

**Political and Social Geography of Marginal Insiders:  
Migrant Domestic Workers in Taiwan\***

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This paper looks at the incorporation and marginalization of female migrant domestic workers Taiwan. The first part sketches the political geography by examining how Taiwan's government regulates, marginalizes, and disciplines foreign contract workers. The second part portrays the social geography by discussing how migrant domestic workers establish multiple forms of communities and networks. I also compare Filipina and Indonesian migrant domestics regarding how they are discursively constructed by employment agencies and how they gather in different spatial patterns on Sundays.

***Introduction***

On February 8, 2003, Shia Liu, a well-known Taiwanese writer and an advocate of the rights of the disable, died after being attacked by her Indonesian caregiver Vina, the caregiver, suffered from conversion disorder, a psychological affliction caused by

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emotional stress, which made her unable to distinguish between reality and imagination. Vina told the police that she had no memory of what happened except that she had dreamed of Liu's dead father, who told her to help her wheelchair-bound ward because there was an earthquake. This incident shocked the Taiwanese public. Some employers were worried that they had placed an unexploded bomb at home and urged the government to adopt more effective surveillance on the mental health of foreign workers.<sup>1</sup> The others pointed to the prevalent violation of the rights of migrant workers, especially the deprivation of rest days among migrant caregivers. In face of pressure and isolation at work, "victims [may] become victimizers" (*Taipei Times*, February 8, 2003).

Taiwan's government officially opened the gate for migrant workers beginning in the early 1990s. Within only a decade, the number of registered migrant workers has exceeded 300,000, about 2.5 percent of the national workforce (CLA, 2003). Over one third of them are employed for domestic work, the most vulnerable and feminized occupation filled by migrant labor.

This paper looks at the incorporation and marginalization of migrant domestic workers in the political and social geography of Taiwan. By looking at state regulations and household politics, I examine how Taiwan's government recruits migrant workers into the country, yet places them in a marginal position, and how Taiwanese employers isolate their foreign employees to prevent them from "going stray" or "running away."

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<sup>1</sup> Shia Liu's brother said in a press conference: "My sister's death would be worthwhile if the government could set up a safety mechanism to ensure that we are not hiring a wolf, a tiger, or a murderer." It should be noted that Liu's family have decided not to file a lawsuit, because they consider Vina also a member of an underprivileged group (*Taipei Times*, February 9, 2003). The murder charge was lifted concerning the mental disorder of the caregiver. Vina was released and repatriated to Indonesia in April 2003.

And by investigating the landscape of civil society, I explore how migrant domestic workers establish varying forms of communities and networks, some of which are tied to the local market economy and civic organizations. Migrant communities are segregated along national divides: Filipinas and Indonesians, the two major groups of migrant domestics in Taiwan, gather in separate spaces in different patterns during their off-day activities.

My analysis is based on data collected for a larger ongoing project on the employment of migrant domestic workers in Taiwan. The research methods include archival studies, in-depth interviews, and ethnographic observation. The first period of fieldwork was carried out between July 1998 and July 1999. I served as a volunteer and observer in a Catholic church-based NGO in Taipei. I also conducted open-ended, in-depth interviews with 58 Filipina domestic workers and 46 Taiwanese employers. Since September 2002, my assistants and I have been conducting the second phase of fieldwork with Indonesian domestic workers. We met our informants, who were mostly Javanese Muslims, at Taipei's Train Station or a Mosque. I communicated with Filipina workers in English and with Indonesians in Mandarin Chinese. Some interviews with Indonesian workers were conducted by a Malay-speaking assistant.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Indonesian domestic workers usually learn some Mandarin-Chinese at training courses held by Indonesian agencies, and they gradually improve their language skills during their interactions with Taiwanese employers. In general, those who have stayed in Taiwan over one year can sufficiently express themselves in Chinese. Malay translation is more necessary when communicating with those workers who recently arrived in Taiwan or who have little linguistic communication with their bed-ridden wards.

### *Political Geography of Foreign Workers*

In October 1989, Taiwan's government authorized a special order that allowed foreign workers to work legally for a national construction project for the first time. Two years later, the release of working permits for migrant workers expanded to the private sector, starting with particular industries such as construction and labor-intensive manufacturing. In May 1992, the Legislative Yuan<sup>3</sup> promulgated the Employment Service Law, offering a legal ground for the recruitment and regulation of foreign workers. The legalization of migrant contract labor is however restricted to those countries that have signed bilateral agreements with Taiwan's government, initially including the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, and Malaysia, and more recently, Vietnam.

The entry of migrant workers primarily emerged as a response to the urgent demand for low-wage labor by Taiwanese capitalists. Due to the rise in local wages and competition from cheaper labor in China and Southeast Asia, Taiwanese labor-intensive industries began losing their competitive advantage in the global market since the mid-1980s. To ensure surplus accumulation, these small-scale companies began to either relocate production facilities to countries with cheap offshore labor or recruit low-paid migrant workers to factories in Taiwan. Most migrant contract workers primarily fill unskilled or semi-skilled manufacturing and construction jobs.

The introduction of low-cost foreign labor is also seen as a solution to the thorny problem of childcare among dual-earner households and to the demand for in-home care among the aging and ill population. In 1992 the Council of Labor Affairs (CLA) granted

work permits to “domestic caretakers,” who are employed to take care of the severely ill or disabled. Later, the CLA released limited quotas for the employment of “domestic helpers” to households with children under the age of 12 or elderly members above the age of 70. In recent years, the government has imposed stricter restrictions on the qualification for the privilege of employing domestic helpers. Yet the employment of migrant caretakers, categorized as “social welfare foreign workers” by the CLA, is under no quota restriction. Many households I interviewed applied for caretakers in the name of elder family members but actually assigned them the tasks of housework or childcare. The number of domestic helpers has been decreasing because some employers forfeited their quotas after their children grew older. In contrast, the employment of caretakers has continued to grow (see Table 1). Since the distinction between the categories of “domestic helper” and “caretaker” is ambiguous in reality, I use the term “domestic worker” to cover both categories interchangeably.

[TABLE 1 here]

The ratio of female to male migrant workers in Taiwan is about 14: 11. However, migrant women are mostly concentrated in the positions of domestic helpers and caregivers, with over 95 percent of migrant domestic workers being women. The migrant population of multiple nationalities contains varied degrees of feminization (see Table 2), a fact related to occupational segregation by ethnicity/nationality. The labor force emigrating from Indonesia is highly feminized (90%), as 64 percent of Indonesian

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<sup>3</sup> The Legislation Yuan is an institute equivalent to the parliament.

migrant workers are employed for household service. By contrast, migrant workers from Thailand are mostly male (84 percent), because 97 percent of Thai workers are placed in the construction sector (calculated from data provided by CLA, 2003).

[TABLE 2 here]

The recruitment of migrant workers has triggered heated political debate in Taiwan, a relatively ethnically homogenous society.<sup>4</sup> During the deliberation on the Employment Service Law, legislators, regardless of whether they were supporting or objecting to this policy, expressed similar concerns about the potential negative impact caused by the entry of migrant workers to Taiwan. The then-president of the CLA, Chao Sho-Buo (1992: 145) expressed his worry in a public speech:

Look at the current situation of Black people in the United States. They were in fact “foreign workers” in the beginning...The race problems in the United States today resulted from the introduction of foreign workers...Taiwan is such a small and populated country...We have to consider this very carefully.

Taiwan’s government has actively intervened in the recruitment of migrant labor forces. Despite its alliance with local business and employers in the introduction of low-cost labor, its migration policy is nevertheless driven by the goal of safeguarding the geographical and symbolic boundaries of the “nation.” This rationale becomes clear when

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<sup>4</sup> The population in Taiwan consists of four major ethnic groups: the aborigines, the Hakka, the Fukienese or Hoklo, and the mainlanders. The aborigines are a population of Malayo-Polynesian descent sharing linguistic and ethnic features with some groups in the Philippines; and the other three groups descend from multiple waves of Han-Chinese immigrants.

using Vic Satzewich's (1991) theoretical framework to examine Taiwan's migration policy. He identifies three forms of state intervention in the process of labor migration. First, the state, by setting up a standard of exclusion, determines who is eligible for entry into the geopolitical national territory. Second, the state stipulates who is included within the symbolic boundaries of the nation by regulating access to civil rights. Third, the state also determines how migrant workers are allocated and incorporated into specific positions in the labor market and the organization of the labor process.

### *Selective Entry into the National Terrain*

As early as the beginning of the 1980s, some Southeast Asians entered Taiwan with tourist visas and illegally overstayed their visas. Estimates of undocumented foreign workers in the late 1980s exceeded 50,000 (Tsay, 1992). The legalization of migrant labor in 1989 should be read not only as a response to capitalist demands for cheap labor, but also as a realistic strategy to maintain the integrity of national boundaries. If total exclusion of foreigners is impossible, limited inclusion of them should be a more plausible regulation.

Taiwan's government has carefully regulated the entry of migrant contract workers through quota and point systems. This is different from the regulation of foreigners with professional, technical, and managerial expertise, whose work permits are approved on a case-by-case basis depending on the applicant's qualification and job category (Tseng, forthcoming). The number and distribution of blue-collar migrant workers is, however, under quota control. Based on investigations into unemployment

and labor shortages, the CLA adjusts the size of quotas and releases them to selected industries or occupations.

In addition to controlling the quantity of migrant workers, Taiwan's government has also enforced medical surveillance on their "quality." Migrant workers have to pass a medical examination before entering Taiwan and are required to go through a medical check-up every half year. The exam includes a chest X-ray, a blood test for Syphilis, Type-B hepatitis surface-antigen test, a blood test for malaria, a stool test for intestinal parasites, an HIV-antibody test, a urine test for amphetamines and morphine, and psychological evaluation. If a migrant worker fails any of these checks, he or she will be repatriated immediately.

Local newspapers and magazines often cover stories of contagious diseases carried by migrant workers with sensational headlines such as, "Parasites: The majority of the carriers are Filipina maids" (*United Evening News*, July 21, 1994) and "Two more AIDS migrant workers found" (*United Daily News*, January 15, 1994). These diseases are often associated with the living conditions in Southeast Asia, which are negatively portrayed as "backward," "dirty," and, "uncivilized" among the Taiwanese public. Poor hygiene among migrant workers is not only an indicator of underdevelopment, but also an alleged consequence of "having low morals." Southeast Asian migrants are suspected of promiscuity and thus carriers of dangerous sexually transmitted diseases, such as this headline implies, "Thai workers into prostitution: Be careful of spreading AIDS" (*China Times*, May 13, 1998).

Such racist stereotypes of workers from Southeast Asia lead to a common accusation that migrant workers endanger public health in Taiwan. For example, one



councilor from Taoyuan County—the administrative area that hosts the largest number of migrant workers in Taiwan—suspects that the rising number of HIV positive carriers in this region was due to “the invalid enforcement of medical check-ups among migrant workers” (*United Daily News*, May 30, 2001). These discourses of social pathology construct foreign workers as “undesirably different” from native Taiwanese (Cheng, 2001; Wu, 1997). They enforce a distinction between “us” and “them” by stigmatizing migrant workers as racialized others while projecting an imagined community of healthy natives.

### ***Desired Workers yet Rejected Citizens***

Although migrant workers are included within the geographical national terrain, they are excluded from the *symbolic* national boundaries. As the CLA officials have repeatedly announced, one of the crucial principles in Taiwan’s foreign labor policy is to strictly prohibit the permanent settlement of migrant workers. In the beginning, Taiwan’s government mandated that the maximum duration of a migrant worker’s contract was three years (two years plus one-year extension) and each worker could work in Taiwan only once. Such a rotation system also aims to maximize economic benefits while keeping social costs to a minimum (Tseng, forthcoming). However, this strict regulation has increased training costs for Taiwanese employers and incentives for migrant workers to overstay their visas. To amend these problems, the recent version of the Employment and Service Law, promulgated in Jan 2002, allows migrant workers “with good records” to reenter once more and work in Taiwan up to six years.

According to the Employment Service Act in Taiwan, migrant workers are entitled to the rights and welfare stipulated in the Labor Standards Law, including a

minimum monthly wage (NT\$15,840<sup>5</sup>), maximum working hours (8 hours a day and 48 hours a week), annual leaves (seven days a year), and health insurance.<sup>6</sup> However, despite these regulations, many migrant workers face working conditions that violate these legal standards. More importantly, migrant workers employed by private households are not included in this legal protection. They often suffer from long working hours, receiving no days off or paid vacations, and having no health insurance. NGOs and labor activists have urged the government to establish a new legal ground for protecting this most vulnerable group of migrant workers.

The state regulation on foreign workers is selective on a class basis, which often intertwines with national hierarchies. Low-end migrant workers, mostly from Southeast Asian countries, are recruited on a contract basis and not eligible for permanent residence or citizenship. By contrast, migrant professionals, technicians, and managers, mostly from North American and West European countries, are entitled to apply for permanent residence or naturalization after residing in Taiwan with legal jobs for over five years consecutively.<sup>7</sup>

The regulation of citizenship contains gender significance as well. The bodies of migrant women, which bear the capability of producing “alien” offspring, are subject to the state’s “medical gaze” (Huang and Yeoh, this volume: **page number**). Once found pregnant at a medical checkup, migrants may be repatriated immediately. Some female migrant workers have resorted to abortions to avoid being deported under the pregnancy

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<sup>5</sup> The currency exchange rate between US dollars and NT dollars in May 2003 was about 1: 34.5.

<sup>6</sup> The purpose of these legal measures, according to my interview with the CLA staff, is to comply with the International Labor Organization (ILO).

<sup>7</sup> The Law of Nationality issued on February 2000.

restriction. The rising abortion rates among Filipina migrants have become a concern for Catholic churches. Taiwan's media have reported cases in which migrant mothers were suspected of abandoning their babies (*China Times*, January 6, 1999). The pregnancy test was finally lifted in November 2002, after the NGOs' extended protests based on the concerns over violations of human rights and the Gender Equality in Employment Law, which had been enforced since March of the same year.

### ***Marginal and Bonded Labor***

In addition to selective inclusion into its borders and exclusion from citizenship, the third dimension of state intervention is to allocate migrant workers to a marginal and vulnerable position. To conveniently supervise the whereabouts of migrant workers, Taiwan's government has deprived their right to circulate in the domestic labor market. The CLA dictates that a migrant worker can work for only one particular employer during a stay in Taiwan. No transfer of employer is allowed except under the following conditions: if the original employer goes bankrupt, closes business, or cannot pay wages to the worker; if the care recipient of a migrant worker dies or migrates to another country; and if a worker is abused by the employer or illegally placed to an employer different from the one stipulated in the contract.<sup>8</sup>

This policy consolidates the marginal status of migrant workers by depriving them of their trump card—"voting by their feet." Such regulation helps stabilize the relation of production and aggravate equality in the worker-employer relationship (Liu,

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<sup>8</sup> Article 59 in the Employment Service Act.

2000).<sup>9</sup> Migrant workers, tied to the contract of personal subordination, have little bargaining power but tolerate hardship and maltreatment at work. The fear of termination also prevents them from getting involved in local union politics or openly protesting unreasonable working conditions (Lee, 1995). Another factor that aggregates the vulnerability of migrant workers is the collection of exorbitant placement fees—a migrant worker usually pays an amount that equals to five to 14 months of his or her wages in Taiwan.<sup>10</sup> A small portion is paid in the home countries and the rest is charged through wage deduction (NT\$10,000 per month). Bonded by the shackles of debts, migrant workers face severe financial loss when quitting or being deported. Therefore, in the face of unreasonable or unpleasant working conditions, they manage to tolerate their contract employers; otherwise, they “run away” from them.<sup>11</sup>

Taiwan’s government also places migrant workers in the custody of employers as a way of externalizing management costs. Each employer is requested to deposit a sum equivalent to two months of the migrant worker’s salary as an assurance bond and to pay

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<sup>9</sup> In both the studies of Lee (2002) and Wu (1997), migrant factory workers were subject to longer working hours and lower wages than their Taiwanese coworkers.

<sup>10</sup> According to the CLA regulation approved in October 2001, an employment agency can legally collect a placement fee up to the amount of a worker’s monthly wage, plus a monthly service fee (NT\$1,800 during the first year, NT\$1,700 during the second, and NT\$1,500 during the third). Accordingly, the maximum amount of legal placement and service fees collected from a worker during three years totals NT\$75,840. Yet, this official amount is far below the amount collected in reality. Based on my investigation, a migrant worker has to pay a placement fee ranging from NT\$80,000 to NT\$220,000 to come to Taiwan. The job offers in construction and manufacturing cost more than domestic jobs.

<sup>11</sup> See Lan (2000) for more discussion about the role of employment agencies and the conditions of undocumented migrant workers.

a monthly “employment stabilization fee,” ranged from NT\$1,500 to NT\$5,000 by occupational category. The fee is designed to subsidize government expenses for managing migrant workers and retraining local workers. If a migrant worker disappears from the custody of her or his employer, the latter is still obligated to pay the fee every month until the worker is caught or the contract expires. Another more serious punishment to the employer is that the quota associated with the “runaway” worker is temporarily frozen so the employer is not able to hire a replacement during this period.<sup>12</sup> These measures have trickle-down effects on how employers conduct labor control in the household politics—to keep an eye on “alien” workers at home.

### *Watching Aliens at Home*

State regulations frame the unequal power dynamics between Taiwanese employers and migrant contract workers. This is especially true for the employment of migrant domestic workers, who are in the employers’ custody day and night. Relegated by the state of the task of “policing the maid” (Huang and Yeoh, 2003), employers not only monitor the job-related performances of migrant domestics but also place surveillance on their physical stability and moral conduct.

Migrant workers’ employers or brokers usually withhold their employees’ passports during their stay in Taiwan. Some Taiwanese employers withhold wages as “forced savings” or a “compulsory deposit” to discourage workers from “running

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<sup>12</sup> This regulation slightly changed after April 2003. A domestic employer will forfeit the right to replace new workers after two migrant employees have disappeared from her/his custody.

away.”<sup>13</sup> The deduction ranges between NT\$3,000 to NT\$5,000, the equivalent of between one-sixth to one-third of a worker’s monthly wage. The money will not be returned to the worker until she completes the contract and leaves Taiwan. According to some employers I interviewed, their employment agencies even suggest that the money be given to the worker when she reaches the airport gate on her return to the home country.

Most employment agencies suggest to employers that they not grant workers Sundays off, especially during the first three or six months of the contract. Some employers require that workers take a day other than Sunday off as a measure to distance individual workers from socializing with other migrant workers. In extreme cases, workers are not given house keys or not allowed to leave their employers’ residence alone. Other employers adopt more covert measures to supervise a worker’s off-day activities and social networks. Among the employers I interviewed, some checked the worker’s room or personal belongings during their days off to look for any unusual signs that suggested the worker might run away. One even requested reports from the phone company detailing the numbers of local calls in order to get hold of the workers’ social ties

Indeed, some employers request their migrant employees work on Sundays because of a special need, such as the care of a newborn baby or an invalid patient. However, many others make this request for the purpose of control and surveillance. An employer explained her rationale: “We don’t mind paying her [the worker] overtime at all.

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<sup>13</sup> The CLA in 1998 issued a regulation that approved forced savings on the condition that both parties agree to the arrangement. Such wage withholding was outlawed in 2002 but some employers still

We just don't want her to go out, messing around with too many friends. It's better to stay home. Doing no work is fine."

It is common thinking among Taiwanese employers that granting rest days to migrant domestic workers will lead to transgression, such as this quote: "We're afraid she might go astray once she goes to the church on Sunday and socializes with other foreign workers." Dating a migrant boyfriend, in particular, is considered an indicator of transgression, leading to possible consequences of pregnancy and "running away." Bearing in mind past criminal events conducted by migrant domestic workers and their boyfriends,<sup>14</sup> some employers worry about a connection between dating and criminal acts like kidnapping and burglary.

Migrant domestic workers are usually forbidden from having visitors in their employer's house or to sleep over at their friends' houses. A few employers check on the worker's whereabouts on Sundays or even strictly prohibit dating. The control of sexuality and socialization of migrant domestic workers is similar to the discipline of daughters within a family patriarchy—"to be a good girl." Some employers looked embarrassed when describing these control measures to me, but they legitimized their intrusion into the worker's privacy by viewing themselves as the worker's moral guardians: "We are not intruding, we are just concerned," said one employer.

Another major reason why the employers confine the workers at home is to distance them from migrant communities. "We have specified this in the contract—no

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continue this practice.

<sup>14</sup> One such incident happened in a city in southern Taiwan on October 13, 1997. A Filipina domestic worker, along with her boyfriend, also a migrant worker, broke in the residence of her former employer, stole some cash, and killed three family members.

days off. We don't want them to be polluted in the church," said an employer. The Catholic church-based NGOs in Taiwan are major providers of legal information and assistance to migrant workers. Sunday gatherings are occasions for migrant domestic workers to compare notes on employers, express grievances, offer mutual advice, and exchange tactics for resistance. When expressing concerns about the "pollution" of the migrant community, employers are worried that their migrant employees might become more aware of their rights and more active in negotiating working terms. Nancy (pseudonym) is a Filipina domestic worker whose employer gives her no days off and dislikes her making contact with other Filipinas. She described one exchange that revealed her employers' hidden worry:

I asked my employer [to give me days off]. But she doesn't want me to have Filipina friends. She is angry when I talk to other Filipinas in our neighborhood. I said, "Ma'am, we just take the garbage out."

*Why is she angry?*

I think she doesn't like me to get any information about our conditions here. If I have Filipina friends, they will teach us this and that. Last time, I knew there were five Sundays that month. I talked to my employer. She said, "How do you know that? What kind of friends are you making?"

In these cases, private households have become a field of intimate surveillance and intrusive control over the gendered and racialized bodies of foreign workers. The employers monitor the sexuality of migrant women to avoid the consequence of pregnancy and repatriation by the state. Besides, female migrants' bodies contain potential links to male migrant workers, who are attached with the racialized imagination of "crime-prone dangerous species" in popular discourses (Cheng, 2001; Lan 2002). To employers, alliances among migrant workers constitute potential threats to family security as well as employer's domination. By contrast, isolation of domestic workers assures their compliance and discipline. The next section further looks into national



variations among migrant domestic workers, which often lead to distinct discursive constructions and methods of labor control.

### ***Unruly Filipinas vs. Docile Indonesians***

Filipina migrants used to dominate the occupation of domestic service in Taiwan until recently being outnumbered by their Indonesian competitors. An increasing number of employers, often on the advice of placement agencies, are replacing “smart yet unruly” Filipina workers with “stupid yet obedient” Indonesians. The proportion of Filipinas among all migrant domestic workers in Taiwan has decreased from 83 percent in 1998 to 18 percent by the end of 2002, while the proportion of Indonesian workers has risen from 15 percent in 1998 to 68 percent by the end of 2002 (See Table 3).

[TABLE 3 here]

The number of Indonesian domestic workers has been slightly decreasing after August 2002, when the CLA suspended the recruitment of Indonesian workers initially because they have the highest “runaway” rate. This ban, meant to be a temporary and symbolic measure, has continued after some ruptures in the diplomatic relationship between the Taiwanese and Indonesian governments. Under such circumstance, quite a few employers have turned to labor forces in Vietnam, a sending country that has been approved by the CLA only since November 1999.

Placement agencies in Taiwan have categorized migrant workers based on essentialized ethnic differences and mystified national characters (Cheng, 2001; Lin, 1999). When browsing several websites of employment agencies in Taiwan, I found that Filipinas are usually portrayed as “optimistic in nature, romantic, autonomous” and “outgoing, individualistic, opinionated, smart, hard to manage.” By contrast, Indonesians are described as “obedient, born to be hardworking and thrifty,” or “emotionally stable, living a simple life, no days off.”<sup>15</sup> These descriptions mention little about the historical or social contexts related to these “ethnic differences.” Some even bluntly use terms such as “in nature” and “born to be” to imply the essential nature of such ethnic characterizations.

Abigail Bakan and Daiva Stasiulis (1995: 307) found that placement agencies in Canada produced racialized stereotypes about migrant domestic workers in order to survive and thrive in this volatile industry.<sup>16</sup> For a similar reason, Taiwanese agencies maneuver cultural discourses to justify their promotion of Indonesian domestic workers, whose recruitment brings higher profits than the brokering of Filipina migrants. An Indonesian of Chinese descent who worked as a translator in an employment agency bluntly told me, “They said Filipinos are difficult. It’s nonsense. It’s only because agencies can make more money out of Indonesians.” Employment agencies usually charge Indonesian migrants a higher amount in placement fees than their Filipina counterparts. Based on my investigation, the amount paid by Indonesian domestic

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<sup>15</sup> <http://netcity4.web.hinet.net> and <http://www.885manpower.com.tw>, accessed on 1 July, 2002.

<sup>16</sup> For example, migrant women of lighter skin are employed for childcare and cooking, while darker women are assigned to housework (Cohen, 1987).

workers as a placement fee is now between NT\$120,000 to NT\$160,000 and the amount paid by a Filipina domestic worker ranges between NT\$60,000 and NT\$120,000.

By producing an essentialized distinction between Filipinas and Indonesians, Taiwanese agencies suggest that employers assign them different tasks and adopt distinct methods of management. Indonesians are great candidates for taking care of the elderly and the ill. Yet, when hiring childcare workers, English-speaking Filipinas are considered better educated, more modern, and more civilized than Indonesians.<sup>17</sup> Ethnic divisions among migrant domestic workers not only demarcate their separate niches in the labor market, but also rationalize hierarchical differences in their status and rights. Employment agencies usually inform employers that it is feasible to ask Indonesians to give up their day off, but the no-day-off rule is often not acceptable among Filipina workers, who are characterized as being calculating and militant about their labor rights. In many contracts signed by Indonesian domestic workers before their entry to Taiwan, an article specifies that they agree to take no days off or taking only one day off each month.

It is ironic that Filipino migrant workers have a greater reputation for running away than Indonesian workers, as current figures show that, in fact, the runaway rate of

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<sup>17</sup> In 1998, 90 % of migrant domestic helpers and 82 % of caretakers in Taiwan were from the Philippines and only 6 % of domestic helpers and 17% of the caretakers were from Indonesia. In 2001, Indonesian labor accounted for 53 % of domestic helpers and 71 % of caretakers, whereas the proportions of Filipina domestic helpers and caretakers dropped to 40 % and 20 % respectively. The decline of Filipina caretakers is most obvious across the whole of Taiwan (18 % in 2001), whereas the decline is less severe among Filipina domestic helpers in Taipei city alone (48 % in 2001) (Data compiled from the unpublished statistics provided by the CLA).

Indonesian migrant workers has outnumbered their Filipina counterparts.<sup>18</sup> This transition happened in parallel with the trend that most employers have gradually replaced Filipina workers with Indonesian ones. In other words, it is the occupational category of domestic work, rather than a particular nationality of migrant workers, that contributes to the increasing numbers of “runaway” migrant workers.

These so-called ethnic differences are also related to the uneven distribution of social resources between Filipina and Indonesian migrant workers. The “docility” of Indonesian workers is built on the condition that they speak little English in general. As such, they are less capable to verbally bargain with their employers and are unable to access information in English. Besides, Indonesian workers have few affiliations with outside institutions offering legal assistance or counseling, unlike Filipina migrants who make contacts through local Catholic churches and church-based NGOs. MECO (the Manila Economic and Cultural Office)<sup>19</sup> has also played a relatively active role in the protection of their overseas citizens compared to the overseas office of the Indonesian government in Taiwan.

In sum, it is institutional contexts, rather than fixed, essentialized “ethnic features,” that shape the life contours of different migrant groups. Despite the marginal

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<sup>18</sup> Filipino migrants had the highest ratio of running away in 1996 (3.6 %) in contrast to the rate of 2.6 % among Indonesians. Yet, the runaway rate among Indonesians rose to 2.9 % in 2000 and 2.3 % in 2001. Over the same period, the rate fell among Filipinos to 1.2 % in 2000 and 0.9 % in 2001 (<http://www.evta.gov.tw/stat/9011>, accessed on 20 November, 2001).

<sup>19</sup> Because of Taiwan (the Republic of China)’s ambiguous nationhood in international politics, it has failed to establish formal diplomatic ties with most countries in the world. MECO serves as the de facto Philippines embassy in Taiwan.

position allocated by the host state and employers, migrant domestic workers manage to reach their compatriots and establish a variety of networks and communities. The remainder of this article sketches the social geography of migrant communities, based on my observation in Taipei City of how migrant domestic workers, through the mediation of the market economy, civil organizations, and communications technology, have gradually transformed the landscape and meanings of public space.

### *Social Geography of Migrant Communities*

Brenda Yeoh and Shirlena Huang (1998) have pointed out that places like train stations and parks, which are public but away from the employers' homes, ironically provide migrant domestic workers a higher degree of privacy and personal freedom. I have also argued elsewhere (Lan, forthcoming) that Sunday activities constitute a "backstage" (Goffman, 1959) for migrant domestic workers. In front of their employers, they have to dress and act in correspondence to the inferior image of "maid." When taking days off, they reclaim their identities by taking controlling of their dress codes, ways of behavior, and plans of activities. During the week, migrant domestic workers are scattered and isolated in private residences of their employers; on Sundays, they seek some sense of social belonging and empowerment on the collective backstage (Constable, 1997).

The gathering of migrant domestic workers in Taiwan does not constitute a spatially confined and constantly active ethnic enclave. Its social geography contains the following characteristics: First, the functioning of migrant communities is intermittent—asleep on weekdays and only alive on Sundays. Migrant domestic workers, who have no free time at their disposal on weekdays, can only visit the communities during their days

off. Second, the existence of migrant communities is provisional. Migrant contract workers are not permanent residents but temporary visitors/consumers in the communities. Their stay in Taiwan is limited, depending on the often-changing state policy. Finally, the communities of migrant workers are segregated along national divisions. Filipino migrant workers hang out in the area around St. Christopher's Church, forming a weekend enclave with vibrant business activity-. Indonesian migrant workers gather at Taipei's Train Station, from where they expand their social networks and horizons of activities to nearby cities.

***Chongshan: Weekend Enclave with Business Niches***

St. Christopher's is a modest Catholic church located on Chongshan North Road in Taipei. This church has offered English masses since the U.S. army was stationed in Taiwan during the 1950s and 1960s. The neighborhood, filled with American-style bars and restaurants, is still frequented by Western expatriates. This landmark symbolizes Taiwan's past dependence on the United States as well as Taiwan's present transnational ties. Since the early 1990s, St. Christopher's has become the most popular gathering place for Filipino migrant workers on Sundays. In addition to English services, the church now provides Tagalog masses in response to the increasing number of Filipino churchgoers on Sundays. According to the estimate of a Filipino missionary, at least 3,000 people attend mass there every Sunday.

The surrounding area, called Chongshan among migrant workers, has acquired nicknames like "Little Manila" and "Filipino town" among Taiwanese. Tagalog characters are seen on many signboards of Filipino grocery stores, delicatessens, karaoke

clubs, and remittance and cargo services. On Sundays the streets are flooded with Taiwanese and Filipino vendors selling all sorts of commodities, including Filipino newspapers, magazines, CDs, videotapes, Tagalog romance novels, clothes, underwear, jewelry, cosmetics, luggage, sheets, typewriters, and even used computers. Migrants can also purchase homemade Filipino food and low-cost services like haircuts, manicures, and hair perms in the alley behind the church.

Doing business on the street saves rent and taxes but the informal economy has its downside. The city government has outlawed street vendors, and the police patrols racks the nerves of migrant customers, whether or not they have legal documents for their status in Taiwan. Under these circumstances, most retailers and services in the alley have recently relocated to the second floor of a nearby shopping mall, Wan-Wan boutique. This mall, not successful in attracting Taiwanese shoppers, used to have many vacancies, but it has become vibrant after the inflow of migrant business.

However, when this business activity is incorporated into the formal economy, it becomes less accessible to foreign contract workers, who have no cultural resources or legal ground to work outside their contract jobs. Therefore, most establishments in the Chongshan area are owned and managed by ethnic Chinese from Southeast Asia (*huaqiao*) and women who are married to Taiwanese men (so-called “foreign brides”).<sup>20</sup> These “outsiders-within” in Taiwanese society import goods through their transnational

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<sup>20</sup> In 2002, every one out of 8.7 marriages registered in Taiwan was a cross-border marriage (not including those who marry mainland Chinese). Over 90 percent of the international marriages were between Taiwanese men and female migrant partners. The majority of these women were from Southeast Asian countries. The top four countries of origin of female migrant partners were Vietnam (63 %), Indonesia (15 %), Thailand (6 %), and the Philippines (5 %); statistics available from

networks to reproduce a home-country lifestyle that accommodates the circular flows of guest workers. Some business owners also incorporate migrant contract workers as their distributors of goods. By selling internet phone cards, cell phone SIM cards, or Levis jeans to their national fellows, migrant workers can make some extra money as part-time entrepreneurs.

Most stores in this plaza are open only on Sundays or weekends. Brenda Yeoh and Shirlena Huang (1998) coin the term “weekend enclaves” to describe a similar formation of migrant communities in Singapore. How do the owners cover rent and other costs when their stores are open for such a short time? One solution is to raise the prices of food and services. Migrant workers are not at all discouraged by the uneconomic prices. A delicatessen owner explicated in an interview, ‘They [migrant workers] can only eat their home country food one day in a week, so they don’t care how much they have to pay.’ The other solution is to seek partnership with local business. A few diners managed by Taiwanese and serving Taiwanese customers turn into Filipino delicatessens only on Sundays. One Filipino karaoke club rents space on Sundays from a local community organization.

Taiwanese business owners have also recognized the rich profits in the consumer pool of migrant workers. They have created a stratified market that serves both Taiwanese and migrant customers, albeit with distinct levels of products or in different time segments. Low-priced apparel chain stores, such as Geordano and Hang Tan, have opened outlets in this area. Special sales are held on Sundays, which offer out-of-season or defected clothes at discount prices. A few discos target Filipino migrant workers as their major customers on Sunday afternoons, a slow time for Taiwanese dancers. These



clubs even provide free shuttles to transport migrant workers directly from the church to the clubs. In a similar logic, nearby love hotels offer discount prices for rooms on Sunday afternoons, a promotion strategy that targets migrant couples as major customers.

For Taiwanese consumers, the Chongshan area is a business district known for wedding photography. Glamorous wedding gowns are displayed in the shop windows lined up on the street only one or two blocks from St. Christopher's church. It is a common practice for Taiwanese couples to take photographs before the weddings, a ritual that allows brides-to-be to experience queen-for-a-day vanity and pleasure (Lee, 1999). However, the Western fairy tales of royal weddings and beautiful princesses are incompatible with the stigmatized images of Southeast Asian migrants—impoverished, backward, and uncultivated. Local stores and residents in this neighborhood have aired grievances about the noise and mess caused by migrant workers. They are concerned that the image of “Little Manila” or “Filipino town” will bring about a decline in business and real estates prices, especially because Sunday is the busiest day for wedding photography studios and real estates agents.<sup>21</sup>

The collective presence of Filipino migrant workers in the Chongshan area has transformed the consumer-cultural landscape of Taipei City. Migrant workers utilize shopping as a way of celebrating their financial improvement and contesting the feelings of indignity and powerlessness at work. They are desired consumers for low-priced commodities and slow-time services. Local business people embrace foreign workers to maximize profits, and transnational entrepreneurs reunite with their working-class compatriots to maintain business niches. Nevertheless, migrant workers are welcome

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<sup>21</sup> I thank Wu Bi-Na for sharing this information based on her interviews with local community leaders.

only as visiting consumers rather than permanent residents, as the presence of these ethnic others is still considered a taint for the public image and cultural presentation of the neighborhood.

### ***Train Stations: Nodes of Flows and Networks***

Unlike Catholic churches, which occupy a central position in the geography of Filipino migrants' Sunday activities, Mosques have yet played no such role in the community of Indonesian migrant workers in Taiwan. Therefore, the off-day activities of Indonesian domestic workers are located in a more decentralized and fluid spatial pattern. Taipei's Train Station is the prime site of their gathering, serving as a node of personal flows, social networks, and chains of activities.

Taipei's Train Station is a recently built, six-floor building that contains multiple public facilities like toilets, phone booths, food courts and other shops. This fully air-conditioned building shelters migrant workers from the discomfort of summer heat and winter rain in Taipei. They usually sit on the floor of the ground-level lobby, chatting, napping, sharing snacks, and reading Indonesian magazines purchased from the grocery store upstairs. When hungry, they feed their homesick stomachs at the Indonesian delicatessens. If bored, they go shopping in the underground Metro Mall or hang out in small dancing clubs and karaoke bars run by Indonesian Chinese in nearby streets.

For migrant domestics who are isolated at work, Taipei's Train Station is a central node for them to reach the flows of migrant fellows. Most Indonesian domestic workers in Taiwan take only one or two days off each month. Therefore, they don't necessarily take the same day off as their limited numbers of friends. Many try to meet new friends in

the train station so they will have company on their rest days. They often run into their “classmates” who were recruited by the same agencies in Indonesia where they spent months<sup>22</sup> in the training center together before coming to Taiwan. They also “territorialize” space in the train station by using the numbers on the wall (such as B20) to mark particular corners for friends to gather on a regular basis even without prior notice.

Taipei’s Train Station is a major locus of local transportation from which migrant workers can take the Metro Railway Train (MRT) or buses to many tourist spots in Taipei. For foreigners who cannot speak or read Chinese, the MRT is a friendly venue of transportation because it announces each stop in both English and Chinese. Within walking distance from the train station is 228 Peace Park, which has become a popular place for migrant workers to hang out, have picnics, and take pictures. The train station is also a convenient place for migrant workers from various cities around Taiwan to gather on Sundays. Migrant domestic workers in Taipei also gather here and then visit nearby cities, in particular Taoyun and Chongli, the two cities where large numbers of migrant factory workers reside. Pockets of gatherings have appeared around train stations in Taoyun and Chongli Train Stations. For instance, when walking from Taoyun’s Train Station through an underground tunnel (filled with vendors selling phone cards, cell phone accessories, and cheap toys), one enters an exotic wonderland. This behind-train-station area has been almost forgotten by Taiwanese consumers but has now become a major weekend enclave for migrant workers. There, one can taste Satay and Phat Thai in the restaurants and purchase coconut milk and shrimp crackers in the

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<sup>22</sup> The time when the worker stays in the training center depends on how long the matching process and the processing of paper work take. Among the Indonesian workers I talked to, the average time was about two

grocery stores. Even fast food restaurants and hair salons, owned by Taiwanese, provide Malay-Indonesian translations of their menus and services.

It takes 40 minutes to one hour to travel from Taipei to Taoyun by train. Many Indonesian workers in Taipei take this regular journey on Sundays. Taoyun becomes a major business enclave and an extension of Taipei train station for three major reasons. First, it is financially difficult for large-scale migrant business to survive around the Taipei Train Station because of the fairly expensive rent. By contrast, rent in Taoyun is so much lower that many migrant stores occupy three-floor buildings offering multiple services —the first floor is a delicatessen, the second floor is a karaoke bar, and the third floor is a dancing floor (no cover charges). Although the facilities and decorations are quite basic, the dance floors are always crowded on Sundays.

The second reason that makes Taoyun a popular gathering spot is because this location is close to industrial zones where most Indonesian male migrants work and reside. Dance floors are important sites for meeting potential dates. As large numbers of Indonesian migrants in Taiwan are women, it is common to see dating couples that consist of a Thai man and an Indonesian woman. In general, Indonesian workers and Thai workers have some interaction (they communicate to each other in Chinese) and the locations of their communities often overlap. By contrast, the Indonesian community and the Filipino community are significantly segregated. Although the Chongshan area offers many attractions such as bargain-priced clothes and a government-sponsored migrant center (discussed later), Indonesian workers in general feel uneasy about hanging out there and especially eating - Filipino food that contains pork.

Finally, Indonesian workers feel less excluded in Taoyun than they do in the

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to three months.

metropolis. In Taipei, Indonesian migrant workers usually shop in the underground Metro Mall. Few of them ever visit a major department store only across the street from Taipei's Train Station. An Indonesian informant told us that she "feels scared of going into it. Things there must be very expensive." The architectural form of this department store, which is located in the second tallest building (33 floors) in Taiwan, frames a 'way-beyond-my-class' image. Some workers who were adventurous enough to walk into the department store felt discriminated by the sales ladies: "They look at us, different. They smile to Taiwanese, welcome them. But not to us, they look at us, Indonesians, are maids, are poor people."<sup>23</sup>

The "occupation" of prime public space on Sundays by migrant workers such as in Central District in Hong Kong (Constable, 1997) and Lucky Plaza in Singapore has often attracted complaints in host societies (Yeoh and Huang, 1998). Similarly, local Taiwanese have complained about the gathering of migrant workers in Taipei's Train Station on Sundays. In 2000, a Taipei City Councilor conducted a survey of 272 Taiwanese passengers in the train station. Seventy-six percent of the respondents said that they were either "disgusted" or felt "bad" about the noise and mess made by migrant workers there on Sundays. Ninety percent of those polled viewed the phenomenon as a "negative subculture" that would ruin the modern image of this city landmark (*Taiwan News*, June 11, 2000).

The CLA once proposed ideas for relocating migrant workers to places of less public visibility, but none of these proposals have turned into practical plans. After more than a decade of recruiting migrant workers, local Taiwanese have gradually accepted

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<sup>23</sup> These quotes were originally in Chinese. I tried to capture the way they speak Chinese (such as

their presence as long as they remain marginal spatially and socially. The spatial locations of Indonesian workers' Sunday activities clearly symbolize their social status of "marginal insiders." They gather at the *corners* of Taipei's Train Station; they eat and dance *behind* the prime public area in Taoyuan; and they tend to shop *underground* rather than in skyscraper department stores. They are seen in public but only at those corners less visible to Taiwanese.

### ***Collective Organization and Informal Networking***

Collective organizing among migrant workers in Taiwan is an arduous mission given the circular nature of guest workers, their marginal status of non-citizens, and the geographic segregation of migrant communities. For migrant workers who can only stay in Taiwan for a few years, participation in unions and other formal collective action involves considerable risks but only temporary benefits. It is even more difficult to organize migrant domestic workers, who are isolated from other migrants in the 'live-in', and even 'no-days-off', condition. In the whole country, there are about 20 institutions that offer some services for migrant workers. Yet only a few are non-government organizations (NGOs) that provide systematic assistances, most of which are affiliated with Catholic churches.<sup>24</sup> To solve this problem, some NGOs have been seeking cooperation with Buddhist and Muslim groups in order to reach Thai, Vietnamese, and Indonesian workers.

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incomplete sentences with grammatical errors) when I translated them into English.

<sup>24</sup> The primary organizations include Catholic Hope Worker Center (Chongli), Migrant Workers' Concern Desk (Taipei), Rerum Novarum Center (Taipei), and Stella Maris International Service Center

These church-based NGOs provide migrant workers with emotional support, social activities, and case counseling. They often assist migrant workers in negotiating with employers and monitor how the labor bureau in the local government handles the workers' complaints. The Catholic NGOs have also formed an advocacy network, which campaigns for improving the condition of migrant workers and monitors the cases that violate the legal rights of migrants. In addition to these efforts, most migrant NGOs are struggling with a lack of financial and human resources. Only a few are staffed with social workers and legal professionals. Some offer Chinese language courses, computer classes, and workshops on labor rights and taxation, which are mostly taught by volunteer workers on an irregular basis.

Under the pressure by NGOs, the central and local governments in Taiwan have been subsidizing some services for migrant workers. For example, the CLA sponsors some NGOs and religious institutions to establish shelters for migrant workers who are awaiting court litigation or transfers to new employers. Most local governments have founded a Foreign Labor Consulting and Service Center as an official channel for redress and claims. Yet only a few are equipped with sufficient numbers of staff with linguistic capabilities to communicate with migrants. The Taipei City Government has also sponsored the establishment of the House of the Migrants Empowerment (HOME), a migrant community center that offers space and facilities free-of-charge for leisure and education activities. Most attendants in this center are from the Philippines due to its location in the Chongshan area. The geographic segregation of migrant communities has impacted the possibility of forming trans-ethnic alliances among migrant workers.

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(Kaohsiung). Taiwan International Workers' Association (TIWA) is the only migrant-oriented organization established by local labor activists without religious affiliation.

For those migrant domestic workers who cannot take Sunday off on a regular basis, they still manage to build social connections and overcome their isolation. Many of them form support networks based on neighborhood affiliations. In Taipei city, all households are required to take out their garbage to be collected by trucks at specified locations and at a scheduled time. Garbage collection is one of the few occasions when migrant domestic workers can leave the houses of their employers. While awaiting the garbage truck, they chat with their fellow nationals, exchange romance pocket books, or use a pay phone to call their families. In addition, migrant women grasp the moments of picking up children at school or wheeling the elderly in the park to share information and feelings with other migrant caretakers.

In general, Filipino workers have more venues of retrieving information than other migrants. They have access to English newspapers and radio programs, both of which serve a larger group of English-speaking expatriates in Taiwan. Migrant workers of other nationalities can only utilize the few radio programs in their local languages. The CLA has sponsored twelve radio programs broadcast in Thai, Tagalog, and English, such as “Asia Nation,” “When Manila Meets Taipei” and “Thai Workers’ Club.” All these programs are scheduled on Sunday, and most programs are hosted by local AM stations. The Taipei City Government also sponsors a radio program “Hello Taipei” for Indonesian workers, the largest group of migrant workers in Taipei City (mostly employed in private households). Some radio programs also receive commercial sponsors from employment agencies, ethnic grocery stores, karaoke clubs, banks offering currency exchange, and even a Thai computer company that tries to recruit workers who are currently employed by Taiwanese computer companies (Chiou, 1998).



Migrant networks are built on face-to-face contacts as well as voice-to-voice connections. The proportion of the Taiwanese population owning cell phones is one of the highest in the world (*United Daily*, June 20, 2002). And migrant workers have not been left out of this technological revolution. Cellular technology has greatly improved communication among migrant workers, who have no permanent residence in host countries and are not entitled to apply for land phones. Making use of cell phones, they are able to reach friends conveniently, send text messages at low costs, and even check email without a computer. Some domestic workers use their cell phones with their employers' permission or even encouragement (so the workers do not overcharge the family phone bills). Others, to avoid objections from their employers, turn on their phones only late at night or shift to the vibrating mode (instead of the ringing mode). In different ways, homebound migrant workers attempt to build cyber communities meeting their compatriots in the air.

### ***Conclusion***

The tragedy of Shia Liu, described in the beginning of the article, has stirred some hidden anxiety about the presence of foreign workers in this ethnically homogeneous society. In the mean time, it has also pushed the public to think over how migrant domestic workers have been treated in this country, which is proud of its recent achievements in democratization. Some said that, if the government could have allowed migrant workers to stay longer, Shia Liu could have kept her previous caretakers instead of hiring a new one that eventually took her life. Others said that, if Vina could have

taken days off on a regular basis, she might have gained enough social support and emotional consolation that might have prevented this misfortune. I would like to conclude this article not with mourning and regrets but with some preliminary suggestions about policy change and activism.

Migrant domestic workers are marginalized by a series of legal and political regulations based on the principle of territorial sovereignty, as well as by their status of personal subordination to contract employers. Facing the challenge of border control by the increasing number of undocumented migrants, Taiwan's government holds employers responsible for monitoring the whereabouts of their foreign employees. Such policy has exacerbated distrust and surveillance in private households but offers no solution to the problem. In fact, the stricter the measures of supervision the employer adopts, the more likely that migrant workers choose to escape from maltreatment and personal control.

To improve the human rights of migrant workers as well as the quality of care for the wards, the host state should "de-marginalize" the position of migrant domestic workers. Migrant workers should be allowed to transfer employers on mutual consent, so employment relationships would be based on reciprocal exchanges rather than personal slavery. So far the Labor Standard Law in Taiwan has yet covered the protection of domestic workers. Such exclusion ignores the facts that private households have become a field of employment and management, and domestic workers are subject to the most intensive surveillance among all migrant workers. Quality care can only be achieved when the quality of life of care workers is a concern.

The case of Taiwan demonstrates that state regulations—"governance from above"—play a vital role in framing the life chances of migrant workers. Yet this does

not exclude the possibility of strategic cooperation and partnership between state sectors (such as local labor bureaus) and civil organizations. A variety of migrant communities have emerged around religious groups, business services, nonprofit organizations, neighborhood networks, and even communications technology. These communities empower migrant workers against isolation and victimization, containing burgeoning models or potential for “governance from below” (see Piper in this volume).

The incorporation of migrant workers in host societies involves multiple spheres and various patterns. Most scholars and activists have concentrated on state regulatory frameworks and civil advocacy groups. Other dimensions are yet to be examined, such as the incorporation of migrant consumers into the market economy and the use of communications technology for social networking among migrant workers. In order to move toward more successful organization of circular contract workers, it is also important to set activist agendas regarding how to build alliances among migrant workers across ethnic groups and how to establish transnational advocacy networks connecting both sending and receiving countries.

TABLE 1  
 Numbers of Migrant Domestic Workers in Taiwan  
 by Occupational Category, 1991-2002

Year	Foreign Caretaker	Foreign Domestic Helper	Total
1991	0	0	0
1992	306	363	669
1993	1,320	6,205	7,525
1994	4,257	9,201	13,458
1995	8,902	8,505	17,404
1996	16,308	13,947	30,255
1997	26,233	12,879	39,112
1998	41,844	11,524	53,368
1999	67,063	7,730	74,793
2000	98,508	7,823	106,331
2001	105,511	9,008	114,519
2002	113,755	6,956	120,711

Source: Council of Labor Affairs, Executive Yuan, Taiwan, R.O.C.

TABLE 2

## Distribution of Migrant Workers in Taiwan by Gender and Nationality

	Grand total	Indonesia	Malaysia	Philippines	Thailand	Vietnam
Female	170,367	81,237	3	47,656	17,662	23,809
	56%	27%	0%	16%	6%	8%
Male	134,654	9,502	30	22,246	94,080	8,796
	44%	3%	0%	7%	31%	3%
Sex ratio	1.3	8.5	0.1	2.1	0.2	2.7

Source: Council of Labor Affairs, Executive Yuan, Taiwan, R.O.C. January 2003

TABLE 3

## Percentage of Migrant Female Domestic Workers in Taiwan by Nationality, 1998-2002

End of Year	Philippines	Indonesia	Vietnam	Thailand	Total
1998	83%	15%	-	2%	100%
1999	57%	37%	-	5%	100%
2000	33%	60%	2%	5%	100%
2001	22%	70%	5%	4%	100%
2002	18%	68%	13%	2%	100%

Source: Council of Labor Affairs, Executive Yuan, Taiwan, R.O.C.

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