Transcending Inequality: A Grounded Theory Study of Filipino Factory Workers in Taiwan

Peter C. Sun

A thesis

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

Master of Social Work

University of Washington

2013

Committee:

Tracy W. Harachi

Alma Dea Michelena

Program Authorized to Offer Degree:

School of Social Work

University of Washington

Abstract

Transcending Inequality: A Grounded Theory Study of Filipino Factory Workers in Taiwan

Peter C. Sun

Chair of the Supervisory Committee:
Associate Professor Tracy W. Harachi
School of Social Work

The purpose of this research is to develop a theory of the main concern of Filipino factory workers in Taiwan and the latent pattern of behavior that accounts for its continual resolution. Using classic grounded theory, nine participants were interviewed and the data were analyzed using the constant comparative method of analysis. The theory that emerged from this study was Transcending Inequality, which explains how participants resolve inequality via three overlapping patterns of behavior: coping, bonding, and serving. Although the notion of transcending is paradoxical in that it tends to sidestep the structural causes of inequality, it foregrounds the participants' individual, cultural, social, and spiritual resources. The findings have implications for three areas of practice and policy: (a) local and transnational community life, (b) religious and spiritual practices, and (c) the strength-based approach.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

Dedication

To Susanti, who cared for my grandfather in his final days

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1   Background to the Study

Taiwan's population of migrant workers has risen dramatically since the establishment of a formal guest worker program in 1991 (Lu, 2000). By the end of 2012, Taiwan had 445,579 migrant workers, predominantly from Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam (Figure 1). More than half the migrant workers were employed in manufacturing industries, with the rest being primarily domestic workers (Council of Labor Affairs, 2012). Rapid economic growth, industrialization, and rising labor costs (Chan, 1999; Tierney, 2007), as well as social changes such as growth in women's employment, declining fertility rates, and changing job attitudes, especially the aversion to so-called *3D* (dirty, dangerous, and demanding) occupations, have increased the demand for foreign labor (Chan, 1999; L. Cheng, 1999; Lan, 2000a).

Numerous studies have established migrant workers as a vulnerable and oppressed population. In 2011, as many as 42.4% of migrant workers in Taiwan had not had a single day off (H.-H. M. Hsiao, 2013, p. 386). Many work long hours in isolated or hazardous environments without legal and social support (C.-F. Chen, 2011; S.-C. Wu, 2006). Exorbitant placement and brokerage fees result in debts that can take as long as a year and a half to pay off (Sheu, 2007). Studies have also investigated exploitative broker and employment practices (Lan, 2003a; A. Lee, 2002; Loveband, 2004); unequal wages and benefits (H.-H. M. Hsiao, 2013; Lin, 2000); cultural shock and homesickness (Bacalso, 2012; A. S. Chen, Lin, & Sawangpattanakul, 2011; Chuang, 2002; Chun, 2003); occupational hazards (Chang & Wang, 1997; Liao, 2011; Sass, 2000; T. Wu et al., 1997); limited citizenship rights and social participation (L. Cheng, 2002; Sassen, 2002; Y.-F. Tseng, 2006; Hong-zen Wang & Bélanger, 2008); discrimination and racism (Lan, 2000b, 2003b; Y. Wang, 2003); emotional, physical, and sexual abuse (S.-J. A. Cheng, 2001, 2004; Pan

& Yang, 2012); and lack of social service provisions (Lai, 2012; O'Neill, 2001; Wei, 2010; Y.-Y. Wu, 2010). Partly because of these problems, many migrants become undocumented, runaway workers (Fuchs, 2011; Lan, 2006a; Selya, 1992).

1.2   Purpose of the Study

Even though research has studied migrant workers' psychosocial experiences and analyzed the systemic aspects of migration, less articulated are the resources and strategies used by migrants to mitigate or overcome their environmental stressors (Furman, Negi, Schatz, & Jones, 2008; Shier, Engstrom, & Graham, 2011; Wong & Song, 2008). Some studies have considered the coping strategies of migrant workers, yet the samples comprised domestic workers. The purpose of this study is to explore the main concern of Filipino factory workers and how they resolve that concern. Gaining knowledge about the resources used by migrant factory workers has direct implications for policy and practice that would contribute to their well-being (Prickett, Negi, & Gómez, 2012).

1.3   Research Questions

This study uses the classic grounded theory approach to address the following research questions (Glaser, 1978):

1. What main concern emerges from Filipino factory workers' migration experiences?
2. How do Filipino factory workers continually resolve this main concern?

Chapter 2: Methodology

The grounded theory of Glaser (1978, 1992, 1998, 2001, 2003, 2005a) was used to generate a theory about Filipino factory workers' main concern and its resolution. Data were collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews that, consistent with the aims of grounded theory, permitted entrée into the perspectives of the interviewees in their own terms.

2.1 Grounded Theory Approach

The aim of grounded theory is to discover the main concern of participants and clarify how participants resolve that concern (Glaser, 1992). Grounded theory is particularly suitable for exploring phenomena not previously examined in depth (Patton, 2001). As a general method, it uses both quantitative and qualitative data (Glaser, 2005b). Holman (1996) identified grounded theory as compatible with the social work discipline's attention to marginalized populations. In addition, cross-cultural research has benefited from grounded theory's detachment from preconceived ideas and foregrounding of participant knowledge (Sheridan & Storch, 2009).

From the different versions of grounded theory, this study adopted a Glaserian or classic grounded theory approach for its focus on discovering a core variable in the data to generate a parsimonious and well-scoped theory.[1] In contrast, constructivist grounded theory has a more diffuse aim of capturing multiple truths and perspectives through a relativistic epistemology (Breckenridge, Jones, Elliott, & Nicol, 2012; Glaser, 2002). Furthermore, Strauss' grounded theory is based on a prescriptive data analysis procedure that was incompatible with this study's emphasis on the emergence of participant concerns (Cooney, 2010; Walker & Myrick, 2006).

Grounded theory is an inductive method of inquiry. The research problem is discovered from the perspectives of the participants to generate theory. To limit preconceived ideas, full

---

[1] For a critique of Glaser's approach to grounded theory, see Thomas and James (2006).

review of the extant literature is deferred until open coding and theoretical coding are near their final stages of completion (Glaser, 1998). The literature is treated as additional data to be critically analyzed and integrated into the developing theory (McCallin, 2006). Unlike verification studies, the credibility of a grounded theory is assessed by the theory's fit, relevance, workability, and modifiability (Glaser, 1978). The theory is fit if its categories match the incidents being conceptualized. It has relevance if it captures the participants' main concern. *Workability* refers to the theory being able to explain, predict, and interpret the substantive area under study. Finally, in light of new data, the theory should be modifiable.

2.2 Data Sources

This study used a purposive convenience sample of information-rich cases, defined as English-fluent Filipino migrant workers who had worked in Taiwan for at least one year (Patton, 2001). The participants were recruited at a Catholic social services center. Large influxes of migrant workers attended mass at the center's adjacent Catholic Church. Staff at the center were trained to use a standardized verbal recruitment script to screen and recruit participants.

Table 1 shows the characteristics of the nine participants who were formally interviewed. No participants had previously worked in any other country, with the exception of their own. The interviews ranged from 48 to 96 minutes.

In addition to in-depth interviews, informal conversations were conducted with a number of Filipino migrant workers, social workers, church staff members, brokers, and employers. I also participated in weekly mass and actively engaged with the attendees. Following the grounded theory dictum "all is data," field notes from these opportunistic conversations and observations were incorporated into the theory formation (Glaser, 1978, p. 8).

2.3 Procedure

After obtaining approval for this study from the University of Washington Human Subjects Division, interviews were conducted from June to September, 2012, in private office spaces at the Catholic social services center. Written consents were obtained prior to the interviews, and participants were informed of the nature and potential risks of the study and advised they were free to withdraw from the study at any time.

An interview guide consisting of 15 open-ended questions was designed to ask the participants about their migration experiences, meanings of culture, and the degree to which their cross-cultural relationships were perceived as culturally sensitive (see Appendix A). Probes were spontaneously used to elicit depth, nuance, and vividness (Rubin & Rubin, 2011) as well as increase theoretical saturation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). As a core category began to emerge, the interview guide was modified to pursue participants' main concern and its recurrent resolution (Christiansen, 2007; Mills, 2011). Given the known vulnerability of the participants, the interviews were guided by strength-based techniques to divert attention from challenges, deficits, or problems (De Jong & Miller, 1995; Saleebey, 1996).

2.4   Data Analysis

The analytical procedures of grounded theory informed the data analysis. Two types of coding procedures were used to analyze the interview data systematically: (a) substantive coding and (b) theoretical coding. Glaser (1978, p. 55) described coding as the process of "fracturing the data, then conceptually grouping it into codes that then become the theory which explains what is happening in the data."

Substantive coding involves open coding and selective coding. In open coding, incidents are compared with other incidents to generate categories that are further compared with new incidents to discover the properties of the categories. This constant comparative method was

applied in this research through line-by-line analysis and facilitated by asking a set of questions: "What is this data a study of?", "What category does this incident indicate?", "What is actually happening in the data?", "What is the main concern being faced by the participants?", and "What accounts for the continual resolving of this concern?" (Glaser & Holton, 2004, p. 48). After a core category emerged in the data through open coding, selective coding delimited coding to incidents significantly related to the core category. Finally, theoretical codes were used to conceptualize the relationships among substantive codes (Hernandez, 2009).

Throughout the process of coding, memos were used to note emergent ideas about codes and their relationships. Sorting the concepts in the memos resulted in the final "substantive theory"—a theory about a substantive area of inquiry (Glaser, 1978, p. 144). Memoing and coding were carried out in ATLAS.ti, a qualitative analytical program.

2.5   Definitions

In this study, the definition of *migrant worker* was taken from the United Nations International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (1990): "A person who is to be engaged, is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a State of which he or she is not a national." Some scholars have indicated preference for the term *transmigrant* to denote a distinct type of international migrant who travels continuously across countries for economic reasons (Furman & Negi, 2007; Pries, 2004). Furthermore, the official term used by the Taiwanese government is *foreign worker*.

Chapter 3: Results

The main concern of the participants in this study was inequality. The substantive theory of Transcending Inequality emerged in the data as the pattern of behavior through which the participants continuously resolved their experiences of inequality. Transcending Inequality consists of three overlapping dimensions: (a) coping, (b) bonding, and (c) serving. The theory explains how the participants drew upon individual, cultural, social, and spiritual resources to address inequality.

3.1   Participants' Main Concern: Inequality

Participants' experiences of inequality, broadly defined as the collection of problems and hardships experienced in the context of transmigration, varied. Some reported having "no problems," whereas others stated they were treated like an "animal" or a "robot." The frequency of reported abuses was significantly higher in the isolated environments of family-owned factories than in larger, corporate-owned factories. All participants suffered from some form of discrimination. The Catholic faith and Filipino cultures of the participants were often misunderstood or regarded with hostility and suspicion (Lan, 2000b).

Working conditions were a major source of concern. Factory work, though naturally grueling, was compounded by long working hours and verbally abusive employers who often expected workers to work overtime instead of taking a day off. Consequently, fatigue was a recurrent symptom. One participant burst into tears as she recounted working for a year without a single day off. Despite working longer hours than Taiwanese workers, migrant workers receive less pay, and they "have no pension provision, do not have opportunity to receive job training, and do not have any other welfare or benefits besides salary" (H.-H. M. Hsiao, 2013, p. 379).

Another source of inequality stemmed from brokers—private intermediaries hired by employers to manage the lives of workers.[2] Brokers were described as "harsh," not having "any care." Participants bemoaned excessive brokerage fees that were incommensurate to services provided. For example, inaccurate interpretation services severely hampered workplace communication. Several participants lived in overcrowded dormitory rooms with 36 occupants. The rooms were persistently "dark" to maintain a sleeping environment for multiple work shifts. Electrical devices were prohibited in the rooms, a common source of frustration. Meals did not always accommodate varying shift schedules or cultural preferences. Finally, private and leisure spaces were lacking.

3.2   Transcending Inequality: Coping

Coping, the first dimension of Transcending Inequality, consists of two strategies used to deal with inequitable experiences: reframing and questioning. Coping strategies prominently emerged in the participants' accounts of first coming to Taiwan, often a traumatic experience because of cultural shock and harsh treatment from brokers.

3.2.1   Reframing

Reframing is the cognitive reappraisal of a situation to focus on "future wishes, hopes and aspirations" (Khawaja, White, Schweitzer, & Greenslade, 2008, p. 507). It discounts inequitable circumstances as having completely negative ramifications, shifting to alternative and positive interpretations. The predicament of landing an unexpected job, for example, was reevaluated as a professional development opportunity:

---

[2] Taiwanese brokers provide a host of services—"recruiting, interviewing and videotaping applicants in the sending countries, matching up qualified ones with Taiwanese employers, processing workers' documents, assisting contract-signing between both parties, arranging workers' transportation and medical examination, and providing services of translation and consultation, and, in some cases, training workers" (Lan, 2000b, p. 81).

I was expecting that I really [work] in the laboratory in the quality control, so when I was

in the production area, "Oh, no," I said to myself, "Oh, no!" It's a very, very big

laboratory. Yes, it's a very big laboratory, but I'm already here, so I have to work. . . .

Maybe I can bring this experience to go along with the other people, because yes, I was a

supervisor before, but I don't have really more experience on supervising or dealing with

the production worker or factory worker just like me here, so as of now, I already have to

deal with them, so I don't take, I don't take it as negative, in negatively, so I always look

forward for the positive one.

Reframing also involves attributing circumstances to luck, fate, or divine power. To be separated

from family, to have a large sum of debt, or to have an unscrupulous broker was considered

"unlucky." Conversely, receiving a contract extension was deemed "lucky." The framing of

events as chance occurrences arose not from superstition but from the unknowability of

stressors—the underprivileged position of not knowing when and where inequality would appear.

Thus, interpreting events as beyond one's locus of control alleviated the burden of explaining the

sudden onset (or withdrawal) of inequality. Reframing under a spiritual worldview had a similar

effect. Belief in God's supernatural provisions overlaid a sense of control over the

unpredictability of inequality. Anticipating the "blessings" of God—such as the prospect of

owning property in the Philippines—provided a way for the participants to leverage their future

prosperity against their present suffering. By ascribing incidents to external causes, the

participants drew upon resources with which to surmount their difficulties, as in the case of

believing in divine help, or they adjusted to their hardships by subscribing to the view that "fate

was out of their hand" (Khawaja et al., 2008, p. 507).

3.2.2 Questioning

Questioning is about interrogating inequality to circumscribe its reach. To protest their lack of basic human rights, the participants asked, "Where is my day off?" Whether through pickets, marches, or private gatherings, questioning revolts against the unchallenged status quo of inequality. Less directly, questioning is focused on resolving inequality by eliciting sympathy, as one participant asked her broker, "Have you ever experienced doing your chores, doing your things in a dark space?" Although questioning constrains the spread of inequality, it is premised on the possibility of change. It turns into silence if it meets indifference:

> They ask to talk about what we want, but sometimes there's nothing happen, because no one speak.

> We usually said that we want electricity in every bed, but . . . some of my co-workers said, since 1994, they already ask for that, but until now, they can't give. Every meeting we always talk about that, but nothing's happened.

Brokers constantly threatened repatriation to quell attempts at subversion. The imbalance of power indicates that participants lack recourse to an impartial legal system:

> Sometimes we're afraid, because they send back to the Philippines sometimes. They're still afraid to speak, because they need this job, so no one have brave enough to speak.

3.3   Transcending Inequality: Bonding

The second dimension of Transcending Inequality is bonding—the formation and perpetuation of social relationships within and across nation-state boundaries. Putting "family first" orients the participants away from alienating labor toward meaningful relationships. The participants also form relations that are "like family." Underlying both types of relationships is

the norm of reciprocity. Bonding stretches social networks, resists exploitative relationships, and alleviates the loneliness of living abroad.

3.3.1   Family

The family, central to Filipino culture and society, serves as "a major source of economic, social, emotional and moral support" (Miralao, 1997, p. 193). A key characteristic of Filipino families is their size: They include relatives bilaterally, kin reckoned by rituals, and non-kin, such as close friends, who are referred to as kin (Abinales & Amoroso, 2005). Participants shared accounts of hardships and happiness with family members. Distributing care across borders, they drew emotional strength from one another:

> Okay, I'm happy, because every day, every day, I can talk to my little two children, computer webcam, every morning before I can work, I can talk to my children.

Despite the prominence of family relationships, the strains of transnational family life were evident among the participants, especially for those who had family members dispersed across several continents:

> We're no longer, no longer thinking of how we care for each other, but we still care, we still care, but you don't—what are their struggles there, we don't know what are my struggles, they don't know what my struggles are, yes, because when we talk to our family back home or to other country, we always say, "We're okay, we're okay." But sometimes we're not or they're not, because they don't want or we don't want to get them worried, right?

Bonding extends to coworkers, employers, and brokers who are not "family" by blood but have the potential to become "family-like." Idioms of kinship signal a continuous desire to transform hostile, impersonal relations into what one participant called *may malasakit sa kapwa* (having

16

concern for our fellowmen). The appropriation of familial terms to non-kin relations indicates that the family serves as a template or a yardstick against which other relationships are measured:

> We can deal with our supervisor anything can approach employer, so she is concerned with us also like family. They're okay with us. They treat us good as well as treat us very nice. I have no problem with that. They are very okay employer and very nice boss.

> So they are very nice to them, my coworkers are very good, they treat me as family. We feel that is not that way hard to work with them so nice to work with them we feel that we have a family there to work in our company.

The Catholic Church furnishes the necessary spatial and temporal requirements for forming and sustaining family-like relationships, drawing large crowds of migrants every Sunday. On the one hand, the Church represents the reproduction of communities of origins, hence the use of such similes as "like home" and "like family." On the other hand, as promulgated through Scriptural readings and homilies, the church is a spiritual home by virtue of the common faith of its adherents.

> The people that I [meet] every week, we just sisters, like they become your brother, sister, like Nana [mother] Sandra [pseudonym] is like our already our mother, it's like that, you can what you have in the Philippines you can also have here, it's like you can some many friends, it's like that for every week, I just want Sunday, because I'm with them.

3.3.2 Reciprocity

Reciprocity emerged in the data as the norm underlying bonding relationships. Relations of reciprocity tend to balance and transcend relations of asymmetry (Glenn, 1986, p. 155). One

17

property of reciprocity is mutuality in communication, which, as one participant remarked, results in a dialogic "flow":

> We will share and explain us. Somebody would explain us. If we ask, they would explain, then if they ask, too, we would explain. So, it would be fine, the flow will be fine.

Humor frequently animates mutual bonding. Transcending language barriers, it regularizes commonalities, stressing similarities over differences. It also flattens power hierarchies, as illustrated between a worker and her manager:

> There's a certain camaraderie between us, it's natural that sometimes she just wants to bully me. She kick me, not kick like this, it's like in a karate class, you know. Um, this one, this part, she kicked my ass, and then I kick her too!

A second property of reciprocity is empathic understanding. According to the participants, *understanding* is not knowledge of the other but the willingness to listen, to become aware, and to assume the position of the other:

> I hope that they [brokers] know about us, and I hope that they know much deeper in us, deeper in us. To know what we feel, like that, and if ever, if ever we may have a problem, they depend us.

> To listen the situation, to giving as important the feelings of others, like for example, me I'm foreign, you are the Taiwanese, just giving an importance my feelings, giving my needs, my needs, also my benefits, also my dream to apply in the Taiwan people.

> They [employers] understand what if you said, "I am so tired today, can I can't go, go to work." They understand us. They—For me, they feel what we feel.

18

A third and more complicated property of reciprocity is equivalent exchange, which concerns the participants' insistence on a quantification of exchanges with respect to their wages, benefits, and rights. They argued that the input of their labor should result in commensurate outputs— rights and freedoms in accord with labor laws—as well as wages equivalent to those of non-foreign workers. By juxtaposing "what we give" to "what we should receive," the participants employed the logic of exchange to contest their rights:

> That's why they are unfair to us, yes, every day we working, we are hard, we are hard work, and then we don't, we don't see anything that bad or—but why only one, one, what you call this, only one, one day for this Sunday, they can't give me the chance, the opportunity to come here, to serve here.

3.4 Transcending Inequality: Serving

The third dimension of Transcending Reciprocity is serving, an "in vivo" category referring to participants' religious involvement. By "serving people" and "serving God," the participants voluntarily immersed themselves in opportunities to be thankful, to receive, and to give, which gave rise to personal and spiritual meaning. It is theorized that the intrinsic rewards associated with prosocial behaviors and the addition of spiritual resources enabled the participants to rise above inequality.

3.4.1 Gratitude

Gratitude was a recurrent variable expressed in the religious experiences of the participants, who gave thanks to God for his help in numerous aspects of their lives, particularly for overcoming the hurdles of working abroad:

For me, I'm always, because that's one is we the way to thanks, to God, giving me an

opportunity to work here in Taiwan because it's very different just work in Philippines

and work in abroad. The income is different.

My religion is Catholic, because for me all my life request, from I get to marry, I, for me,

just dreaming to go abroad, because first, my mind, the placement fee, where you get it,

where I got it, 30 thousand, it's for me dreaming, because 30 thousand is not, I don't have

30 thousand.

Indebtedness toward God causes some to resist employer demands. Often, participants were

dissuaded from attending church to work overtime. By continuously asserting their belief in God,

the participants extricated themselves from a controlling order and, in turn, channeled their

gratefulness into sharing:

Yes, because I believe in God, that, that He give me what I want. I thank for all the

blessing, that I receive on my right now until now that I'm here, I'm alive, that's why it's

okay, because my employee is not God, so God is important to me, that's why.

That's why I'm sharing to others, you have a time to go to church, why it is, very nice do

it just praise thank the Lord blessing, all call just grace good healthy work

3.4.2   Ministering

Ministering is the act of giving, sharing, and serving others at church. Despite Sunday

being the only day of rest, all participants voluntarily engaged in some form of service at the

church, such as being commentators, choir members, or ushers. Voluntary "overtime" service at

church contrasted sharply with and thereby resisted overtime labor at work:

Filipinos are generous people you can see. You can see, in the church, there are a lot of—

they are generous with their time, right? Actually, the volunteers here in the church, they

work six or seven days a week; every Sunday they still find time to serve and give and go

to church. Not just go to church, some of them just came from night shift. They work

volunteer then stay here for a lot of several hours.

According to participants, the desire to minister to others was constantly at odds with employer

demands to work overtime. However, its persistent prioritization was a leverage for maintaining

rights:

Can you give this overtime to other people, because I want—I will go to the church. I

will attend the mass.

"Oh, it's Sunday. I don't want to have OT [overtime], because I will going to church."

"Oh, it's okay," something like my leader said, "Ah, it's okay." They already know that

every Sunday, I don't want to OT, something like that they understand

Some ministries were directly involved with solving problems. Drawing from their own

experiences, the participants exchanged social capital, sharing their knowledge of local laws and

referring newcomers to resources and service providers:

Because my ministry here is focused also on the rights of migrant workers here, so I had

some idea like the labor laws here in Taiwan, so whenever some random Filipino worker

has some questions, and if I know something about it, I can share.

3.4.3 Meaning

Serving behaviors were meaningful to the participants for their protective influence

against such behaviors as "wasting money," "wasting time," "drinking," "smoking," and

"sleeping." Besides the Catholic Church, migrant workers have very few community spaces where they truly belong. The "outside world" is not characterized by a surfeit of recreational choices but of spatial and social exclusion, of ghettos and low-income enclaves (Huang & Douglass, 2008, p. 70). Within this contested geography, the church is a potent site of meaning:

> Yes, instead of going out and wasting my money, my time in the outside world, why is it not going here and that's my own thinking, why is it, because I can, I can see that we are in need of more volunteers here, so I present myself to be a volunteer here, because I know I have a lot of things to do here than to have our, than to go outside and then waste money, waste time, then going home, sleep, just like toxic, just toxic. Yeah, because it's only Sunday, it's only that day that we can offer to Him, to God.

Serving behaviors cultivated such character traits and competencies as leadership, patience, honesty, camaraderie, and public speaking skills. As a "training ground," the church increased the preexisting assets of the participants; it built on strengths seldom acknowledged in the limiting environments outside of the church setting. The personal transformations wrought by engaging in service also reflected the demoralizing effects of inequality, invoking the "negative" effects of resentment and dissatisfaction:

> I've been coordinator for one of the ministries, and then I had experience to be in the Parish Pastoral Council. So it's also good training ground, you get to have your leadership skills developed, even when you are in this kind of place, this kind of environment.

That's why Nana [mother] Sandra [pseudonym] told me, oh you're different now, you're

different now, because before, my first three months, three or four months, I was, maybe

I was, my face was so negative.

The notion of transcending as surpassing both the contexts and consequences of inequality is

perhaps most clearly demonstrated by the association of serving with reduction of stress,

happiness, satisfaction, fulfillment, and renewal. Serving includes the properties of bonding ("to

serve other family"), spiritual influence and reframing ("God is there for me"), and engagement

in activities of high personal interest ("I love what I'm doing"):

Wow! When we get here [church], we are very happy, we forget my six days working

day, time is gone like that, I felt that it's a brand new day again when I go back to my

house, because it's a remove my stress and renew here, and I feel that we have so many

friends there, make you laugh, then have some fun together.

The most important thing is God is there for me, because, you know, even though you're

I'm tired but when I go here my nothing the tiredness that I feel! I'm here for to serve

God, to serve other family. I'm happy on what I'm doing maybe. That there, I'm happy

and fulfilling!

It's not just community, it's not the feeling, you know, not only mentally, physically, but

also spiritually, you know.

Yes fulfilling, yeah, that I serve here, that I meet other people, that I help other people,

that I talk other people, that a lot of uh things do, to do here, yeah, and then the important

thing is I, I love what I'm doing, yeah, I love, because if you love, what are you doing, what you are doing is nothing! Just everything is, everything is fulfilling, everything is okay! And I love to like what I'm saying before in our seminar that we are here because we have the willingness to do this.

Chapter 4: Discussion

The purpose of this study was to uncover the main concern of the participants and its recurrent resolution. Transcending Inequality attempts to theorize how the participants address inequality via three interlocking patterns of behaviors: coping, bonding, and serving.

4.1   Integration with the Literature

This study's findings are consistent with the literature on the coping, resistance, and empowerment strategies of Filipino migrant workers (Constable, 1997a, 1997b, 2010; Guevarra, 2006; Lan, 2006b; Lindio-McGovern, 2004; Stasiulis & Bakan, 1997; Trager, 1984; W. Tseng, 2006; Hui-ching Wang, 1996; T.-F. Wu, 2002; Yeoh & Huang, 1998, 2010). The dimensions of coping, bonding, and—to a lesser extent—serving have also been discussed in prior research on Filipino factory workers in Taiwan (Y. K. Lee, 1995; Sills & Chowthi, 2008; W. Tseng & Lee, 2001; W. Tseng, 2006; T.-F. Wu, 1997, 2002).

Accounts of the protective influence of Filipino family relations are replete in the literature (Aguilar & Peñalosa, 2009; Aguilar, 2004, 2009; Friedman & Schultermandl, 2011; Medina, 2001; Miralao, 1997). Further, "quasi-family" relations have been found to mitigate work stress through material and emotional exchanges (H. Chen, 2011; Cohen, 1991, p. 201),[3] though a caveat to this finding is that domestic workers are often expected to perform extra duties without additional pay when they are considered family members (Ayalon & Shiovitz-Ezra, 2010, p. 2555; H. Chen, 2011; Ku, 2010). The absence of this contradiction in this present study is likely because of factory workers' clearer demarcation of employer-employee relations, unlike domestic workers who live with their employers. For both types of migrant workers, there is clear evidence of the strains and costs of family separation (Aguilar, 2009; Hondagneu-Sotelo

---

[3] The *compadre system*, a legacy of the Spanish colonization of the Philippines, extends the "family line beyond that set even by broad consanguinal lines" (Perdon, 2010, p. 17).

& Avila, 1997; Parreñas, 2001, 2002, 2005, 2008; Tungohan, 2013). The challenges of transnational Filipino parental practices can render the family into "a deep source of stress and alienation" (Wolf, 2002, p. 347). A seldom discussed aspect of migrant workers' social relations is the norm of reciprocity, an ancient Filipino value of historical significance (Cannell, 1999; Enriquez, 1986; Glenn, 1986; Hollnsteiner, 1973; Ileto, 1979; Kaut, 1961; Lynch, 1973; Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000; Rafael, 1988). Lan (2002, 2003b) and Guevarra (2009) have shown that the Filipino value of *utang na loob* (debt of gratitude) explains migrant workers' ties of reciprocity and obligation. Their findings may explain the link between indebtedness and the dimensions of bonding and serving.

Several studies have investigated the role of religion in the lives of Filipino migrant workers (Constable, 1997a, 2010; Fresnoza-Flot, 2010; Nakonz & Shik, 2009). Such focus on religion is not surprising, given that more than 80% of the Philippine population identify as Roman Catholic (Abinales & Amoroso, 2005). Across the world, Catholic Churches have become popular sites of information and social exchange (Hathaway & Pargament, 1991; Jin, 2007). Many provide targeted social services, including shelters for trafficked or abused workers (Wei, 2010). However, grassroots-level change has not been typically associated with the Catholic Church (Cruz, 2006, 2010), leading social activists in Taiwan to criticize migrants' overly "dependent" relationships with the Church (Kung, 2005, p. 197). This study has found similar contradictory results. Nevertheless, Nakonz (2009, p. 34) argued that the "very high self-esteem and sense of dignity" associated with religious involvement should not warrant a "disempowered reading." Consistent with this interpretation is this present study's finding concerning the concept of serving. Serving exemplifies churches as "a context for building competencies in their members," in which the skills and talents of migrant workers are

26

recognized and developed (Hathaway & Pargament, 1991, p. 84). Helping others may have increased participants' ability to cope with their own hardships (Lietz, 2011). Furthermore, serving was motivated by and engaged for spiritual purposes and meaning. Previous studies tended to neglect the transcendent nature of spirituality in favor of the social or organizational qualities of religion (Henery, 2003; Zinnbauer, Pargament, & Scott, 1999).

4.2   Contributions to Knowledge

The notion of transcending is a new concept in the literature. Productive of a sense of movement, it captures Filipino factory workers' continuous desire to overcome situations of subordination via an ecology of individual, social, cultural, and spiritual assets. Its purchase as a concept lies in its groundedness in the language of the participants. Bonding, for instance, calls for an expanded understanding of family as a template for relating to all people, irrespective of blood ties. Attending to these strengths and nuances can sensitize researchers and practitioners to ways to increase the preexisting capacities of migrant workers. Transcending is also a paradoxical concept, situated within the constant movement, fluidity, and hybridity of transmigration. The most salient paradox is that not all participants "transcend" their struggles by directly challenging or combating inequality. Congruent with this observation, Constable (1999, p. 553) found that Filipino domestic workers were "both complicit in, and express[ed] resistance toward, various forms of control." Furthermore, Lee (1995) and Wu (1997, 2002) investigated why Filipino factory workers abstained from action when faced with injustice.

How useful, then, is the theory of Transcending Inequality if it tends to ignore the underlying causes of inequality? Here I consider a strength-based approach in conjunction with critical realism's "concern with broader social structures" (Oliver, 2012, p. 378). From these perspectives, transcending can be said to constitute a set of practices that disavow the "logic" of

inequality—the dialectics of coping and escaping, bonding and alienation, and serving and servitude. Although this logic is not always named, it is, nevertheless, suggestive of power and structure: the "absences, silences, hidden positions and structural discourses echoing through individual accounts" (Oliver, 2012, p. 382). In this sense, transcending approximates "resistance," which Foucault (1991) defines as largely consisting of "alternative readings" and "typically avoid[s] any direct symbolic confrontation with authority or with elite norms" (as cited in Yeoh & Huang, 1998, p. 595). It differs from resistance, however, because it is centered on the participants' potentialities and possibilities, the "core conditions of change" (Saleebey, 2000, p. 130). By honoring broader social structure and individual agency, it is thus possible to locate participant strengths without dislodging the importance of radical social change (Saleebey, 1996; F. T. Y. Wang, 2006).

4.3   Implications for Practice and Policy

This research has implications for both practice and policy. The findings are relevant for organizations and agencies interested in enhancing the welfare of Filipino factory workers, including the Taiwanese social work profession (Chou, Haj-Yahia, Wang, & Fu, 2006); NGOs and faith-based organizations (O'Neill, 2001; Tsai & Hsiao, 2006; Wei, 2010); social activists (Hsia, 2006, 2009; Kung, 2005); and national, municipal, and private agencies that oversee and manage the labor migration process (Kung, 2002; Lai, 2012). Three implications are discussed: (a) the significance of local and transnational community life, (b) the significance of religious and spiritual practices, and (c) the strength-based approach.

4.3.1   Significance of Local and Transnational Community Life

Bonding emerged in this study as a source of strength. Maintaining family ties and developing new social relations are important protective factors in migrant workers' lives. One

implication of this finding is the need to increase access to spaces for local community life (Y. Hsiao, 2005; Huang & Douglass, 2008; Lan, 2003c, 2003d; P. Wu, 2003; Xu, 2000; Yeoh & Annadhurai, 2008; Yeoh & Huang, 1998; Yu, 2009). As the participants noted, their dormitories were dark and overcrowded, lacking leisure and recreational spaces. Ancillary to this situation is the need to recognize migrant workers' legitimate use of public spaces. Migrant workers' spatial rights have often been curtailed or have met with local resistance, such as the closure of a migrant worker community center (Y.-Y. Wu, 2010) and restrictions on migrant workers' freedom to gather at the Taipei Railway Station (Lok-sin, 2012a, 2012b). These incidents have indicated the importance of not only promoting community spaces but also developing multicultural policies aimed at both minority and majority groups to "achieve an open-minded attitude to cultural differences" (L. Wang, 2003, p. 249).

A second implication is the need to improve channels of communication between migrants and separated family members (Parreñas, 2002). Factory workers in this study were prohibited from using electrical outlets in their dormitory rooms, thereby preventing them from using communication devices to connect with family members abroad. These policies should be revised to recognize migrants' transnational communities—a critical system of social networks that provides "defense mechanisms for coping with situations of vulnerability" (Canales & Armas, 2007, p. 234). In cases when mothers leave their children behind for work, Hochschild (2000, p. 5) recommends getting fathers to contribute more to child care or developing the Filipino economy to diminish the incentive to migrate. Ideally, migrant workers should have annual leave to return home or, as is the case in Italy, the option to bring family members abroad (Parreñas, 2002, p. 16), either within the terms of a contract or through channels for permanent citizenship (Lan, 2006a, p. 144).

4.3.2 Significance of Religious and Spiritual Practices

The religious freedom of migrant workers should be respected and understood. Even though the Labor Standards Act guarantees one day off for factory workers, workers are often coerced into working overtime in lieu of attending church. Education should be provided to employers so they understand the importance of religion. Creating private or meditation spaces at the dormitory complex may also lead to more religious freedom for the migrant workers. Although not the direct focus of this study, there is a manifest need to include domestic workers in the Labor Standards Act. According to the International Religious Freedom Report for 2012 on Taiwan, "Religious leaders and NGOs raised concerns that the law does not guarantee a day off for domestic workers and caregivers, thus limiting their ability to practice fully their religion" (U.S. Department of State, 2012).

4.3.3 Strength-Based Approach

This study's findings indicated that Filipino factory workers are highly resilient in the midst of adversity, warranting a strength-based approach for practice. Practitioners should recognize migrant workers as competent and resilient (Fraser, Galinsky, & Richman, 1999; Saleebey, 1996; Wong & Song, 2008) and attend to the possibility of resistance and rebellion as additional sources of strengths (Guo & Tsui, 2010). A strength-based approach also incorporates client perspectives. For example, the participants of this study have an intrinsic desire to serve their own communities, a natural alignment with community organizing and bottom-up empowerment efforts. Furthermore, the strength-based approach can be encouraged by integrating cultural or multicultural competence into Taiwan's social work education and code of ethics (Hung, Yang, & Yen, 2010). According to Saleebey (2000, pp. 133–134), there are four principles of strength-based practice:

1. Believe in the client

2. Affirm and show interest in the client's view of things

3. Focus on the dreams, hopes, and visions of people

4. Account for the assets, resources, reserves, and capacities within the client and in the environment

Finally, implementing a transnational wraparound model would call attention to migrant workers' families and children, as well as resources in both sending and receiving countries (Furman et al., 2008, p. 500).

4.4   Limitations and Strengths

This study had several limitations. First, because of time constraints associated with overseas data collection and master's level research, theoretical sampling of the participants did not occur, limiting the density and saturation of the study's categories. However, it did not prevent emergence of the study's core category from the data (Glaser, 1978). Second, this study was initially designed as an inquiry into the cross-cultural relations of the participants, possibly forcing culture as a preconceived category. Finally, the grounded theory generated by this study is a hypothetical conceptualization of one main concern of the participants; it is not a factual claim (Glaser, 2005c, 2006) or an attempt to establish truth or reality (Glaser & Holton, 2004; Glaser, 2007).

My inexperience with classic grounded theory undoubtedly contributed to these limitations (Glaser, 2011). As mentioned earlier, my point of departure in this research was a strong desire to understand the cultures of the participants. Although well-meaning and seemingly compatible with the principles of social work, my professional concern evolved into a "pet code" that threatened to undermine the concerns of the participants (Glaser, 2005b, p. 3). As

I became increasingly familiar with grounded theory, I successively modified the study's research questions and protocols to align them with the participants' true concern. Following Sheridan and Storch's (2009) call for reflexivity, I interrogated the overlaying of my "epistemological- and practice-based assumptions" on the data (Moosa-Mitha & Ross-Sheriff, 2010, p. 106). Fortunately, grounded theory is "self-correcting" insofar as maintaining fidelity to its tenets ultimately ensures the emergence—not the forcing—of theory (Hernandez & Andrews, 2012, p. 60).

Despite the limitations discussed above, this study also has some strengths. First, it provides insight into the relatively neglected migrant factory worker population in Taiwan. Prior research, both within and outside of Taiwan, was focused on the plight of domestic workers. Second, this study championed classic grounded theory, an underused methodology in migration studies. The constant comparative method yielded "in vivo" conceptualizations of spirituality that both enriched and challenged previous theorizations. Further, this study elicited the strengths of the participants, a critically needed counterbalance to the problematizing discourse pervading both the literature and public media's depictions of migrant workers (C. Wang, 2009).

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Using classic grounded theory, this study has developed a theory of how Filipino factory workers in Taiwan address inequality. Future research could verify the hypotheses in this study or develop additional substantive-level theories to add nuance to this study's findings. Several implications were derived from this research. Policy can strengthen family ties by improving lines of communications or providing for family reunification. Further, social support networks among migrant workers can be nurtured through increased public, communal, and religious spaces. For practitioners, the findings should encourage a strength-based approach. To coordinate service delivery, social workers could serve as bridges between organizations and nation-states. Finally, this study indicated the need to further the professional knowledge base for multicultural practice with migrant workers.

References

Abinales, P. N., & Amoroso, D. J. (2005). *State and Society in the Philippines*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Aguilar, F. V., Jr. (2004). Is there a transnation? Migrancy and the national homeland among overseas Filipinos. In K. Willis & B. S. A. Yeoh (Eds.), *State/Nation/Transnation: Perspectives on Transnationalism in the Asia Pacific*. New York: Routledge.

Aguilar, F. V., Jr. (2009). Labour Migration and Ties of Relatedness: Diasporic Houses and Investments in Memory in a Rural Philippine Village. *Thesis Eleven*, *98*(1), 88–114. doi:10.1177/0725513609105485

Aguilar, F. V., Jr., & Peñalosa, J. E. Z. (2009). *Maalwang buhay: family, overseas migration, and cultures of relatedness in Barangay Paraiso*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press.

Ayalon, L., & Shiovitz-Ezra, S. (2010). The Experience of Loneliness Among Live-In Filipino Homecare Workers in Israel: Implications for Social Workers. *British Journal of Social Work*, *40*(8), 2538–2559. doi:10.1093/bjsw/bcq050

Bacalso, F. (2012). Half-Taiwanese Migrant Workers? Perspectives on How Migrant Workers in New Taipei City Celebrate Taiwanese National Holidays and Festivals. *Fu Jen Social Studies*, (2), 1–31.

Breckenridge, J. P., Jones, D., Elliott, I., & Nicol, M. (2012). Choosing a Methodological Path: Reflections on the Constructivist Turn. *The Grounded Theory Review*, *11*(1), 64–71.

Canales, A. I., & Armas, I. M. (2007). A world without borders? Mexican immigration, new boundaries and transnationalism in the United States. In A. Pécoud & P. de Guchteneire

(Eds.), *Migration without Borders: Essays on the Free Movement of People*. Paris: UNESCO Publishing.

Cannell, F. (1999). *Power and intimacy in the Christian Philippines*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Chan, R. K. (1999). Taiwan's policy towards foreign workers. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, *29*(3), 383–400. doi:10.1080/00472339980000191

Chang, Y.-C., & Wang, J.-D. (1997). Trends in Major Occupational Injuries in Different Industrial Divisions in Taiwan during 1983-1993. *Journal of Occupational Health*, *39*, 295–301.

Chen, A. S., Lin, Y., & Sawangpattanakul, A. (2011). The relationship between cultural intelligence and performance with the mediating effect of culture shock: A case from Philippine laborers in Taiwan. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *35*(2), 246–258. doi:10.1016/j.ijintrel.2010.09.005

Chen, C.-F. (2011). Management or Exploitation? The Survival Strategy of Employer of Family Foreign Care Workers. *Taiwan: A Radical Quarterly in Social Studies*, *85*, 89–155.

Chen, H. (2011). *The double binding of public and private- The labor condition of migrant domestic workers in Taiwan* (Unpublished master's thesis). Shih Hsin University Graduate Institute for Social Transformation Studies, Taipei, Taiwan. Retrieved from http://ndltd.ncl.edu.tw/cgi-bin/gs32/gsweb.cgi/login?o=dnclcdr&s=id=%22099SHU05655010%22.&searchmode=basic

Cheng, L. (1999). Globalization and women's paid labour in Asia. *International Social Science Journal*, *51*(160), 217–228. doi:10.1111/1468-2451.00190

Cheng, L. (2002). Transnational Labor, Citizenship and State-Building Ideology in Taiwan. *Taiwan: A Radical Quarterly in Social Studies*, *48*, 15–43.

Cheng, S.-J. A. (2001, September). *Serving the Household and the Nation: Filipina Domestics and the Development of Nationhood in Taiwan* (Doctoral dissertation). United States.

Cheng, S.-J. A. (2004). When the Personal Meets the Global at Home: Filipina Domestics and Their Female Employers in Taiwan. *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, *25*(2), 31–52.

Chou, Y.-C., Haj-Yahia, M. M., Wang, F. T. Y., & Fu, L.-Y. (2006). Social Work in Taiwan A Historical and Critical Review. *International Social Work*, *49*(6), 767–778. doi:10.1177/0020872806069081

Christiansen, Ó. (2007). A Simpler Understanding of Classical GT: How it is a fundamentally different methodology. *The Grounded Theory Review*, *6*(3), 39–61.

Chuang, K. (2002). *Wai ji lao gong zai tai wan de fu li yu ji ben quan yi zhi tan tao* (Unpublished master's thesis). National Chung Cheng University Department of Social Welfare, Minxiong, Taiwan. Retrieved from http://ndltd.ncl.edu.tw/cgi-bin/gs32/gsweb.cgi?o=dnclcdr&s=id=%22090CCU00206006%22.&searchmode=basic

Chun L.-M. (2003). Migrant Worker's Labor Rights Kidnapped: A Case Study on Migrant Workers in Taiwan. *National Chengchi University Institute for Labour Research*. Retrieved from http://nccur.lib.nccu.edu.tw/handle/140.119/5128

Cohen, R. (1991). Women of color in white households: Coping strategies of live-in domestic workers. *Qualitative Sociology*, *14*(2), 197–215. doi:10.1007/BF00992194

Constable, N. (1997a). Sexuality and Discipline among Filipina Domestic Workers in Hong Kong. *American Ethnologist*, *24*(3), 539–558. doi:10.1525/ae.1997.24.3.539

Constable, N. (1997b). *Maid to Order in Hong Kong: Stories of Filipina Workers*. Ithaca, NY:

> Cornell University Press.

Constable, N. (2010). Telling Tales of Migrant Workers in Hong Kong: Transformations of Faith,

> Life Scripts, and Activism. *Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology*, *11*(3/4), 311–329.

> doi:10.1080/14442213.2010.513399

Cooney, A. (2010). Choosing between Glaser and Strauss: an example. *Nurse researcher*, *17*(4),

> 18–28.

Council of Labor Affairs. (2012). Foreign Workers Statistics. Retrieved May 17, 2013, from

> http://www.cla.gov.tw/cgi-bin/siteMaker/SM_theme?page=49c05774

Cruz, G. T. (2006). Faith on the Edge: Religion and Women in the Context of Migration.

> *Feminist Theology: The Journal of the Britain & Ireland School of Feminist Theology*,

> *15*(1).

Cruz, G. T. (2010). Chapter Two: It Cuts Both Ways: Religion and Filipina Domestic Workers in

> Hong Kong. In *Gender, Religion, and Migration: Pathways of Integration*. Lanham Md.:

> Lexington Books.

De Jong, P., & Miller, S. (1995). How to interview for client strengths. *Social Work*, *40*(6), 729–

> 736.

Enriquez, V. G. (1986). *Philippine World-View*. Institute of Southeast Asian.

Fraser, M. W., Galinsky, M. J., & Richman, J. M. (1999). Risk, protection, and resilience:

> Toward a conceptual framework for social work practice. *Social Work Research*, *23*(3),

> 131–143. doi:10.1093/swr/23.3.131

Fresnoza-Flot, A. (2010). The catholic church in the lives of irregular migrant Filipinas in France: Identity formation, empowerment and social control. *Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology*, *11*(3), 345–361.

Friedman, M., & Schultermandl, S. (Eds.). (2011). *Growing Up Transnational, Identity and Kinship in a Global Era*. Toronto: University of Toronto.

Fuchs, R. (2011). *Human Trafficking of Legal and Illegal Migrant Workers in Taiwan*. Chungli, Taiwan: Hope Workers' Center.

Furman, R., & Negi, N. J. (2007). Social work practice with transnational Latino populations. *International Social Work*, *50*(1), 107–112. doi:10.1177/0020872807072500

Furman, R., Negi, N., Schatz, M. C. S., & Jones, S. (2008). Transnational social work: using a wraparound model. *Global Networks*, *8*(4), 496–503. doi:10.1111/j.1471-0374.2008.00236.x

Glaser, B. G. (1978). *Theoretical Sensitivity: Advances in the Methodology of Grounded Theory*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Glaser, B. G. (1992). *Emergence vs Forcing: Basics of Grounded Theory Analysis*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Glaser, B. G. (1998). *Doing Grounded Theory: Issues and Discussions*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Glaser, B. G. (2001). *The Grounded Theory Perspective*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Glaser, B. G. (2002). Constructivist Grounded Theory? *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, *3*(3). Retrieved from http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/825

Glaser, B. G. (2003). *The Grounded Theory Perspective II: Description's Remodeling of Grounded Theory Methodology*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Glaser, B. G. (2005a). *The Grounded Theory Perspective III: Theoretical Coding*. Mill Valley,

    CA: Sociology Press.

Glaser, B. G. (2005b). Staying open: The use of theoretical codes in grounded theory.

    The Grounded Theory Review, *5*(1), 1–20.

Glaser, B. G. (2005c). Basic Social Processes. *The Grounded Theory Review*, *4*(3), 1–27.

Glaser, B. G. (2006). Generalizing: The descriptive struggle. *The Grounded Theory Review*, *6*(1),

    1–27.

Glaser, B. G. (2007). All is Data. *The Grounded Theory Review*, *6*(2), 1–22.

Glaser, B. G. (2011). Blocking Conceptualization. *The Grounded Theory Review*, *10*(1), 1–15.

Glaser, B. G., & Holton, J. (2004). Remodeling Grounded Theory. *Forum: Qualitative Social*

    Research, *5*(2). Retrieved from http://www.qualitative-

    research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/607

Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for*

    Qualitative Research. Aldine Transaction.

Glenn, E. N. (1986). *Issei, Nisei, War Bride: Three Generations of Japanese American Women*

    in Domestic Service. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Guevarra, A. R. (2006). Managing "Vulnerabilities" and "Empowering" Migrant Filipina

    Workers: The Philippines' Overseas Employment Program. *Social Identities*, *12*(5), 523–

    541.

Guevarra, A. R. (2009). *Marketing Dreams, Manufacturing Heroes: The Transnational Labor*

    Brokering of Filipino Workers. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Guo, W., & Tsui, M. (2010). From resilience to resistance: A reconstruction of the strengths

    perspective in social work practice. *International Social Work*, *53*(2), 233–245.

    doi:10.1177/0020872809355391

Hathaway, W. L., & Pargament, K. I. (1991). The Religious Dimensions of Coping: Implications

    for Prevention and Promotion. The Coping Process; Religion and the Process of Coping;

    Summary; Religious Coping and Prevention. *Prevention in human services.*, *9*(2), 65.

Henery, N. (2003). The Reality of Visions: Contemporary Theories of Spirituality in Social

    Work. *The British Journal of Social Work*, *33*(8), 1105–1113.

Hernandez, C. A. (2009). Theoretical Coding in Grounded Theory Methodology.

    The Grounded Theory Review, *8*(3), 51–59.

Hernandez, C. A., & Andrews, T. (2012). Commentary on "Constructing New Theory for

    Identifying Students with Emotional Disturbance." *The Grounded Theory Review*, *11*(1),

    59.

Hochschild, A. R. (2000). The Nanny Chain. *American Prospect*, *11*(4), 32–36.

Hollnsteiner, M. R. (1973). Reciprocity in the Lowland Philippines. In F. Lynch & A. de

    Guzman II (Eds.), *Four Readings on Philippine Values* (4th ed.). Quezon City,

    Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press.

Holman, W. D. (1996). In Their Words: Mainland Puerto Rican Poetry, Grounded Theory, and

    the Generation of Culturally Sensitive Social Work Knowledge. *Journal of Multicultural*

    Social Work, *4*(3), 69–79. doi:10.1300/J285v04n03_05

Hondagneu-Sotelo, P., & Avila, E. (1997). "I'm Here, but I'm There": The Meanings of Latina

    Transnational Motherhood. *Gender and Society*, *11*(5), 548–571.

Hsia, H.-C. (2006). The Making of Immigrants Movement: Politics of Differences, Subjectivation and Societal Movement. *Taiwan: A Radical Quarterly in Social Studies*, *61*, 1–71.

Hsia, H.-C. (Ed.). (2009). *Unquiet Migration: Taishe Reader in Im/Migration*. Taipei: Taishe.

Hsiao, H.-H. M. (2013). Precarious Work in Taiwan A Profile. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *57*(3), 373–389. doi:10.1177/0002764212466243

Hsiao, Y. (2005). *Study of Migrant Filipino Labors' Leisure Activity Types and Leisure Constraints in Taipei* (Unpublished master's thesis). National Taiwan Normal University Graduate Institute of Sports & Leisure Management, Taipei, Taiwan. Retrieved from http://etds.lib.ntnu.edu.tw/cgi-bin/gs/ntnugsweb.cgi?o=dntnucdr&i=sid=%22G0069231012%22.&searchmode=basic

Huang, L., & Douglass, M. (2008). Foreign workers and spaces for community life: Taipei's Little Philippines. In M. Douglass & A. Daniere (Eds.), *The Politics of Civic Space in Asia: Building Urban Communities* (pp. 51–71). Routledge.

Hung, S.-C., Yang, W.-S., & Yen, P.-C. (2010). More Than Lost in Translation? An Exploratory Study of Social Workers' Experiences Working with Vietnamese Wives in Taiwan. *International Social Work*, *53*(3), 327–338. doi:10.1177/0020872809359749

Ileto, R. C. (1979). *Pasyon and Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippines, 1840-1910*. Ateneo University Press.

Jin, T.-L. (2007). *The Making of Filipino Community in Taiwan* (Unpublished master's thesis). National Tsing Hua University, Hsinchu.

Kaut, C. (1961). Utang Na Loob: A System of Contractual Obligation among Tagalogs. *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*, *17*(3), 256–272. doi:10.2307/3629045

Khawaja, N. G., White, K. M., Schweitzer, R., & Greenslade, J. (2008). Difficulties and Coping Strategies of Sudanese Refugees: A Qualitative Approach. *Transcultural Psychiatry*, *45*(3), 489–512. doi:10.1177/1363461508094678

Ku, Y.-L. (2010). *The Condition of Freedom: A Case Study of a Homicidal Vietnamese and an Inquiry into the Situation of Migrant Domestics in Taiwan* (Unpublished master's thesis). National Chiao Tung University Graduate Institute for Social Research and Cultural Studies, Hsinchu.

Kung, L. (2002). Migrant Workers in Taipei: Biased Central State Policy and Alternative Administration Strategy of Local State. *Taiwan: A Radical Quarterly in Social Studies*, *48*, 235–286.

Kung, L. (2005). From We-group to He-group: My journal with the Migrants. *Research in Applied Psychology*, *26*, 189–216.

Lai, C.-M. (2012). Public Administration and Consultation for Foreign Blue-collar Workers: The Case of Central Taiwan. *Taiwan Labour Review*, *4*(1), 89–135.

Lan, P.-C. (2000a). Bargaining with Patriarchy: Taiwanese Women Hiring Migrant Domestic Workers. *Anthropology of Work Review*, *21*(3), 9–14. doi:10.1525/awr.2000.21.3.9

Lan, P.-C. (2000b, December). *Global divisions, local identities : Filipina migrant domestic workers and Taiwanese employers* (Doctoral dissertation). Northwestern University, Evanston, IL.

Lan, P.-C. (2002). A Transnational Topography for the Migration and Identification of Filipina Migrant Domestic Workers. *Taiwan: A Radical Quarterly in Social Studies*, *48*, 11–59.

Lan, P.-C. (2003a). "They Have More Money but I Speak Better English!" Transnational

 Encounters between Filipina Domestics and Taiwanese Employers). *Identities*, *10*(2),

 133–161. doi:10.1080/10702890304325

Lan, P.-C. (2003b). Maid or Madam? Filipina Migrant Workers and the Continuity of Domestic

 Labor. *Gender and Society*, *17*(2), 187–208.

Lan, P.-C. (2003c). Negotiating social boundaries and private zones: The micropolitics of

 employing migrant domestic workers. *Social Problems*, *50*(4), 525–549.

 doi:10.1525/sp.2003.50.4.525

Lan, P.-C. (2003d). Political and Social Geography of Marginal Insiders: Migrant Domestic

 Workers in Taiwan. *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, *12*(1), 99.

Lan, P.-C. (2006a). Legal Servitude and Free Illegality: Control and Exit of Migrant Workers.

 Taiwan: A Radical Quarterly in Social Studies, *64*, 107–150.

Lan, P.-C. (2006b). *Global Cinderellas: Migrant Domestics and Newly Rich Employers in

 Taiwan*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Lee, A. (2002). Guests from the Tropics: Labor Practices and Foreign Workers in Taiwan. In E.

 N. Chow (Ed.), *Transforming Gender and Development in East Asia*. New York:

 Routledge.

Lee, Y. K. (1995). *Why Don't They Take Action: Research on the Differences of the Action

 Strategies of Migrant Workers* (Unpublished master's thesis). Fu Jen Catholic University,

 New Taipei, Taiwan. Retrieved from http://ndltd.ncl.edu.tw/cgi-

 bin/gs32/gsweb.cgi?o=dnclcdr&s=id=%22083FJU00501009%22.&searchmode=basic

Liao, H.-C. (2011). The Analysis of Fatal Occupational Accidents of Foreign Workers in Taiwan.

 Journal of Occupational Safety and Health, (19), 30–42.

Lietz, C. A. (2011). Empathic Action and Family Resilience: A Narrative Examination of the

   Benefits of Helping Others. *Journal of Social Service Research*, *37*(3), 254–265.

   doi:10.1080/01488376.2011.564035

Lin, H.-L. (2000). *Filipina Household Workers in Taiwan* (Unpublished master's thesis).

   Tunghai University Department of Sociology, Taichung, Taiwan. Retrieved from

   http://ndltd.ncl.edu.tw/cgi-

   bin/gs32/gsweb.cgi?o=dnclcdr&s=id=%22089THU00099001%22.&searchmode=basic

Lindio-McGovern, L. (2004). Alienation and Labor Export in the Context of Globalization:

   Filipino Migrant Domestic Workers in Taiwan and Hong Kong. *Critical Asian Studies*,

   36(2), 217–238.

Lok-sin, L. (2012a, September). Local community petitions foreign workers to leave. *Taipei

   Times*. Retrieved October 11, 2012, from

   http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/front/archives/2012/09/20/2003543198

Lok-sin, L. (2012b, September 17). Workers protest station measure. *Taipei Times*. Retrieved

   October 11, 2012, from

   http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2012/09/17/2003542976

Loveband, A. (2004). Positioning the product: Indonesian migrant women workers in Taiwan.

   Journal of Contemporary Asia, *34*(3), 336–348. doi:10.1080/00472330480000141

Lu, C.-Y. (2000). Politics of Foreign Labor Policy in Taiwan. *Journal of Asian and African

   Studies*, *35*(1), 113–131. doi:10.1163/156852100512176

Lynch, F. (1973). Social Acceptance Reconsidered. In F. Lynch & A. de Guzman II (Eds.), *Four

   Readings on Philippine Values* (4th ed.). Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila

   University Press.

McCallin, A. M. (2006). Methodological Issues: Have we forgotten the place of thinking here? *The Grounded Theory Review*, *5*(2/3), 51–57.

Medina, B. T. G. (2001). *The Filipino Family* (2nd ed.). Diliman, Quezon City: The University of the Philippines Press.

Mills, J. (2011). *Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide*. Sage Publications.

Miralao, V. A. (1997). The Family, Traditional Values and the Sociocultural Transformation of Philippine Society. *Philippine Sociological Review*, *45*(1/4), 189–215.

Moosa-Mitha, M., & Ross-Sheriff, F. (2010). Transnational Social Work and Lessons Learned From Transnational Feminism. *Affilia*, *25*(2), 105–109. doi:10.1177/0886109910364366

Nakonz, J., & Shik, A. (2009). And all your problems are gone: religious coping strategies among Philippine migrant workers in Hong Kong. *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, *12*(1), 25–38.

O'Neill, P. (2001). Caring for All Migrants. *Asian Migrant*, *14*(2), 45–53.

Oliver, C. (2012). Critical Realist Grounded Theory: A New Approach for Social Work Research. *British Journal of Social Work*, *42*(2), 371–387. doi:10.1093/bjsw/bcr064

Pan, S.-M., & Yang, J.-T. (2012). Outsiders in the family: Abuse of migrant domestic workers in Taiwan. *Asian Journal of Women's Studies*, *18*(1), 87–117.

Parreñas, R. S. (2001). Mothering from a Distance: Emotions, Gender, and Intergenerational Relations in Filipino Transnational Families. *Feminist Studies*, *27*(2), 361–390.

Parreñas, R. S. (2002). Human Sacrifices: What Happens When Women Migrate and Leave Families behind? The Case of the Philippines Raises Some Troubling Questions. *The Women's Review of Books*, *19*(5), 16.

Parreñas, R. S. (2005). Long distance intimacy: class, gender and intergenerational relations between mothers and children in Filipino transnational families. *Global Networks*, *5*(4), 317–336. doi:10.1111/j.1471-0374.2005.00122.x

Parreñas, R. S. (2008). Transnational Fathering: Gendered Conflicts, Distant Disciplining and Emotional Gaps. *Journal of Ethnic & Migration Studies*, *34*(7), 1057–1072. doi:10.1080/13691830802230356

Patton, M. Q. (2001). *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Pe-Pua, R., & Protacio-Marcelino, E. A. (2000). Sikolohiyang Pilipino (Filipino psychology): A legacy of Virgilio G. Enriquez. *Asian Journal of Social Psychology*, *3*(1), 49–71. doi:10.1111/1467-839X.00054

Perdon, R. (2010). *Footnotes to Philippine History*. Boca Raton, FL: Universal Publishers.

Prickett, J. C., Negi, N., & Gómez, L. J. M. (2012). Return Migration in the Transnational Context: The Case of Male Transmigrants from Petlalcingo, Mexico. *Journal of Ethnic And Cultural Diversity in Social Work*, *21*(1), 55–73. doi:10.1080/15313204.2012.648594

Pries, L. (2004). Determining the Causes and Durability of Transnational Labour Migration between Mexico and the United States: Some Empirical Findings. *International Migration*, *42*(2), 3–39.

Rafael, V. L. (1988). *Contracting Colonialism: Translation and Christian Conversion in Tagalog Society Under Early Spanish Rule*. Duke University Press.

Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. (2011). *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data* (Third Edition.). SAGE Publications, Inc.

Saleebey, D. (1996). The strengths perspective in social work practice: extensions and cautions. *Social Work*, *41*(3), 296–305.

Saleebey, D. (2000). Power in the People: Strengths and Hope. *Advances in Social Work*, *1*(2), 127–136.

Sass, R. (2000). The dark side of Taiwan's globalization success story. *International journal of health services : planning, administration, evaluation*, *30*(4), 699–716.

Sassen, S. (2002). Global Cities and Diasporic Networks: Microsites in Global Civil Society. In G. Marlies, M. Kaldor, & H. Anheier (Eds.), *Global Civil Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Selya, R. (1992). Illegal Migration in Taiwan: A Preliminary Overview. *International Migration Review*, *26*(3), 787.

Sheridan, V., & Storch, K. (2009). Linking the Intercultural and Grounded Theory: Methodological Issues in Migration Research. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, *10*(1). Retrieved from http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1217

Sheu, H. (2007). *Culture in the Borderlands: "Stories" of Southeast Asian Domestic Workers in Taiwan* (Doctoral dissertation). Heidelberg University, Heidelberg, Germany.

Shier, M. L., Engstrom, S., & Graham, J. R. (2011). International Migration and Social Work: A Review of the Literature. *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, *9*(1), 38–56. doi:10.1080/15562948.2011.547825

Sills, S. ., & Chowthi, N. (2008). Becoming an OFW: Renegotiations in Self-Concept Among Filipino Factory Workers in Taiwan. *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, *17*(2), 189–220.

Stasiulis, D. K., & Bakan, A. B. (1997). Regulation and Resistance: Strategies of Migrant

    Domestic Workers in Canada and Internationally. *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*,

    6(1), 31–57.

Thomas, G., & James, D. (2006). Reinventing grounded theory: some questions about theory,

    ground and discovery. *British Educational Research Journal*, *32*(6), 767–795.

Tierney, R. (2007). The Guest Labor System in Taiwan. *Critical Asian Studies*, *39*(2), 205–228.

    doi:10.1080/14672710701339410

Trager, L. (1984). Family Strategies and the Migration of Women: Migrants to Dagupan City,

    Philippines. *International Migration Review*, *18*(4), 1264–1277. doi:10.2307/2546082

Tsai, Y.-H., & Hsiao, M. (2006). The Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) for Foreign

    Workers and Foreign Spouses in Taiwan: A Portrayal. *Asia-Pacific Forum*, *33*. Retrieved

    from http://www.rchss.sinica.edu.tw/capas/publication/newsletter/N33/33_01-1.pdf

Tseng, W. (2006). Social Conditions of Foreign Laborers in a Meatpacking Factory in Rural

    Southern Taiwan. *Research in Economic Anthropology*, *25*, 51–73.

Tseng, W., & Lee, M.-F. (2001). Transnational Migration, Social Conditions and Foreign Labor

    Workers: Filipino and Thai Food Processing Workers in Taiwan. In *Society for the Study

    of Social Problems*.

Tseng, Y.-F. (2006). Who can be Us? Class Selection in Immigration Policy. *Taiwan: A Radical

    Quarterly in Social Studies*, *61*, 73–107.

Tungohan, E. (2013). Reconceptualizing Motherhood, Reconceptualizing Resistance.

    International Feminist Journal of Politics, *15*(1), 39–57.

    doi:10.1080/14616742.2012.699781

U.S. Department of State. (2012). International Religious Freedom Report for 2012. Retrieved

      May 24, 2013, from http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/religiousfreedom/index.htm

United Nations. (1990). International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant

      Workers and Members of Their Families. Retrieved March 8, 2012, from

      http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/cmw.htm

Walker, D., & Myrick, F. (2006). Grounded Theory: An Exploration of Process and Procedure.

      Qualitative Health Research, *16*(4), 547–559. doi:10.1177/1049732305285972

Wang, C. (2009). Dis/placed Identification and Politics of Space: The Consumptive Ethnoscape

      around Tao-Yuan Railroad Station. In H.-C. Hsia (Ed.), *Unquiet Migration: Taishe*

      Reader in Im/Migration. Taipei: Taishe.

Wang, F. T. Y. (2006). Encounter with Culture Study. *Taiwan: A Radical Quarterly in Social*

      Studies, *62*, 279–282.

Wang, Hong-zen, & Bélanger, D. (2008). Taiwanizing female immigrant spouses and

      materializing differential citizenship. *Citizenship Studies*, *12*(1), 91–106.

      doi:10.1080/13621020701794224

Wang, Hui-ching. (1996). *Work stress and coping amongst Filipino female domestic helpers in*

      Taiwan. Taipei, Taiwan: Taiwan Grassroots Women Workers' Centre.

Wang, L. (2003, June). *Towards multiculturalism? Identity, Difference and Citizenship in*

      Cultural Policy in Taiwan (1949-2002) (Doctoral dissertation). University of Warwick.

      Retrieved from http://webcat.warwick.ac.uk/record=b1667541~S15

Wang, Y. (2003). *Removing the bracket or adding another? -- The life experiences and life*

      strategy of Filipino maids in Taiwan (Unpublished master's thesis). National Taiwan

      University Department of Anthropology, Taipei, Taiwan.

Wei, W. (2010). The Social Services Offered by the Catholic Church to Migrant Workers. *Community Development Journal Quarterly*, *130*, 171–184.

Wolf, D. (2002). *At home in the world?: Filipinos in global migrations*. (F. V. Aguilar Jr., Ed.). [Quezon City]: Philippine Migration Research Network and Philippine Social Science Council.

Wong, D. F. K., & Song, H. X. (2008). The Resilience of Migrant Workers in Shanghai China: the Roles of Migration Stress and Meaning of Migration. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, *54*(2), 131–143. doi:10.1177/0020764007083877

Wu, P. (2003). *ChungShan- The Formation of a Filipino Migrant Workers' Community Space in Taipei* (Unpublished master's thesis). National Taiwan University Graduate Institute of Building and Planning, Taipei.

Wu, S.-C. (2006). The Trapped Labor: An Analysis of the Working Conditions and Employee-Employer Relations of Foreign Domestic Workers and the Examination of Foreign Labor Policies in Taiwan. *Social Policy & Social Work*, *10*(2), 1–48.

Wu, T., Liou, S., Hsu, C., Chao, S., Liou, S., Ko, K., … Chang, P. (1997). Epidemiologic study of occupational injuries among foreign and native workers in Taiwan. *American Journal of Industrial Medicine*, *31*(5), 623–630. doi:10.1002/(SICI)1097-0274(199705)31:5<623::AID-AJIM18>3.0.CO;2-0

Wu, T.-F. (1997). *On the Process of Cultural Struggle of Unfree Migrant Labours Sunday Lives* (Unpublished master's thesis). Tunghai University Department of Sociology, Taichung, Taiwan. Retrieved from http://ndltd.ncl.edu.tw/cgi-bin/gs32/gsweb.cgi?o=dnclcdr&s=id=%22085THU00208003%22.&searchmode=basic

Wu, T.-F. (2002). The Resistance and Adaptation of Foreign Workers in Taiwan in the 1990s-Sunday lives as a Battlefield. *Hong Kong Journal of Social Sciences*, (23), 103–150.

Wu, Y.-Y. (2010). HOMEless: a case study of private/public inversion and the temporal-spatial exclusion faced by migrant domestic workers. (J. Y.-C. Chang, Trans.)*Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, *11*(3), 325–354. doi:10.1080/14649373.2010.484170

Xu, H. Y. (2000). *The Use of Space and Its Effect on a Filipino Labour Gathering Area: Christopher Church Area in Chung-Shane North Road*. Dan-Jiang University, Taipei.

Yeoh, B. S. A., & Annadhurai, K. (2008). Civil Society Action and the Creation of "Transformative" Spaces for Migrant Domestic Workers in Singapore. *Women's Studies*, *37*(5), 548–569. doi:10.1080/00497870802165502

Yeoh, B. S. A., & Huang, S. (1998). Negotiating Public Space: Strategies and Styles of Migrant Female Domestic Workers in Singapore. *Urban Studies*, *35*(3), 583–602. doi:10.1080/0042098984925

Yeoh, B. S. A., & Huang, S. (2010). Transnational Domestic Workers and the Negotiation of Mobility and Work Practices in Singapore's Home-Spaces. *Mobilities*, *5*(2), 219–236. doi:10.1080/17450101003665036

Yu, X. (2009). Influence of Intrinsic Culture: Use of Public Space by Filipina Domestic Helpers in Hong Kong. *Journal for Cultural Research*, *13*(2), 97–114. doi:10.1080/14797580902786457

Zinnbauer, B. J., Pargament, K. I., & Scott, A. B. (1999). The Emerging Meanings of Religiousness and Spirituality: Problems and Prospects. *Journal of Personality*, *67*(6), 889–919. doi:10.1111/1467-6494.00077
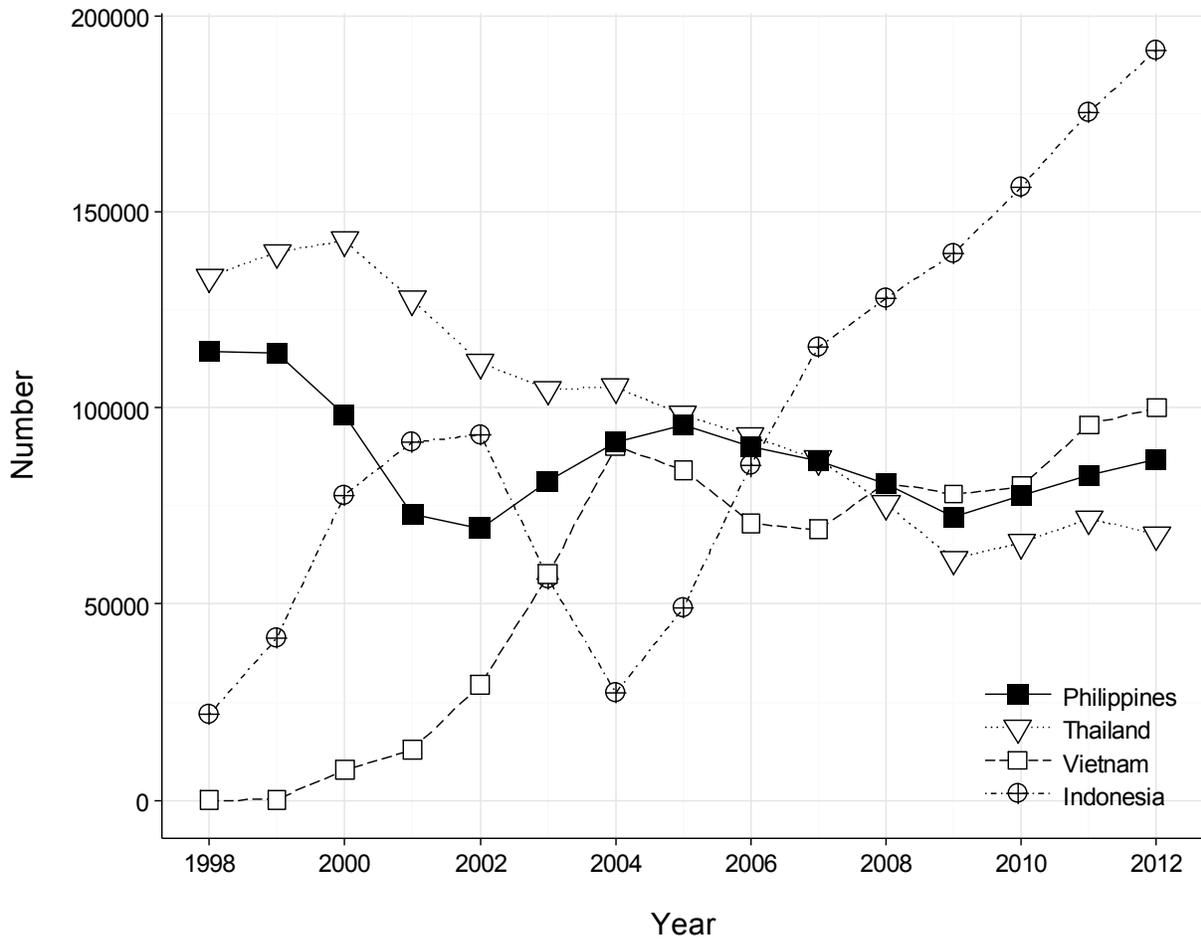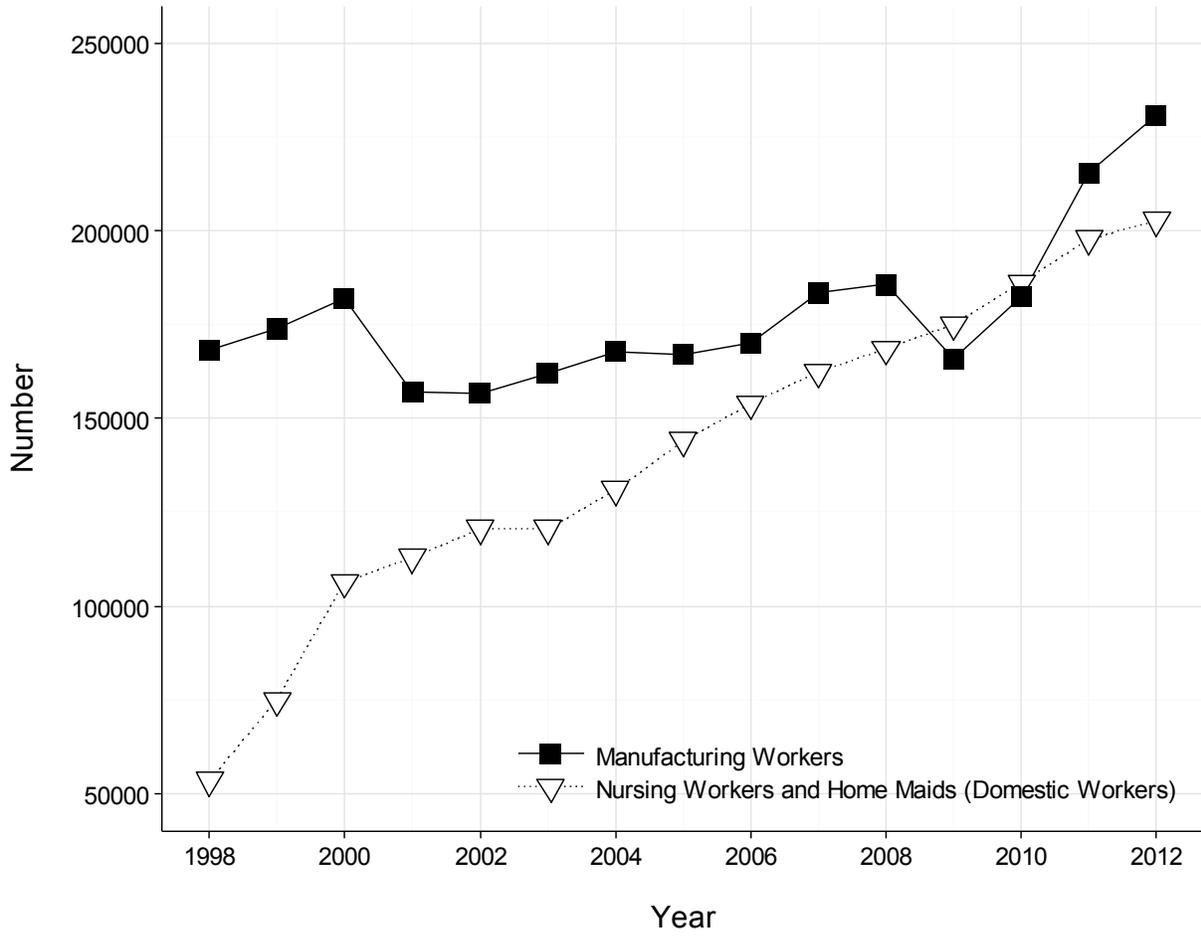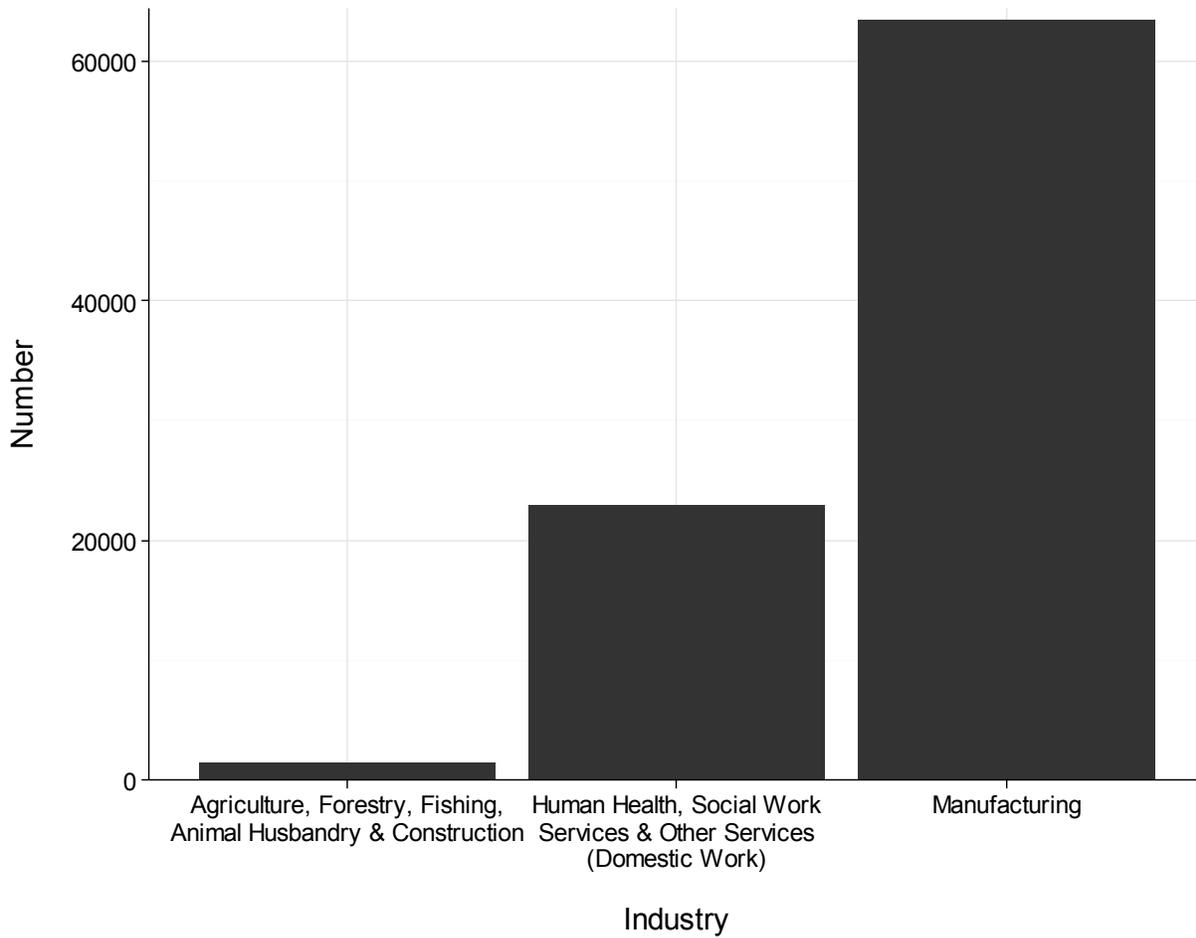
Figure 1. Migrant workers in Taiwan by nationality from 1998 to 2012. Adapted from the

Bureau of Employment and Vocational Training, Council of Labor Affairs.

Figure 2. Migrant workers in Taiwan by industry from 1998 to 2012. Adapted from the Bureau

of Employment and Vocational Training, Council of Labor Affairs.

Figure 3. Filipino migrant workers in Taiwan by industry at the end of April, 2013. Adapted

from the Bureau of Employment and Vocational Training, Council of Labor Affairs.

Table 1

Characteristics of Research Participants

Gender	Age	Region	Education	Years in Taiwan	Type of Job
F	31	Luzon	College	5	Quality Engineer
M	31	Luzon	College	5	Factory Worker
F	33	Luzon	College	4	Factory Worker
M	27	Luzon	College	4	Factory Worker
M	30	Visayas	High School	1	Factory Worker
M	31	Visayas	College	2	Machine Operator
F	24	Luzon	College	1	Factory Worker
F	35	Luzon	High School	1	Factory/Caretaker
F	27	Luzon	College	6	Factory Worker

Appendix A: Interview Guide

1. How would you like to be addressed? Since I would like to keep your identity confidential, could you please tell me only your first name? I will remove your name and any other information that can identify you from the transcription of the recording.

2. Can you tell me about your typical week here in Taiwan?

3. When did you first come to Taiwan?

    4. How long have you been here in Taiwan?

    5. How long do you plan to stay in Taiwan?

6. Can you tell me which culture you identify with and what it means to you?

7. How did you get your job?

    8. If you had to go through a placement agency and/or broker to find your job, how sensitive were they to your culture?

9. Could you please describe your relationship with your employer?

    10. How sensitive is your employer to your culture?

11. Have you accessed social services in Taiwan before? How was the experience?

    12. How sensitive was your social service provider to your culture?

13. What kinds of language barriers do you face here in Taiwan?

14. Whom do you turn to if you have problems?

15. What is your opinion of the cultures in Taiwan?