Lindio-McGovern, 2012). Because of these, Taiwanese employers have become wary of letting their employees attend such events, they are worried that domestic workers may become more aware of their rights making them more active in negotiating the terms of their employment (Lan, 2006: 165). One of the more prominent churches that offer

services to migrant workers is St. Christopher's Church in Taipei. Through the church's Migrant Workers Concern Desk (MWCD), migrant workers have access to two social workers who they can talk to about their problems. These social workers, along with other churchgoers, nuns and priests, also conduct prison visits to illegal migrants detained in Taiwan. Such action is considered to be very significant by migrant workers who have been detained especially since they often have to deal with feelings of disconnection from the outside world during their imprisonment in detention camps (Lindio-McGovern, 2012).

Aside from providing services to migrant workers, NGOs are also working to enhance the rights of domestic workers. NGOs utilize various means to make migrant workers more "visible," employing different discursive strategies to gain media attention. One of their approaches is presenting migrant workers as victims of employer abuse who lack legal protection (Lan, 2005: 225). By publicizing the violence against Filipino domestic workers for example, such as the murder of Elly Rose Miguel and Felicidad Tiladan, NGOs direct attention to the issue of human rights for migrant workers and they effectively emphasize the vulnerability of migrant domestic workers whose work is largely invisible and isolated (Lindio-McGovern, 2012). Furthermore, they stress how this vulnerability is exacerbated by the ambiguous status of migrant workers who do not have the option of acquiring citizenship or permanent residence (Sim, 2003). Migrant workers are also presented as "unsung heroes" who have sacrificed their lives while working in Taiwan, citing the cases of domestic workers who suffered death when the country was hit by the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) epidemic in 2003. NGOs are also working to fight the social stigma attached to migrant workers by holding protests and demonstrations against institutions and groups that uphold racist perceptions about migrant domestic workers (Lan, 2005). Indeed, NGOs have given migrant workers the voice to protest the harsh conditions they face. An example is the

Hope Workers' Centre, a non-governmental, church-related group in Taoyuan, which launched a successful policy-oriented campaign resulting to the revision of Article 8, Sections 1-8 of the Employment Permit and Management Regulations of Foreign Workers. Due to the policy change, employers who illegally withhold the passport, ARC or any property of a foreign worker will be penalized and will no longer be allowed to hire a foreign worker. Their outstanding permit to hire a foreign worker will also be cancelled (Lindio-McGovern, 2012; Lan, 2006).

The central and local governments in Taiwan have also extended their financial support for the services given to migrant workers by NGOs and religious groups. For example, the CLA has sponsored the establishment of shelters for migrant workers who are awaiting transfer to new employers or court litigation. Meanwhile, the Taipei City Government has sponsored the House of Migrants Empowerment (HOME) which is a community centre that offers migrants space and facilities for their cultural and educational activities. This has largely benefitted migrant organizations such as KaSaPi (*Kapulungan ng Samahang Pilipino* or Organization of Filipinos) and TIMWA (Taiwan Indonesian Migrant Workers' Association), who were able to utilize such support for the development of their groups (Lan, 2005: 226).

However, despite of the changes that have emerged due to the efforts of NGOs and the Catholic churches in Taiwan, Lan (2005) stresses that the lack of financial and human resources have limited the ability of these groups to support migrant workers (p. 225). Even though local governments in Taiwan have provided support by subsidizing services for migrant workers, most NGOs are staffed with only a handful of social workers and legal professionals. In addition, NGOs are also unable to mobilize migrant workers. One major hindrance to this is the state regulation prohibiting migrant workers from participating in unions and collective actions. The risks involved in participating in unions and other formal collective actions weighs greatly for migrant workers

as well who can only stay in Taiwan for a few years, while the benefits are only temporary (Lan, 2005). Due to the nature of domestic work, migrant workers are also isolated from other migrants due to the live-in and no days-off conditions, making it even more difficult for them to organize (Lindio-McGovern, 2012; Lan, 2006; Asis, 2005). Religious diversity and community segregation have also hindered the creation of trans-ethnic alliances among migrant workers. Since most NGOs are associated with Catholic churches, their services are enjoyed mostly by Filipinos (Lan, 2005). The competition between Filipinas and other Asian migrant workers have also exacerbated this problem. This competition, which is intensified by the racialized classification that demarcates migrant workers by nationality, has made it difficult to rally together migrant domestic workers from different nationalities (Lan, 2006). As Liu (2015) summarizes in her report on two cases of Filipina domestic workers in Taiwan, collective knowledge and political struggle have been difficult to sustain for both the migrant workers and NGOs due to the temporary visa status of workers, the instability of organizational resources, and other structural constraints (p. 86).

Despite of the challenges faced by NGOs in Taiwan, they have significantly contributed to the improvement of the lives of many domestic workers working in this territory. Scholars have documented cases where Filipino domestic workers were able to escape exploitative working conditions due to the assistance of NGOs. Filipinos are also better protected in comparison to their Asian counterparts (Lindio-McGovern, 2012; Lan, 2006; Asis, 2005). However, it appears that their increasing involvement in the promotion of migrant rights have also negatively affected Filipina domestic workers. As Asis (2005) notes, the issues that Filipinos experience tend to be at the forefront during negotiations and usually have a public face because they are more likely to approach NGOs and other institutions for assistance, in comparison to other migrant groups (p. 45). Moreover, the Catholic church, which is usually one of the first places that Filipino migrant

workers tend to seek out in their country of employment, has facilitated the discussion of common concerns as well as the identification of possible solutions, allowing Filipinos to have a better understanding of their rights and thus the capacity to negotiate the terms of their employment. The experience of the “People Power” Revolution in the Philippines has also influenced migrant Filipino workers to organize and mobilize to address the problems they have (O’Neill, 2001 as cited in Asis, 2005). The cost of such empowerment has led to the decreasing number of Filipina domestic workers in Taiwan. Employers and placement agencies have then become wary of Filipinas as they are increasingly being perceived as being too assertive of their rights, becoming more of a burden rather than an advantage.

Civil Society in Hong Kong

Similar to Taiwan, an active civil society is also present in Hong Kong. Characterized by lively labour unions, NGOs, media, religious groups, and other organizations, the civil society in Hong Kong has been involved in the discussions concerning migrant workers as well. According to Wee and Sim (2005), the tradition of liberalism which Hong Kong has inherited from British colonial governance has enabled foreign domestic workers to organize themselves through NGOs and labour unions (p. 197). It has also provided the civic space for migrant workers to develop their capacity to assert their rights. The Asian Domestic Workers’ Union and the Indonesian Migrant Workers’ Union are but two of the migrant workers’ union that have developed in Hong Kong (Sim, 2003). Under the Employment Ordinance, foreign domestic workers are afforded the right to form and participate in trade unions, allowing many of them to acquire a greater degree of legal literacy concerning their labour rights (Wee and Sim, 2005). This is a significant difference with the situation in Taiwan where foreign domestic workers are prohibited from participating in trade unions.

NGOs, from the outset, have highlighted the adverse effects of labour migration. They have undertaken various research, advocacy work, and debates that focused on women employed as domestic workers since the 1970s. In 2001, there were already twenty-five NGOs that have offices or drop-in centres in Hong Kong. They have dealt with numerous issues such as illegal recruitment and the exploitation of women through placement agencies; minimum wage issues and maternity protection; and cases of physical and psychological abuse (Gibson, Law and McKay, 2001: 369). There have been several successful attempts by NGOs in Hong Kong to change policies concerning the rights of migrant workers, both in the receiving as well as the sending countries. One example is the successful campaign by the community of Filipino of migrant workers in Hong Kong which protested the Philippine government's forced remittance policy in 1984-1985. At this time, there was an Executive Order issued which required migrants to remit 50-80% of their salary to Philippine banks every month, otherwise their travel documents will not be processed by the Philippine Consulate. After the protest, the state directive was repealed demonstrating the ability of NGOs to mobilize migrants (Asis, 2005: 45).

One of the most prominent organizations in Hong Kong which have adopted a critical perspective on labour migration is the United Filipinos in Hong Kong (UNIFIL-HK). The organization, launched in May 1985, was initiated by Filipino domestic workers and is presently comprised primarily of Filipino migrants at about 90% of its total membership. The main concern of UNIFIL is to unite migrant Filipinos in Hong Kong "to defend their rights and fight the commodification of migrant labour" (UNIFIL organizational document as cited in Lindio-McGovern, 2012). In addition, UNIFIL recognizes itself as "a campaign center for issues affecting migrants, for solidarity work other Asian migrant workers, and for building alliances with other organizations" (Lindio-McGovern, 2012: 46). UNIFIL's campaigns are mainly directed towards

the policies of both the Philippines and Hong Kong. Some of its most notable campaigns were launched to protest the POEA memorandums that negatively affected domestic workers such as the forced remittance policy; the Memorandum Circular 41 which required placement agencies to establish welfare centers for domestic workers in place of the Philippine government; and the Memorandum Order Instruction #8 which stipulated the collection of annual fees from migrant workers for their OWWA membership (Lindio-McGovern, 2012; Asis, 2005). These policies were criticized to be revenue-generating practices of the Philippine government, which served to benefit the state while exploiting migrant workers. Although the changes that resulted from the actions of UNIFIL were somewhat limited given that the policy changes made by the Philippine government are minimal, the campaigns did bring public attention to the central role of the state in the commodification of labour. Lindio-McGovern (2012) highlights that this is important since raising awareness is a key factor in the creation of social movements and collective resistance meant to transform social structures and policy (p. 57).

Meanwhile in Hong Kong, UNIFIL's political campaigns against state policies have contributed to the success of inter-ethnic alliances. UNIFIL's public demonstrations and rallies, as well as their lobbying, against the host government's policies on domestic workers have influenced the actions of other affiliate NGOs. Since the policies of the Hong Kong government affected domestic workers from different nationalities, it allows for the emergence of inter-ethnic solidarity which NGOs have greatly utilized and benefitted from. An example is the policy on wage reduction for domestic workers in 1998 which initiated the creation of the Asian Migrant Coordinating Body (AMCB), an alliance comprised of Filipino, Nepalese, Thai, Sri Lankan, and Indonesian workers. The protests against the policy conducted by the AMCB eventually led to the Hong Kong government decreasing the proposed 30% minimum wage cut to 5% (Wee and Sim, 2005). In

2001, there was a second attempt by the Hong Kong government to further reduce the wages of migrant domestic workers. Due to the support of UNIFIL, the AMCB organized public rallies and militant protests against the wage cuts which resulted in the withdrawal of the proposed plan for wage reduction. Such inter-ethnic alliances are very important, especially in the face of labour-control policies that are meant to divide workers along ethnic lines in order to disempower them (Lindio-McGovern, 2012: 61).

Other NGOs which have played a prominent role in organizing Filipino domestic workers in Hong Kong include the Mission for Filipino Migrant Workers (MFMW) and the Asia-Pacific Mission for Migrants (APMM, formerly the Asia-Pacific Mission for Migrant Filipinos). The MFMW, established in 1981, is based at St. John's Cathedral in Hong Kong, close to Central which is the city's downtown area. This organization represents the ecumenical efforts responding to the need for organized and institutionalized assistance for migrant workers whose welfare and human rights are threatened (Lindio-McGovern, 2012: 68). Comprising this organization are the National Council Churches in the Philippines, the Resource Centre for Philippine Concerns, the Anglican Holy Carpenter Church, and the religious and laypeople from the Catholic and Protestant Churches in Hong Kong. The MFMW's three-pronged program designed to assist Filipino migrant workers in Hong Kong, as well as other nationalities who may want its services, includes providing education, training, and support for organizing domestic workers. Aside from holding seminars for migrants to educate them about their rights, it also provides para-legal training to organizations who are looking to provide legal assistance to their members. The MFMW is also involved in documentation, research and information dissemination which is useful for groups to support their political campaigns. The last component of the program involves pastoral, social welfare, and legal assistance given to Filipino migrants as well as non-Filipino migrants. This organization, in

comparison to the service model Church organization is Taiwan, is what Lindio-McGovern (2012) refers to as an empowerment model which combines providing services to migrants with political organizing oriented to change policy (p. 70). She adds that this model is what has allowed migrant groups to organize more militant forms of political action in comparison to other labour-receiving countries (Lindio-McGovern, 2012: 70). As for the APMM, which has a more regional focus, its advocacy work for Filipino migrants is composed of international networking and solidarity, organization, education, and raising public awareness of the situations faced by Filipino migrants. It has headquarters in a number of places such as Korea, Japan, Australia, Taiwan, Macau and the Middle East, which is useful for international networking and information dissemination (Lindio-McGovern, 2012). Through their efforts, as well as the rest of the civil society in Hong Kong, Filipina domestic workers have become more educated about their rights as migrant workers. In addition, they can easily access numerous services provided by NGOs and others groups, limiting the exploitative experiences that they may have. Due to these, Hong Kong remains to be one of the ideal destinations for Filipino migrant workers.

Civil Society Shaping the Lives of Migrant Workers

As outlined, Filipino domestic workers in Hong Kong have access to more resources that would help them combat the exploitative conditions they are faced with. The nature of civil society in Hong Kong has enabled Filipino domestic workers to organize and speak against the abuses they face. Migrant workers have successfully campaigned to change policies in Hong Kong, as well as in the Philippines, exhibiting the importance of NGOs and their role in mobilizing migrants. Meanwhile, although not as vibrant as Hong Kong's and somewhat limited in comparison, the civil society in Taiwan has also undertaken significant steps to assist Filipino domestic workers. Despite of the constraints faced by NGOs in Taiwan, they have aided migrant workers in their

legal battles against their employees, saw them through their troubling experiences by offering both material and immaterial support. The presence of NGOs has also given many Filipinos help to undertake forms of resistance against oppression on their own, supported by the knowledge that there are groups who are sympathetic to their plights.

However, it appears that the efforts of civil society to aid Filipina domestic workers had different consequence for their situation in Taiwan and Hong Kong. Because of the growing influence of NGOs in Taiwan as well as the increasing awareness of Filipino domestic workers of their rights, employers and hiring agencies have now diverted their recruitment of domestic workers to other countries such as Indonesia. The boldness that Filipinas have in asserting their rights and making demands about their terms of employment have discouraged many employers from hiring them. In contrast to Filipinas, Indonesians are perceived to be less likely to rebel against their employers. Although Filipinas have better English-language skills and are generally better-educated than their Indonesian counterparts, the cost of employing them has become too much to bear for employers as well as recruitment agencies. As Lan (2006) has outlined, the perception about Filipinas as being “unruly and disobedient,” has become common and widespread among Taiwanese employers. Meanwhile, in Hong Kong where inter-ethnic alliances have emerged and grown, migrant domestic workers from other nationalities also engage in protests and other militant forms of collective action. As a result, despite of their inclination to engage in protests, Filipina domestic workers are not singled out by employers in Hong Kong as unruly and more likely to object about the terms of their employment. Altogether, these demonstrate that the two territories share many similarities in their vibrant civil society. However, it also shows that in one case, the mobilization may have had an influence to explain the diminishing number of Filipina domestic workers in Taiwan but not in Hong Kong.

Because civil society is active to a similar degree in both places, but the results for Filipina workers diverge, what other factor can then explain the difference? Could the international relations of Taiwan and Hong Kong with the Philippines have more explanatory power? Since foreign domestic workers are neither considered as part of the local labour force nor as citizens of the labour-receiving jurisdiction, but depend up to a point on the labour regulations of the sending country, the Philippines, we can ask to what extent the relations between receiving and sending territories matter. Therefore, an examination of the bilateral relationship between the governments of Taiwan and Hong Kong, with that of the Philippines will be the next step that will be undertaken.

Chapter Four: Diplomatic Relations between Sending and Receiving States

The political relationship between labour-sending and labour-receiving governments is another important factor that affects the lives of migrant workers since the selection of sending countries is usually influenced by diplomatic issues. Bilateral agreements between sending and receiving governments may shift during problematic times, thereby affecting migrant workers of different nationalities unevenly. Although Taiwan and Hong Kong do not have formal relations with the Philippines due to their status in the international community, they do have bilateral agreements concerning the hiring of migrant Filipino workers. Over the years, the relationships of Taiwan and Hong Kong with the Philippines have undergone changes, tensions have also erupted between them. Since the similarities in the state of the civil society in these two labour-receiving nations were not able to explain the difference in the situations faced by Filipina domestic workers, perhaps an external factor such as international relations can help explain why the number of Filipinas engaged in domestic work in Taiwan has decreased while it has remained the same in Hong Kong. In order to determine the extent to which the political relationship of sending and receiving polities affects the recruitment of Filipina domestic workers, examining the shifts in the relationship between the Philippines and these two jurisdictions is necessary.

Taiwan-Philippines Relations

As Lan (2005) notes, the consideration of foreign affairs is one of the major characteristics of Taiwan's migration policy on transnational domestic workers which has critical consequences on the experiences of migrant workers (p. 213). Due to Taiwan's status in the international community, a state with limited recognition and formal ties as a sovereign nation, diplomacy has been difficult to navigate at times. Its government has continually utilized the recruitment of

migrant workers as a “bargaining chip” to enhance diplomatic ties with the labour-sending states (Lan, 2005: 215). Sending countries for migrant labour is determined based on the suggestions of Taiwan’s Department of Foreign Affairs. Countries which have signed bilateral agreements over the employment of migrant labour with Taiwan include the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, and more recently Vietnam and Mongolia (Lan, 2005). The Taiwanese government actively intervenes in the recruitment of migrant workers, evident not only in its role in the selection of sending-countries, but also in how it has used the recruitment of migrant workers to enhance its relations with other states.

Over the years, Taiwan and the Philippines have maintained a relatively stable political relationship except for several incidents which have affected agreements concerning the recruitment of domestic workers. The first incident occurred in August 1999 when the Philippine government referred to Taiwan as a local province of the People’s Republic of China. This resulted in Taiwan withdrawing its negotiation over a bilateral air-links agreement with the Philippines. After the breakdown of the talks between the two parties, Taiwan suspended air links with the Philippines which at that time had affected the tourism business in the Philippines as Taiwanese airlines were one of the biggest carriers flying tourists to Manila (Sung, 1999; Vanzi, 1999). A temporary suspension of migrant workers from the Philippines was also placed due to the diplomatic crisis (Lan, 2005: 215). The aviation dispute, which involved passenger quotas, further worsened as Taiwan criticized China’s influence over the Philippines’ decision to withdraw their recognition of an earlier air accord (Sung, 1999).

In 2011, another incident caused a diplomatic crisis between the two countries. The dispute occurred after the Philippines deported 14 Taiwanese and 10 Chinese fraud suspects to China. The Justice Secretary at that time, Leila de Lima, claimed that the Philippine government had chosen

to act as such since the victims of the fraud case were Chinese citizens, therefore it was appropriate to settle the case in China. Since the charges against the group were filed in China in relation to an investment scam that defrauded Chinese nationals, the Philippines saw that it was proper to deport them to China, despite of the request of the Taiwanese government to repatriate their citizens to Taiwan (The China Post, 2011). The crisis further worsened after the Philippine government refused to offer an apology for the deportation of the Taiwanese nationals. As a result, Taiwan recalled its envoy in the Philippines and cancelled visa waiver privileges for some visitors from the Philippines. It also imposed a go-slow for applications of Filipinos who were looking to work in Taiwan. The screening process which usually took a maximum of 12 days were changed to four months, effectively putting a freeze on the hiring of Filipino migrant workers (The China Post, 2011). This became the second time that the Philippines were involved in Taiwan's suspension of the hiring for migrant workers. The Taipei Economic and Culture Office (TECO) also imposed stricter requirements for Filipino migrant workers bound for Taiwan, increasing the documents they need to submit for their applications. The Pilipino Manpower Agencies Accredited to Taiwan (PILMAT) further added that the crisis delayed the departure of about 5,000 Filipinos who were bound for Taiwan at that time (Abella, 2011).

The most recent interaction which has severely affected the diplomatic relations of the Philippines and Taiwan is the territorial dispute between these two jurisdictions. The dispute between the two nations which involves fishing rights and the delimitation of Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ), has already been ongoing for a number of years. The EEZ, a 200 naval mile zone extending from the coastline within which a state has exclusive rights to exploit natural resources,¹²

¹² As outlined by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which the Philippines adheres to as a UN signatory. Taiwan, being a state which the United Nations does not recognize as an independent country, is not a signatory of the UNCLOS.

overlaps in the case of Taiwan and the Philippines. On May 2013, a Taiwanese fishing boat, the Kuang Ta Hsing No. 28 was fired upon by the Philippine Coast Guard(PCG) which resulted with the death of fisherman Hung Shih-Cheng. The PCG reported that they had intended to board and inspect the vessel after they were found to be fishing illegally in the Philippines' EEZ. However, the Taiwanese fisherman did not respond to the calls to stop and prepare for boarding and instead had allegedly attempted to ram the PCG vessel (Balintang Channel Incident Report, 2013). The Taiwanese government claimed that the PCG had used excessive force during the confrontation and that under international law standards, they were prohibited from using weapons against unarmed boats in the first place (Thim, 2013). Because of the shooting incident, Taiwan imposed a number of sanctions on the Philippines including a freeze on the work permit applications of Filipino migrant workers, the cessation of economic exchanges, as well as military exercises in waters between the two sides. A travel warning to the Philippines was also placed, prompting travel agencies in Taiwan to suspend group trips to the country. The Department of Tourism mentioned that this was very worrisome considering how Taiwanese tourists represent the fifth biggest market at 4.2% of the total arrivals to the Philippines for the first quarter of 2013 (Sun and Lin, 2013). The sanctions came after the Philippine government failed to comply to the demands of the Taiwanese which involved issuing a formal apology, hastening the investigation of the shooting, punishing the perpetrators, compensating the family of the deceased, and undertaking talks over fishing rights in the disputed area (Sui, 2013). The sanctions affected Filipino workers in Taiwan heavily. The CLA reported that the suspension will prevent about 35,000 Filipinos a year from finding work (Sun and Lin, 2013). Although the sanctions were lifted later in 2013, it had still left some serious effects on the lives of Filipinos working in Taiwan.

Hong Kong-Philippine Relations

In comparison to Taiwan, Hong Kong has not had many confrontations with the Philippines which could have caused a diplomatic crisis of the same gravity as that of the aforementioned territorial dispute of 2013 between Taiwan and the Philippines. Political relations between Hong Kong and the Philippines have been relatively stable except for the Manila Hostage Crisis of August 2010. The incident which resulted in the death of eight Hong Kong residents and injury to nine others, occurred after a disgruntled former police officer took a tourist bus hostage (Heydarian, 2016). The police officer, Rolando Mendoza, who claimed he was unfairly dismissed from work demanded that he be given the chance to defend himself in a fair hearing. After hours of negotiations to free the hostages failed, Mendoza open fired on the hostages (Martelino-Reyes, 2015). Following the incident, Hong Kong criticized the Philippines for mismanaging the crisis and demanded a public apology from the then president Benigno Aquino III. However, Aquino refused to do so, arguing that the perpetrator was not acting in behalf of the Philippine state and as such, an apology from the Filipino head of state was not warranted (Heydarian, 2016).

The diplomatic crisis that ensued afterward led to Hong Kong placing economic sanctions and travel restrictions against the Philippines. Due to the sanctions, Hong Kong cancelled the 14-day, visa-free entry agreement for diplomats and other officials of the Philippine government (Larano, 2014). A black alert under the Outbound Travel Alert (OTA) system has been placed on the Philippines following the hostage crisis, which means Hong Kong tourists face a severe threat in the country and should avoid travelling there. Aside from the Philippine, the only other country which Hong Kong has placed the black alert on is Syria due to the civil war going on in the country (Carney, 2013). It was not until 2014 when Hong Kong downgraded the black alert to amber,

which means that “Hong Kong residents who intend to visit the country or are already there should monitor the situation, exercise caution, and attend to personal safety” (HKSAR, 2014).

The situation was resolved four years following the incident after the Philippine government fulfilled most of the demands made by the victims and their families regarding the issuance of a formal apology, financial compensation, as well as punishing the Philippine government officials who were responsible for the mishandling of the event (Legaspi, 2014). Although the Philippine government did not extend a formal apology – the biggest demand of the families of the victims, Filipino officials did offer verbal apologies to them during a meeting in Hong Kong. The Philippine National Police director general also sent to the families of the victims letters expressing the government’s “most sorrowful regret and sympathy,” which the relatives of the victims described as having the same meaning as an apology (SCMP, 2014). Meanwhile, several high-ranking police and government officials were dismissed from their posts after being found guilty of gross incompetence. The Philippines also ensured the Hong Kong government that measures were to be taken in order to prevent these kinds of incidents in the future, thereby guaranteeing the safety and welfare of tourists (Tan, 2014). Although relations between the two governments were restored after a long and arduous process, Filipinos working in Hong Kong were still affected by the incident. After the hostage taking, angry Hong Kong residents held protests criticizing the Philippine government. During this time, Filipinos were advised to take caution when travelling to Hong Kong due to the sentiments of its residents following the incident. Hong Kong employers also threatened to fire their Filipino domestic workers, endangering the jobs of tens of thousands of Filipinos (Martelino-Reyes, 2015). Hong Kong residents also held negative sentiments about Filipinos, long after the incident occurred, evident during an international football match between teams from the Philippines and Hong Kong in 2013. During

the game, spectators were hurling racial slurs and obscene gestures to the Filipino players even throwing objects at the players from the stands (Wu, 2013). Tourism in the Philippines was also affected as the number of Hong Kong visitors to the country decreased by 16% after the hostage crisis. Four years after the crisis, the number of Hong Kong tourists are still below the level in 2010 (SMCP, 2014).

By 2014 the sanctions placed on the Philippines on 2010 have then been lifted and the Hong Kong and Philippine government have both maintained that the diplomatic relations between them have returned to normal. Despite of the aforementioned consequences of the incident, as well as the length that it took for both nations to resolve the issue, it appears that Filipino migrant workers in Hong Kong were not severely affected by the diplomatic crisis. Even though there was a threat about the dismissal of Filipino domestic workers after the incident, there was no freeze put on the recruitment of Filipinas, unlike the situation in Taiwan. Moreover, this has also been the only confrontation between the two governments that has resulted in a deterioration of their political relationship. Unlike Taiwan, Hong Kong and Philippines have not engaged in numerous disputes, thereby minimizing the chances for the Hong Kong government to reduce the number of Filipino domestic workers it recruits.

Effects of Diplomatic Relations

The political relationship between the Philippines and Taiwan has undergone a number of shifts in the past decade. Several times, these incidents had resulted in Taiwan putting a freeze on the number of Filipino migrant workers it accepted. Meanwhile, Hong Kong-Philippine relations have not been as problematic aside from the diplomatic crisis of 2010 which had taken years to finally be resolved. Although the hostage crisis of 2010 resulted to more deaths, the Hong Kong government had not chosen to punish Filipino migrant workers in its territory and instead had

focused on making the Philippine government take responsibility for the incident. The sanctions that were put on the Philippines by Hong Kong did not directly affect the recruitment of Filipino domestic workers. It was instead more directed to officials of the Philippine government. Hong Kong's concern after the incident was also to ensure the safety of its citizens during their stay in the Philippines, therefore its response to the crisis was focused on resolving a different matter.

As for Taiwan, it had been involved in a number of confrontations with the Philippines which have had lasting effects on the recruitment of Filipino migrant workers. After each incident, the number of Filipinos working in Taiwan has seen a decrease thereby illustrating how diplomatic relations between sending and receiving countries can have severe consequences for migrant domestic workers. Although the most recent confrontation between the Philippines and Taiwan involved the death of a Taiwanese national, the issue regarding the fishing rights is still the main point of dispute between the two nations. The economic implications of the delimitation of the overlapping EEZs of Taiwan and Philippines is significant. However, aside from the territorial dispute, Taiwan has had limited interactions with the Philippines. The same can also be said about Hong Kong. The hostage incident did not result in any lasting consequences affecting domestic workers. A travel ban was placed on the Philippines, an action that was reflected in China's response to the hostage crisis. However, incidents between the Philippines and these two labour-receiving governments were so few and similar in their little degree of gravity that it is impossible to argue that bilateral relationship is the cause of the different situations faced by Filipino domestic workers in Taiwan and Hong Kong. Moreover, because of the fundamental similarity in their status of limited sovereignty, both Taiwan and Hong Kong face many diplomatic limitations in their formal interactions with the Philippines.

China affects the sovereignty of these two governments and, indirectly, their interactions with the Philippines. China has long contested Taiwan's claim of being a sovereign state, maintaining that Taiwan is part of its territory (Winkler, 2012). Meanwhile, China has resumed the exercise of sovereignty over Hong Kong. Although Hong Kong is allowed to engage in international agreements and to participate in certain international organization on its own, it still remains as a special administrative region of the People's Republic of China, signifying that China still has some degree of influence over its decisions (Sun, 2008). This may be a big difference between Hong Kong and Taiwan. Due to Hong Kong's status, it does not have as much leverage in its relation to the Philippines in contrast to Taiwan. However, although China does not have full control over the decisions that the Taiwanese government makes, their contention over the status of Taiwan limits the ability of the Taiwanese government to engage in proper diplomatic relations with the Philippines. For example, the economic and cultural relations that the Philippines maintains with Taiwan are handled through the Manila Economic and Cultural Office (MECO), an agency under the Office of the President, with the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office (TECO) as its Taiwanese counterpart, as opposed with it going through the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines. This has been so due to the Philippines' recognition of the One-China Policy under which the country has diplomatic relations only with China, which in turn considers Taiwan as its province (Quismundo, 2013).

Since neither the civil society in Taiwan and Hong Kong nor their political relationship with the Philippines can fully explain the difference in the situations of Filipino domestic workers in these two labour receiving territories, perhaps an examination of the labour market itself can provide an explanation for the different situations. In particular, looking at the needs of the employers as well as the strategies used by recruitment agencies who mediate between the

employers and the workers may yield observations that can explain why the number of Filipino domestic workers is decreasing in Taiwan while it has remained stable in Hong Kong.

Chapter Five: The Role of Brokers and Placement Agencies

As previously mentioned, the entry of foreign domestic workers in Taiwan and Hong Kong has allowed native women to participate in the formal labour market (Lan, 2006; Wee and Sim, 2005). As Cortés and Pan (2013) notes on their study of Hong Kong and Taiwan, temporary foreign domestic helper policies contributed to a significant increase in the labour force participation of women, especially for mothers of young children (p. 368). They add that foreign domestic helpers are regarded by women as suitable substitutes for their time spent in household reproduction (Cortés and Pan, 2013: 369). However, despite of the convenience that comes with hiring foreign domestic workers, there are many elements that employers have to consider when choosing a foreign domestic worker. The nature of the work that domestic workers do and the space where they perform their work is very unique therefore the screening and hiring process for domestic workers involves complex elements.

Meeting the Employer's Needs

As outlined by different scholars, domestic workers undertake a variety of tasks from taking care of a child or an elderly to cooking to doing laundry (Parreñas, 2008; Lan, 2006). In some instances, domestic workers end up working at the businesses of their employers as well, doing tasks such as cleaning their office or serving in their restaurants (Constable, 2007; Lan, 2006). These duties are outside of the tasks that they are authorized to do as domestic workers, especially for some migrant workers who are specifically meant to only provide elderly care. But even though these kinds of work are illegal, there are no bodies that monitor such practices thereby allowing employers to assign such workloads to their foreign domestic workers.

Although their role as domestic workers encompasses a wide range of duties, employers still have specific qualifications that they look for in their prospective domestic workers. For example, employers tend to favour foreign domestic workers who speak English when choosing someone to take care of their child (Lan, 2006; Wee and Sim, 2005). Filipino domestic workers are known to have good English-speaking skills and as such are regarded to be better suited to care for children, especially for families who may not have the same English language competencies. Lan (2016) mentions that for lower-educated employers in Taiwan, the added benefit of English tutoring for their children is a factor they consider when hiring Filipina domestic workers (p. 263). Meanwhile, in a study conducted by Tang and Yung (2016) on households in Hong Kong regarding the effects of foreign domestic workers on school children's educational outcomes, they found that the English-speaking ability and maturity of Filipina FDHs contribute to the improvement of children's educational outcomes (p. 117). Children under the care of Filipina domestic workers experienced an improvement in their scores of their core academic subjects while in other cases, the presence of Filipina FDHs helped decrease the chances of late schooling for children (Tang and Yung, 2016). These kinds of effects are elements that employers must consider when choosing a domestic worker, particularly for those who will be delegated to care for children.

Meanwhile, others may find that foreign domestic workers who speak the native language may be more suitable to caring for the elderly (Lan, 2006). Lan (2016) explains that the transmission of native language skills to migrant workers does not only have a practical function of facilitating communication, it also carries an underlying purpose of "consolidating the status hierarchy by subordinating the servant to the master's language" (p. 263). In fact, Indonesian domestic workers spend approximately 138 hours in the training camps, learning Mandarin

Chinese since their Chinese language proficiency is considered as a major advantage over their Filipina competitors (Lan, 2016).

For other employers, having a Filipino domestic worker who speaks English may also be more favourable since they can communicate properly with their employee. This situation is especially relevant to FDHs employed in Hong Kong where many residents have a command of English. This minimizes, if not avoids, any misunderstanding between the employer and the domestic workers. This element is very important especially if the employer has to give the worker instructions on how certain tasks have to be done. In the same way, other employers may also prefer foreign domestic workers who speak Mandarin or Cantonese. As Lan (2005) notes, Taiwanese employers who have high school education or lower experience difficulties when “communicating with and placing demands on their Filipina maids in English” (p. 219). Filipina domestic workers then utilize their proficiency with the English language as a tool for symbolic resistance, for instance when negotiating job terms concerning workload reduction, or by commenting on the grammar and pronunciation of their employers as well as by deliberately using advanced vocabulary when talking to their employers (Lan, 2005: 219). Taiwanese employers frustrated over such incidents turn to Indonesian and Vietnamese domestic workers instead who are required to know Mandarin Chinese or Hokkien to win job orders in Taiwan (Lan, 2005).

The preferences that employers have, which are shaped by a number of factors, may also affect their choice in domestic workers. After interviewing Taiwanese employers, Cheng (2006) lists some of the essential traits that employers look for when choosing a domestic worker such as the “display of willingness, desire, and ability to work” (p. 87). Employers particularly expect to see from Thai and Indonesian women the “appearance of respect, obedience, and servility, befitting the status of domestics,” in contrast to the general perception of Filipinas as being

“outgoing, aggressive or even insubordinate” (Cheng, 2006: 87). Ultimately, women from different labour-sending countries are shaped into the obedient and suitable domestic workers they are expected to be by these preferences. Recruitment agencies then manufacture migrant workers who fit into this image.

The Role of Recruitment Agencies

Recruitment agencies have taken a central role in facilitating the movement of foreign workers. As Cheng (2006) writes, the bureaucratization and commercialization of the migration process, resulting from the intensification and expansion of international labour migration, have increased the dependence of employers and migrant workers on intermediaries (p. 73). Both employers and migrant workers are choosing to rely on recruitment agencies in order to avoid dealing with intricate and complex state bureaucracies and legal regulations. But aside from being an intermediary and an agent of control for the labour-receiving government, recruitment agencies are also involved in the “manufacturing” of foreign domestic workers (Cheng, 2006: 72). The manufacturing of foreign domestic workers involves a process of ethnicization where essentialist stereotypes about domestic workers are linked to their nationality (Loveband, 2003: 336). Cheng (2003) also mentions that the “association between national traits and the quality of labour becomes instrumental in diversifying, segregating, and stratifying the labour market,” allowing recruitment agencies to expand their sources of labour and to diversify the labour market (p. 178). As workers of different nationalities are then confined to their own niches, competition among them arises, breeding animosity between different groups thereby effectively suppressing coalition building and labour militancy (Cheng, 2003).

However, recruitment agencies are not the only actors involved in the process of ethnicization. Employers and even foreign domestic workers themselves have played a role in

creating and sustaining these stereotypes (Lan, 2006; Cheng, 2006; Loveband; 2004). But recruitment agencies use this process differently than the employers and foreign workers. According to Balkan and Stasiulis (1995) these racialized stereotypes are essential in the matching process that placement agencies undertake (p. 310). For example, they mention that “assessing the quality of child care in terms of nationality or race of the child-care giver is a standard feature of the matching process” involving the employer and the foreign worker (Balkan and Stasiulis, 1995: 217). They stress that these racialized differentiations are necessary to impress upon the employers that professional screening is critical in finding the most suitable domestic worker for their need. Because of the volatile nature of this industry, agencies have resorted to this tactic to survive and thrive in it (Balkan and Stasiulis, 1995). For the same reason, Lan (2005) claims that recruitment agencies in Taiwan utilize nationality-based stereotypes to justify their promotion of Vietnamese and Indonesian workers, especially when they magnify the difference these women have from the “social construction of Filipina maids” (p. 217). In place of “smart but unruly” Filipinas, employment agencies advise employers to hire “stupid but obedient” Indonesians (Lan, 2005: 216). Recruitment agencies for domestic workers have become a very lucrative business therefore numerous agencies have emerged and they have used such practices as a business strategy. For example, in Taiwan the recruitment of Indonesians apparently brings higher profits than the brokering of Filipina migrants (Lan, 2003). Since Indonesian migrant workers are charged higher placement fees than their Filipina counterparts, recruitment agencies stress the images of Filipinas as being more educated and knowledgeable but also defiant and noncompliant, making them “difficult” to employ (Lan, 2003: 112). They contrast this with images of Indonesian women as being gentle in their temperament and simple in their thinking and are therefore portrayed as “obedient, docile, and better to do repetitive work” (Cheng, 2006: 88). By magnifying the

difference between these two groups of domestic workers, recruitment agencies are then able to make more profits (Cheng, 2006; Lan, 2003). This is significant considering that Indonesian migrant workers are pay placement fees ranging from NT\$ 120,000 to NT\$160,000 while Filipina domestic workers are charged between NT\$60,000 and NT\$120,000 (Lan, 2003).¹³

In Hong Kong, recruitment agencies also take part in the racialization of foreign domestic workers, however they also employ other strategies to convince employers that their “domestic workers – their ‘products’ – are superior to those of their competitors; that they are better qualified, better trained, and more obedient” (Constable, 2007: 65). For example, agencies focus on “direct hires,” domestic workers who have not previously worked in Hong Kong and refuse to employ “finish contracts,” domestic workers in Hong Kong whose contracts will be expiring soon (Constable, 2007). Employers prefer direct hires because they are deemed to be “more subservient, and less wise and cunning compared to those who have been here (Hong Kong) for a while” (Constable, 2007: 67). According to agencies, employers are able to “break in” a direct hire in whatever way they deem fit which is not possible for “finish contracts”. Foreign domestic workers who have prior experience working in Hong Kong can make demands to employers and negotiate the terms of their contracts. They also know their way around and already have a network of friends from whom they can get support. Meanwhile, employers can dictate the terms of employment for direct hires. Although hiring “finish contract” workers can be more advantageous to both the workers and the employers, since they have a chance of conducting an interview in person and would not have to rely on files and videotaped interviews, the same cannot be said for agencies. The economic benefits of having direct hires in comparison to that of having “finish contract” workers, are greater for recruitment agencies (Constable, 2007). Since agencies provide a

¹³ These are the placement fees which Lan found based on her investigation.

“guarantee” for the suitability of the foreign domestic worker that they provide to employers, it is to their advantage to ensure that the domestic worker will be to the satisfaction of employers. Having rebellious domestic workers who insist and dictate the terms of their employment are therefore problematic and increases the likelihood of dissatisfaction from the employers.

Recruitment agencies in the Philippines also participate in the process of manufacturing suitable domestic workers. Training centres are established in the Philippines where Filipinas are taught how to do household work and how to care for children or the elderly. They also learn about the culture and society of their place of employment as well as the immigration rules that apply to them. Furthermore, Filipinas are continually reminded in the training centre to “obey and not to argue with their employers” (Cheng, 2006). Recruitment agencies in the Philippines act as a disciplinary institution, cultivating specific characteristics in migrant women to make them suitable for domestic work. The interaction of Filipina women with the recruitment agencies involve a self-disciplining process “to display deferential behaviours/attitudes and to internalize attributes required of domestics” (Constable, 1997 as cited in Cheng, 2006: 76). As Constable (2007) adds, recruitment agencies in the Philippines are not only involved in maintaining a steady pool of domestic workers, they are also responsible for transforming “women into domestic workers” (p. 69). She notes (2007),

Whether a manager of a marketing firm, a schoolteacher, a university degree holder, or a rural housewife who has not completed high school, whether married or unmarried, in her teens or in her forties, a woman undergoes virtually the same homogenizing process intended to produce a single product: a hardworking, submissive, and obedient domestic helper (p. 69).

By creating a suitable subservient domestic worker, agencies in the Philippines serve to reinforce the ethnic racialization that recruitment agencies in Hong Kong and Taiwan have propagated.

Shaping the Employer's Choice

The labour segmentation of foreign domestic workers in Taiwan and Hong Kong, a result of the racialized stereotypes that recruitment agencies create and “sell” to employers, has affected the number of Filipina domestic workers in these two territories. The role of agencies in advising employers which “nationality best suits their particular needs” have been crucial in the channelling of migrant workers by gender and nationality into hierarchically structured segments of the labour market (Loveband, 2004: 340). As Cheng (2006) mentions, agencies emphasize how Filipino domestic workers have the skills, education, and experience which may cause their insubordination but these elements may be important for employers who have specific needs (p. 93). For example, Taiwanese employers who have childcare needs favour Filipinas because of their education, skills, nursing qualifications, and their English language competency. Employers who have businesses may also prefer them since they can ask Filipinas to work in the office or compose business letters. However, the education and skills of domestic workers may be of less concern if the main need of employers is simply for housework and for elderly care, which represents most foreign domestic workers' authorized employment. Employers then prefer Indonesian, Thai, and Vietnamese women because they are thought to be more docile and obedient and as such, are easier to manage (Cheng, 2006). Although employers have their own preferences or they have specific qualities that they might look for in a foreign domestic worker, their choices are ultimately shaped and determined by the racialization that recruitment agencies undertake. As mediators, recruitment agencies deal with both the prospective domestic workers, convincing them that they are offering the best possible job, and the employers, persuading them that they can provide the most suitable

candidate for their needs. The power that agencies have in shaping the life of a foreign domestic worker is therefore very significant. Although they are mostly criticized for charging exorbitant fees to foreign workers, they play an even bigger role in sustaining the disparaged position of foreign domestic workers.

Therefore, the role that recruitment agencies have and the strategies they employ can best explain why the number of Filipino domestic workers has declined in Taiwan while it has remained stable in Hong Kong. Due to the competition between recruitment agencies in Taiwan, marketing Indonesian domestic workers as more docile and easier to manage in comparison to Filipino domestic workers has become a profitable strategy and as such, more employers are choosing Indonesians over Filipinas. Meanwhile the image of Filipino domestic workers as being more educated yet rebellious has convinced employers that they are harder to employ and would be suitable as domestic workers only in some specific cases.

In the meantime, recruitment agencies in Hong Kong undertake a different approach in promoting domestic workers from different nations. Although there are still racialized images being used to differentiate domestic workers from different nations, recruitment agencies emphasize more the suitability and convenience of choosing “direct hires” who are easier to manage regardless of their nationality because they are new and have no prior experience working in Hong Kong. This strategy therefore has not affected the hiring of Filipinas resulting to the stable numbers of Filipinos foreign domestic workers being hired by the Hong Kong government.

Conclusion

Although labour-receiving governments recognize the role that migrant domestic workers play in the society, they still have different measures to control the migrant labour. They especially have measures in place to prevent migrant domestic workers from acquiring citizenship, thereby effectively ensuring the maintenance of a certain degree of stability in the existing ethnic cleavages of the Taiwanese and Hong Kong population. The temporary status of migrant domestic workers also benefits the receiving governments since they do not have to offer extensive social services to them. Meanwhile, the Philippines have been actively sending migrant domestic workers overseas because of their remittances, which constitutes a substantial percentage of the country's GDP. Despite of the lack of rights and services in the receiving countries, the Philippine government has not extended much assistance either. As a result, Filipino domestic workers have had to rely on civil society, not only for various services but for the advocating for migrants' rights as well. Because of this, negative sentiments about Filipinas being too unruly and unmanageable have increased, prompting Taiwanese employers to hire from other nations instead.

Even though the state of civil society and international relations cannot sufficiently explain the difference between the situations of Filipino domestic workers in Taiwan and Hong Kong, it did reveal that they do have some effects on the situations that foreign domestic workers face in these two labour-receiving territories. Examining civil society and diplomatic relations have also illustrated the roles that these factors play in the recruitment of migrant domestic workers. For example, civil society has emerged as one of the key providers of support and assistance to migrant domestic workers who lack the rights and services that other regular workers possess. NGOs and church-based groups do not only aid migrant domestic workers in times of crisis, they have also begun to advocate for the rights of these workers. The policy changes that have emerged through

the efforts of the civil society in both countries have not been very substantial however it has certainly increased the attention placed on the experiences of migrant domestic workers and the exploitative conditions that they face. As a result, campaigns pushing for more transformative changes have increased.

Meanwhile, the case of Filipina domestic workers in Taiwan and Hong Kong also shows how important stable diplomatic relations is for the sending countries, such as the Philippines who rely on labour migration as a revenue-making policy. In times of crisis, the Philippine government had to concede to the demands of the labour-receiving government in order to avoid any ramifications that would affect Filipino domestic workers. The reliance on the remittances of foreign workers also brings to light the lack of efforts from the Philippine government to generate enough jobs for women in the country. Although Filipinas have other reasons for undertaking domestic work abroad, the main driver which is the lack of “good jobs” is an issue that the Philippine government has to address to resolve the brain drain occurring in the country. The current administration in the Philippines have been urged to create more jobs for women especially after a recent execution of a domestic worker in Kuwait (ABS-CBN News, 2017). However, it remains to be seen what the Philippine government will do to resolve this issue.

As the Philippines continues to rely on labour migration to generate revenues, and as long as Filipinos are unable to find decent work in the country, working abroad will continue to be a reality for many women. At the same time, women in developed polities such as Taiwan and Hong Kong, will continue to depend on the services of migrant domestic workers in order for them to maintain their roles at home and at work. Labour-receiving territories, including Taiwan and Hong Kong, will also continue to hire migrant workers because of the need for them. A closer investigation of the processes through which recruitment agencies operate, and how this affects

foreign domestic workers of different nationalities unevenly, is therefore necessary. As previously outlined, the racialization of foreign domestic workers resulting from the business strategies undertaken by recruitment agencies have affected the number of Filipinos being hired in Taiwan and Hong Kong. Although recruitment agencies have been closely monitored for possible illegal activities, there has not been much focus in their role in creating, disseminating, and profiting from the racialized stereotypes which they assign to domestic workers from different nationalities. Scholars have noted that these practices by agencies have successfully convinced employers to hire workers from a specific country based on these assumed traits (Lan, 2005; Wee and Sim, 2005; Cheng, 2003). However, a closer look is needed to be undertaken to understand these practices and learn how detrimental they can be for foreign domestic workers. As Loveband (2004) observes, the agencies, employers, and even the workers themselves accept these differences which are based on stereotypes and generalized statements, a reality which is very problematic (p. 343). Since this racialization of foreign domestic workers have become a naturalized process in the industry, it is then difficult to reverse or suppress. Nonetheless, a better understanding of this process can provide insights on how it can be mitigated. Perhaps an investigation of this process can also enhance the awareness of the different actors involved in it, especially for employers and workers who reinforce these stereotypes without realizing its negative effects.

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Appendix

Table 1. Number of Overseas Filipinos Workers

	Total	Men	Women
2000	978,000	527,000	451,000
2001	1.3 million	528,000	501,000
2002	1.06 million	554,000	506,000
2004	1.06 million	524,000	539,000
2005	1.33 million	667,000	660,000
2006	1.52 million	751,000	764,000
2007	1.75 million	890,000	859,000
2008	2 million	1.03 million	968,000
2009	1.9 million	1.01 million	901,000
2010	2.04 million	1.06 million	975,000
2011	2.2 million	1.1 million	1.03 million
2012	2.22 million	1.14 million	1.07 million
2013	2.29 million	1.15 million	1.14 million
2014	2.32 million	1.14 million	1.17 million
2015	2.44 million	1.19 million	1.25 million

Source: Philippine Statistic Authority – Survey on Filipino Overseas Workers 2001-2015

Table 2. Filipino Domestic Workers Deployed Per Year

	Total
2000	66,890
2001	70,052
2002	62,548
2003	45,858
2004	61,873
2005	81,725
2006	89,819
2007	44,904
2008	47,841
2009	69,669
2010	94,880
2011	142,689
2012	155,795

Source: Philippine Overseas Employment Administration – OFW Deployment 2000-2012

Table 3. Foreign Workers in Social Welfare

	Total	Philippines	Indonesia	Thailand	Vietnam
2000	106,331	34,772	63,563	5356	2634
2001	112,934	24,875	78,678	4158	5221
2002	120,711	21,223	81,490	2733	15,263
2003	120,598	29,347	47,891	2961	40,397
2004	131,067	34,446	21,457	3333	71,783
2005	144,015	35,047	41,906	3057	63,956
2006	153,785	29,107	75,577	2318	46,767
2007	162,228	24,369	101,619	1819	34,414
2008	168,427	22,894	111,114	1504	32,912
2009	174,943	22,676	121,058	1295	29,914
2010	186,108	23,320	135,019	1226	26,542
2011	197,854	23,017	148,080	1068	25,688
2012	202,694	22,291	157,403	870	21,499
2013	210,215	21,582	167,215	745	20,572
2014	220,011	24,784	174,584	666	19,974
2015	224,356	27,613	177,265	557	18,919

Source: Workforce Development Agency, Ministry of Labour, Taiwan, 2016,

Table 4. Women Foreign Domestic Helpers in Hong Kong

	Total	Philippines	Indonesia	Thailand
2008	252,497	122,720	123,245	3,787
2009	263,525	126,513	130,335	3,821
2010	281,228	133,761	140,811	3,651
2011	295,243	140,766	148,013	3,283
2012	307,491	152,007	149,072	2,958
2013	315,985	160,589	148,856	2,678
2014	325,564	168,706	149,632	2,614
2015	335,088	177,619	150,008	2,532

Source: Census and Statistics Department, HKSAR, 2015