

Unsung Heroes or Modern Slaves?

The precarity and intersectionality of female migrant domestic workers in Hong Kong during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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ありがとう、皆さん！

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Abstract

The breakout of the COVID-19 pandemic dramatically altered societies and the labor market worldwide. Female migrant domestic workers are also disproportionately affected by the pandemic crisis. Migrant domestic workers in Hong Kong have multiple identities as the labor force, migrants, women, and belong to ethnic minorities. Focusing on female migrant domestic workers in Hong Kong, using an intersectionality approach and building on the literature on employment precarity, this study investigates how their multiple identities construct their precarious employment in Hong Kong during the pandemic. A qualitative content analysis in the form of newspaper articles, online journals, as well as NGO reports is therefore conducted within the conceptual frameworks of precariousness in employment and intersectionality. The thesis argues that during the COVID-19 pandemic FMDWs have faced precarity in terms of employment precarity, financial precarity, housing precarity, health precarity, and social precarity due to the intersection of their multiple identities as workers, women, having immigrant status, and belonging to an ethnic minority. As a result of the research, it is recommended that long-term policies for providing necessary and inclusive care to migrant domestic workers be implemented. Furthermore, this thesis advocates for an intersectional approach to measuring the precarity of migrant domestic workers in future research.

Keywords: Precarity, Intersectionality, Female migrant domestic worker, COVID-19

List of Abbreviations

CA	Content analysis
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
DH	Domestic helper
DW	Domestic work
FADWU	Hong Kong Federation of Asian Domestic Workers Unions
FMDW	Female migrant domestic worker
HK	Hong Kong
ILO	International labor organization
MDW	Migrant domestic worker
NGO	Non-profit organization
SEC	The standard employment contract
SSC	South-South Cooperation

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1. Introduction

A documentary titled *The Helper* (2017)¹ follows the stories of female migrant domestic workers (FMDWs) in Hong Kong (HK) who left their families behind to care for the homes and families of others. The documentary praises this group of FMDWs as “unsung heroes.” According to HK Immigration Department statistics, by the end of 2021, around 330000 FDWs served families in HK, mainly from the Philippines and Indonesia (Chan & Piper, 2022). DW is a heavily female-dominated sector in HK, accounting for about 98 % of domestic Helpers (DHs) are women (Asian News, 2023). Although they contribute to HK’s economic growth and family well-being, FDWs face several real-life dilemmas and struggles. The pandemic has dramatically altered societies and the labor market worldwide, and FMDWs are affected disproportionately. Their employment situation seems to have become more challenging after the Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) breakout.

Precarity is researched widely in the applied and academic literature and across disciplines in different regions (Parreñas et al., 2019; Silvey & Parreñas, 2020; Wee et al., 2019). Precarious work is labor characterized by low wages, insecure or informal employment, few legal protections, and poor social security protection (Lazar & Sanchez, 2019; Platt et al., 2017). In the labor literature, precarity refers to a new dangerous class (the precariat) whose work has the characteristics of precarity (Suliman & Weber, 2019). Scholars (Parreñas et al., 2021; Rosewarne, 2014) contend that transnational workers, such as MDWs, are characterized by precariousness. As workers with a migrant identity, MDWs usually have weak citizenship in receiving countries (Chan & Piper, 2022; Punathil, 2022). The nature of DW compounds a weak citizenship status, making MDWs more vulnerable by narrowing their choices in the labor market and making them more at risk of exploitation in the labor market (Jinnah, 2020). As a woman-dominated occupation, gender plays a significant role in shaping the precarious employment of DW in different regions (Johnson et al., 2020; Muttarak, 2004). Scholars (Platt et al., 2017; Wu & Kilby, 2022) suggest that gender inequality contributes to the precariousness of FMDWs combined with the nature of DW.

The current literature on precarity is extensive despite covering several gaps. Firstly, studies have explored how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected MDWs. However, These articles focus on a certain period of the pandemic or only on its general impact on FMDWs in

¹Directed by Joanna Bowers, the documentary chronicles diverse stories from Hong Kong’s domestic worker community, uncovering the inspiring combination of grit, pride, and determination that drives them. For more information: <https://helperdocumentary.com/>

HK, failing to offer a comprehensive understanding of the precarious employment of FMDWs during the pandemic. Secondly, there is also a scarcity of research that combines an intersectionality approach with a precarity analytical framework to address the vulnerability of MDWs. Therefore, this thesis will focus on FMDWs' employment in HK during the COVID-19 pandemic. FMDWs are characterized by multiple identities. They are members of the labor force, migrants, and women, who belong to ethnic minorities. Building on the current debate on the precarity of FMDWs, this thesis asks the research question: how did female migrant domestic workers' identities intersect in constructing the precarity of employment in HK during the COVID-19 pandemic? This thesis aims to contribute to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8: "protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment" (UN, n.d.). **This thesis, therefore, aims to alleviate the precarity of employment in the domestic work (DW) sector, particularly when it intersects with FMDWs' multiple identities and in extreme situations like the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, this thesis contributes to SDGs 3 and 5: "good health and well-being"; "gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls."** (UNDP, n.d.).

To answer the research question, qualitative content analysis (CA) is conducted, and a series of newspaper articles, academic papers, and NGO reports or surveys are collected. Through a systematic analysis, the research results show that FMDWs are facing a series of structural issues related to their identities which are linked to their precarity during the COVID-19 pandemic. This thesis, therefore, recommends a long-term policy for providing the necessary care to promote the integration and inclusion of FMDWs in HK. In addition, although FMDWs' employment precarity during COVID-19 has been significant, there is no South-South Cooperation (SSC) between the sending and receiving countries, which tend to have their own policy towards FMDWs. Therefore, this thesis also calls for SSC between the sending and receiving countries.

This thesis begins with an introduction to the topic of FMDWs' precarity, followed by a historical background on Filipino and Indonesian FMDWs in HK in Section 2; in Section 3, a conceptual analytical framework based on the concept of employment precarity, and the intersectionality approach is proposed, and related literature is reviewed. The adoption of CA research approach is justified; the case selection, data collection, and data analysis process are discussed in Section 4. The thesis concludes by discussing the main findings and implications for policymakers.

2. Background

Asia is the region producing and hosting a large number of DHs (UN Woman, 2012). Compared with other places in the region, such as Taiwan and Singapore, HK is one of the Asian cities with the most extended history of importing MDWs from Southeast Asia (Wee & Sim, 2005, p.192). First, it is necessary to explain the phenomenon of FMDWs working in HK, and the development of supply and demand conditions, from a historical perspective.

From a demand perspective, the HK economy boomed in the late 1970s and early 1980s, leading to increased employment of MDWs (Zelman et al., 2019). The implementation of China's so-called Reform and Opening-up policy² in 1978 and subsequent growth in foreign trade attracted HK businessmen, who became the largest investors in mainland China. This resulted in the relocation of manufacturing factories to the mainland due to lower investment costs, while the design, trading, and finance sectors remained in HK; the two were consequently dubbed the "back factory" and the "front store," respectively. The increase in HK's non-industrial workforce created a shortage of human resources, prompting many previously housebound women to enter the labor market. As a result, families began hiring MDWs to take care of children and handle household chores, causing a significant rise in demand for DHs. To meet the shortage of local full-time MDWs, the HK government started to import DWs from the Philippines in the 1970s, and the number of DHs from Indonesia has been increasing since the 1990s (Hung, 2020, p.1).

From a supply perspective, exporting human labor has been a critical national economic strategy of many developing countries in Asia, such as the Philippines and Indonesia. (Zelman et al., 2019). The Philippine government encouraged its citizens to work overseas to reduce unemployment and use remittances from overseas Filipino workers to improve the country's economic situation (Marasigan, 2022). Consequently, the Philippine economy grew significantly due to the remittances from OFWs in the following years. By the 1990s, the governments of Indonesia and Thailand followed the Philippines' lead in changing labor laws to encourage their citizens to work abroad.

The presence of FMDWs brings various benefits to HK. Firstly, by allowing the relatively cheap FDWs to enter the labor market, the government does not incur direct costs of providing childcare subsidies (Cortes & Pan, 2013, p.329). Secondly, MDWs from Southeast Asian countries have played a significant role in caregiving to HK families. By outsourcing DW,

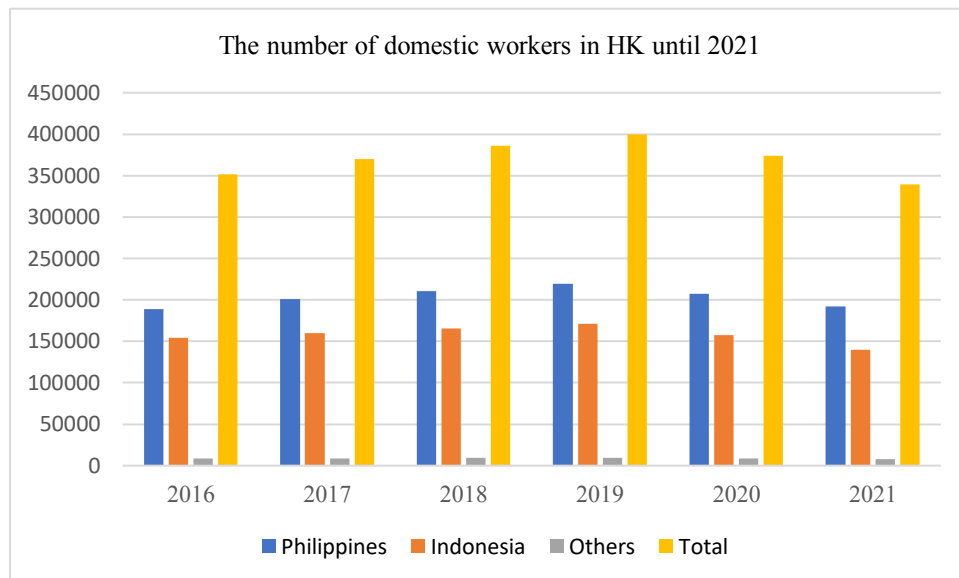
² It is called "*Gaigeikaifang*" in China, guided by Deng Xiaoping in 1978. It refers to a variety of economic reforms. This policy also becomes the basic economic policy in China.

more married and educated HK middle-class women have continued their employment, relieved of the gendered labor of social reproduction (Wee & Sim, 2005, p.176). Thirdly, creating dual-earner households with higher household incomes also benefits the host economy in HK (Chan, 2005, p.524). MDWs in HK contributed an estimated US\$12.6 billion to the city’s economy, or 3.6 percent of its gross domestic product in 2018 (Experian & Enrich HK, 2019).

As a result, outsourcing domestic responsibilities has persisted in HK until today. Over the last two decades, there has been an increase in MDWs, primarily Filipinos and Indonesians. Since the COVID-19 outbreak in January 2020, the HK government has enforced border closures and quarantine policies. However, HK and sending countries did not adopt proper policy cooperation between HK and sending countries during the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, DH application procedures have become much more costly and time-consuming. Additionally, workers who continued to work for HK families felt pressures they had not experienced before (Chan & Piper, 2022, p.274). Table 1 shows the number of DHs in HK in recent years. Figure 1 shows that since the COVID-19 pandemic broke out, the number of MDWs has been declining.

Figure 1

The number of domestic workers in HK



Based on: Chan & Piper, 2022, p.274

3. Conceptual Framework and Literature Review

In this section, related scholarly literature is reviewed, and the conceptual analytical framework based on the concept of employment precarity and the intersectionality approach is proposed. Furthermore, indicators based on the two approaches are developed to assess the precarity of FMDWs during the COVID-19.

3.1 The Concept of Precarity

The concept of precarity emerged from Europe as the central lens for various social struggles and political issues (Harris & Nowicki, 2018; Neilson & Rossiter, 2008; Suliman & Weber, 2019). Precarious work is highly connected to globalization and neoliberalism (Punathil, 2022). The neoliberal globalization has led to an increase in migration, particularly of low-skilled workers who are often employed in the domestic sector. However, despite their significant contributions to the economy and society, these workers often face discrimination, exploitation, and a lack of recognition of their rights (Punathil; 2022).

To understand the core meaning of precarity, I will first define the meaning of precarity in a broad sense. The term “precarity” is derived from the French word *précarité*, which first appeared in French sociology and economics in the late 1970s and was used in the discourse on “new poverty” during the 1970s (Barbier, 2002, p.3). The meaning of *précarité* later refers to “new” employment forms of precarious work outside of the classic Fordist version of full-time permanent contracts. *Précarité* also refers to the precarious employment contracts in 1992 (Barbier, 2002, p.4). The terms “vulnerability” and “exclusion” are also closely linked to the meaning of *précarité* (Barbier, 2002, p.4).

The literature characterized precarious work as low wages, insecure or informal employment with few legal protections, and poor social security protection (Lazar & Sanchez, 2019; Jinnah, 2020; Platt et al., 2017). In the labor literature, precarity refers to a class of workers (the “precarariat”) with the characteristics of precarious work (Standing, 2011 cited in Lazar & Sanchez, 2019). Transnational workers such as MDWs are therefore characterized by precariousness (Rosewarne, 2014). Parreñas et al. (2021) argue that in the case of Singapore, current employer-employee relations in DW at the household scale are characterized by inequality, leading to structural violence, slavery, or trafficking for MDWs (p.2). Silvey & Parreñas (2020) argue that DHs from Southeast Asia working in the Middle East are embedded in “precarity chains,” which refers to the interconnected and cyclical processes of migration, particularly concerning the vulnerability and instability experienced by MDWs. Scholars

(Chan & Piper, 2022; Kosmas et al., 2023) use sporadic hyper-precarity in a specific context of a sudden emergency such as COVID-19. Chan and Piper (2022) argue that the pandemic crisis is a fast-changing and unpredictable situation, leading to increased MDWs' sporadic risks, uncertainties, and vulnerabilities.

Pierre Bourdieu and Agnes Pitrou were the first scholars to use the term "precariousness" and "precarity" in 1963 and 1973, respectively (Kosmas et al., 2023, p.2). Regarding the discussion on "precariousness" in the workplace, Bourdieu's primary argument was that job insecurity was caused by the rise of precarious employment arrangements (such as temporary, part-time, or casual work), which produced comparable outcomes in all fields, but were most noticeable in cases of severe job loss or unemployment (Kosmas et al., 2023, P.2). Precariousness has different dimensions and characters in the workplace. Pitrou identified seven characteristics, including "precariousness" (which entails difficult working conditions and low wages as well as the absence of career prospects), "scarce as well as irregular financial resources," "unstable or unsatisfactory housing conditions," "health problems," "uncertainty about the future number of children," "relative lack of social links," and a "rather precarious balance in terms of the life of the couple" (Pitrou, 1978 as cited in Kosmas et al., 2023, p.3)

In this thesis, I will apply Agnes Pitrou's conceptualization of precariousness to measure the precarity of the FMDW's employment in HK during the pandemic, as Pitrou's lens allows us to understand FMDWs' employment characteristics in the extreme context of COVID-19. Furthermore, precariousness defines the world of the MDW as a reflection of the multiplicity of forces that have pushed the development of labor migration as a solution to structural inequities in the global political economy and their translation into the organization of the private sphere of the political economy (Rosewarne, 2014). However, I do not apply the criteria of "uncertainty about the future number of children" and "rather precarious balance in terms of the life of couple," as this thesis does not focus on the fertility and childbirth of FMDWs. Additionally, Precariousness is related to gender and migration status (Kosmas et al., 2023). Therefore, this thesis also applies an intersectionality approach to measure how the precarity of FMDWs connects with the different identities of FMDWs in HK.

3.1.1 Citizenship and the precarious migrant domestic workers

As immigrants, MDWs usually have weak citizenship in receiving countries (Punathil, 2022; Chan & Piper, 2022). Casas-Cortes (2019) argues that citizenship means "a set of rights and obligations that are conferred on individuals by the state, and which enable them to participate fully in the political, economic, and social life of the country" (p.5). Fox (2005)

contends that transnational citizenship is a complex and multidimensional concept that involves multiple forms of identity, belonging, and political participation.

Jinna (2020) argues that the nature of DW compounds a weak citizenship status, making MDWs more vulnerable by narrowing their choices in the labor market and making them more at risk of exploitation in the labor market. In India, MDWs are subject to various practices that deny them full citizenship, including detection, detention, and deportation (Punathil, 2022, p.1). Casas-Cortes (2019) suggests that the current system of citizenship is inadequate in addressing the precarity and vulnerability experienced by MDWs, who are often excluded from traditional understandings of citizenship. Therefore, the concept of “care citizenship” is proposed to recognize the importance of care work and the rights of those who perform it (p.20). Anderson (2010) contends MDWs challenge the narrow definition of citizenship that is based on legal status and nationality. Therefore, a broader definition of citizenship is proposed based on the principles of equality, participation, and social belonging (p.61).

3.1.2 Gender and the precarious domestic workers

DW is a highly gender-specific niche in the labor market: it is dominated by women (Gulati, 1997; Parreñas & Silvey, 2018; Parreñas, 2000). Female migrant workers, propelled by a lack of decent work, sustainable livelihoods, and other inequalities, including gender discrimination, respond to the demand for DW created in countries of destination (UN Woman, 2012). In the context of the feminization of MDWs, the concept of “global care chains” is widely used to discuss the relationship between care, migration, and development. Herrera (2020) argues that the concept of global care chains illustrates the double character of migrant care work: globally unequal and made of simultaneously material and emotional labor (p.234). Furthermore, the fundamental idea behind the concept is that as one moves further down the care chain, the value of work gradually diminishes and ultimately becomes unpaid (p.233). FMDWs are the central link in increasingly complex transnational global “care chains” that connect migrant women and their families in their countries of origin with employers of DHs and their families in their countries of destination.

Multiple scholars (Johnson et al., 2020; Wee et al., 2019) discuss the role of gender in shaping the precariousness of DW in different regions. Scholars (Muttarak, 2004; Platt et al., 2017; Wu & Kilby, 2022) suggest that gender inequality contributes to the precariousness of FMDWs combined with the nature of DW. Therefore, FMDWs face a series of aspects of precarious employment. Fantone (2007) argues that precarious work has always been a feature of women’s domestic labor and the imperialist exploitation of colonized labor. In HK’s case,

since FMDWs are required to live in the employer's house, Johnson et al. (2020) argue that FMDWs experience workplace surveillance with digital surveillance practices, which harm their privacy (p.288). He also suggests that FMDWs face their male employer's "male gaze" (p.288). In the Singapore case, scholars (Platt et al., 2017; Anjara et al., 2017) contend that female migrants face a range of gender-specific forms of exploitation and discrimination, including sexual harassment, mobility restrictions, and limited access to healthcare (p.126); they also experience high levels of stress and poor physical and mental health, lowering their quality of life. The authors also highlight their unique challenges, such as isolation, lack of social support, and limited access to healthcare in Singapore.

3.2 The Concept of Intersectionality

The concept of intersectionality was first developed by Kimberlé Crenshaw in the 1990s (Crenshaw, 1989). Crenshaw's work focuses on how the intersection of race, class, and gender is responsible for the oppression and disempowerment of black women (Crenshaw, 1989). She stresses the significance of an intersectionality approach to examining inequality: "Any analysis that does not take intersectionality into account cannot sufficiently address the particular manner in which black women are subordinated" (Crenshaw, 1989, p.3). Intersectionality is a broader concept that applies to individuals with different social identities and experiences of oppression and privilege (Weldon, 2008).

As an explanatory approach and theory, intersectionality helps us understand the interwoven relationships of various axes of power, the most important of which are race, class, and gender, in the production of both subjugation and political agency (AI-Faham et al., 2019 ; Bernardino-Costa, 2014). It challenges the limitations of previous approaches in understanding the relationship between social structures. It provides a useful tool for analyzing the interaction between various systems of oppression and inequality experienced by individuals with different identities (AI-Faham et al., 2019).

Faced with the complexity of analysis, scholars seeking to use the concept of intersectionality in empirical work have followed one of two strategies: (1) analyzing the experiences of a specific race-class-gender group; or (2) using an additive approach, identifying the experiences or interests of several broadly defined social collectivities and arranging them alongside one another (McCall, 2005). This thesis will follow the second approach of intersectionality to investigate how the different identities of FMDWs interact and construct their precarious employment in HK during the COVID-19 pandemic. FMDWs' position within the HK dominant society depends on the intersection of their gender, ethnic,

cultural, and national identities and backgrounds (Baig & Chang, 2020, p.788). An intersectionality approach can highlight and examine different elements, as shown in Figure 2. The precarity of FMDWs during the pandemic, therefore, also intersects with their gender and ethnic minority identities and their immigrant status. Therefore, their situation needs to be examined in an intersectional manner.

Figure 2

Intersectionality displayed in a wheel diagram



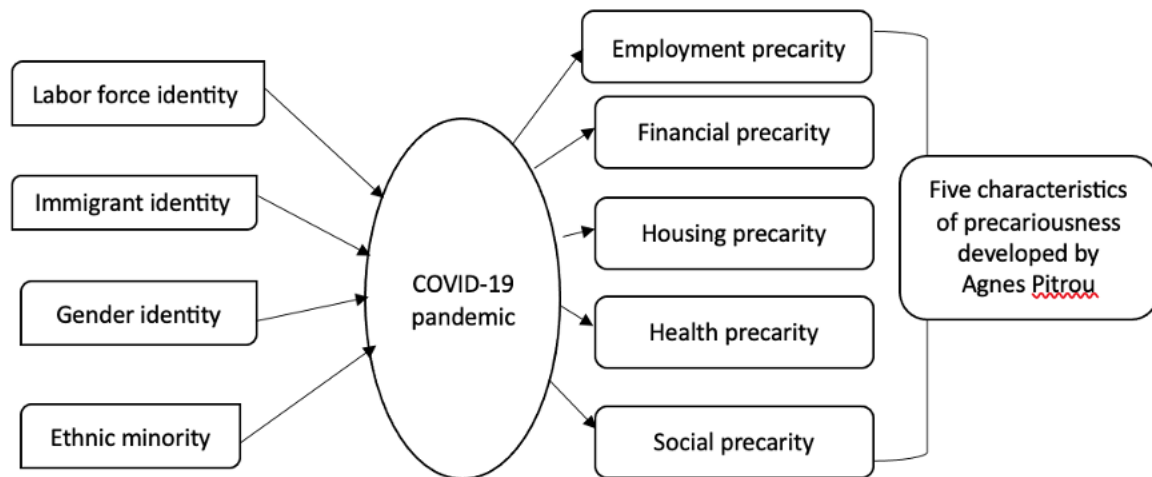
(Criaw, 2009, as cited in Hankivsky, 2022, p.5)

3.3 The Conceptual Framework

Building on the above concepts and literature review, to map and measure the precarity of the FMDWs in HK during the pandemic, the analytical framework of this thesis is shown below:

Figure 3

The conceptual framework



4. Methodology

This section first defines the methodology used throughout the research process, followed by a detailed description of the research design, which includes the selection parameters that justify the choice of HK as a case study. It also describes how data is collected and analyzed.

4.1 Research Design

The thesis will apply a qualitative research approach to answer the research question. A qualitative research method focuses on words and texts, rather than numbers, to explain the social meaning of phenomena (Hesse et al., 2011, p.4). This thesis conducts an “interpretative position” (Hesse et al., 2011, p.5) to analyze the phenomenon behind the precariousness of FMDWs during the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, a qualitative approach is suitable for answering the research question.

4.2 Data Collection

The primary data collection is mainly from related newspaper and NGO reports or surveys; the secondary data collection was mainly from related research articles. Search engines such as the UM Library database, Google, Google Scholar, JSTOR, and the newspapers’ official websites are used to find necessary data.

To get diverse, up-to-date primary data, related newspaper reports on MDWs in HK during COVID-19 were collected. These range from the beginning of the COVID-19 (the beginning of 2020) until the time of writing (2023). Although newspaper articles and other studies could provide some insights into the precarity employment experience of the FMDWs during the pandemic, they can also display selection bias and description bias (Earl et al., 2004, p.67). To balance these biases, I chose newspapers from various newspapers reporting on the FMDW's employment or experience during the pandemic in HK, including global, regional, and local outlets. To find relevant newspapers, firstly, a series of general keywords (see Table 1) were used to find more data through Google and the newspapers' official websites. Secondly, a first review of articles (based on their titles and the presence of keywords related to "Intersectionality/identities" and "Precariousness", see Figure 4. Most news reports concerning DHs are in English because most news sources in Chinese were found not to provide sufficient insight into the precarious employment situation or were too general. These were therefore excluded from the analysed material.

Table 1

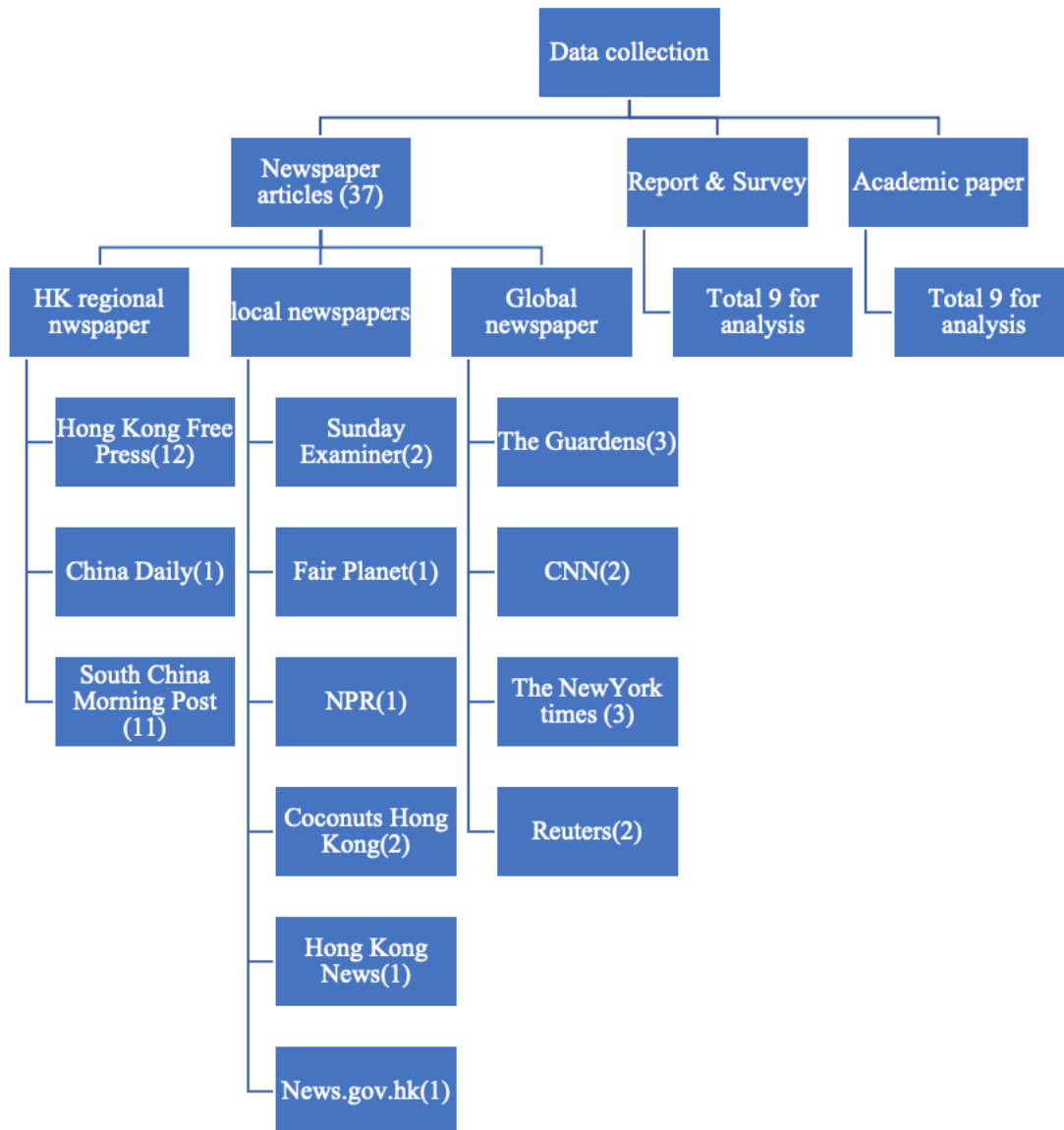
Key words

General information	(female) (migrant) domestic workers (helper), Filipino (migrant) domestic worker (helper), Indonesian (migrant) domestic worker (helper), Hong Kong, precarity, precarious, precarious employment, COVID-19 pandemic
Intersectionality/identities	migrant, minority, vulnerability, minority, female, excluded, marginalized, vulnerability, discrimination
Precariousness	Working hours, leaves, salary, terminate contract, financial anxiety, healthy conditions, living conditions, social life

In addition, through Google Scholar and the UM Library database, with the keywords above, a series of articles were found related to the precarity of FMDWs in HK during COVID-19. By going through the reference lists of each article, many related articles were found and used for the literature review. Therefore, our final dataset includes newspaper articles, NGO reports or surveys, and academic papers:

Figure 4

Data collection process



4.3 Data Analysis

A qualitative content analysis is applied to answer the research question. CA is a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of textual data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). CA aims to “provide knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p.1279). Therefore, it is suitable to interpret how the identities

of FMDWs construct their precarious employment and the patterns behind this precarious experience during the pandemic.

Using the conceptual framework of precarity and intersectionality theory helps shape the coding system used in this thesis, which also offers a direct link to the research question. Specifically, this research selected codes such as “employment precarity”, “financial precarity”, “housing precarity”, “health precarity”, and “social precarity”. Intersectional identity codes such as “gender” and “migrant” are used. After reviewing the data collected and the salient details highlighted, additional sub-codes are created from this starting point. This iterative process aims to remove bias from the data.

4.4 Case Selection

A critical decision in single-country studies concerns the selection of countries. A case study is an intensive study of a single unit to understand a larger class of (similar) units (Gerring, 2004, p.342). A typical-case sample is made up of people who can be considered typical for a community or phenomenon (Nel, 2020). It allows you to develop a profile about what is usual or average for a particular phenomenon (Statistics How To, n.d.). This thesis chooses HK as a typical case study to generate or test hypotheses for several reasons. Firstly, Asia is one of the destinations for MDWs. Compared with other destinations like Brunei, Malaysia, Singapore, and Taiwan, the HK district is typical in Asian countries. The growing demand for FMDWs in HK is one of the typical cases to comprehend precarious employment during the pandemic. Secondly, HK is generally a desirable destination for MDWs than the Middle East or other Asian nations, due to a more vital tradition of protective labor laws, despite these laws being sometimes insufficiently enforced (Zelman et al., 2019).

5. Finding and Discussion

FMDWs in HK have multiple identities that intersect and contribute to their precarious employment, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. In this section, I apply Pitrou’s five characteristics of employment precariousness to measure how the multiple identities of FMDWs’ construct new employment patterns during the pandemic.

5.1 Employment Precarity

The FMDWs' employment precarity analysis includes wages, workload, leaves and holidays, and job insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to the HK government's Labour Department, MDWs' wages cannot be below the minimum wage. During the pandemic, the government announced a 2% increase in the minimum allowance wage from HK\$4,630 (\$593) to \$4,730 (\$603) and a HK\$23 increase in the minimum food allowance for DHs to at least HK\$1,196 per month from October 2022 (Coconuts Hong Kong, 2022). However, there is a structural problem around the minimum wage. The minimum salary is meager, which hardly covers MDWs' living costs. Moreover, there is no transparency in the decision-making process. Additionally, they have no right to argue, debate, or recommend anything, and there is no legal mechanism to challenge what you cannot accept during the pandemic (Agarwal, 2022).

To understand how MDWs obtain the wage, we should also consider the factor of working conditions, including working hours, workload, and leaves during the pandemic. The Mission for Migrant Domestic Worker service report (2021) showed that nine of ten MDWs complained of long working hours. One of two MDWs complained about working on their rest days and statutory holidays. FMDWs needed to work more extended hours, and labor exploitation has become more common during the pandemic. Several reasons contribute to the long working hours.

Firstly, the standard employment contract (SEC) regulates FMDWs' work to six days per week. However, there is no regulation to set standard working hours. Following the live-in policy, FMDWs are required to live in their employer's house. Because they work in private homes, they are hidden from public view and isolated from other workers, leaving them particularly vulnerable to exploitation (Dresser, 2015 as cited in Banerjee et al., 2022). Secondly, during the government-mandated quarantines and lockdowns, the employer was required to work from home, and children were also out of school. Therefore, the boundary between working hours and private time for FMDWs became blurred, leading to longer working hours and a heavier workload. Thirdly, according to the SEC, FMDWs have the right to one day off every week on Sunday. However, one day out has become difficult during the pandemic. Even the government encouraged employers to allow employees to enjoy their vacations and trust that they could take preventive measures on their own. However, the employer was concerned that social contact would increase the risk of virus transmission at home. In addition, the government issued a statement (News.gov.hk, 2020) advising that FMDWs should stay home on their rest day to prevent the spread of COVID-19, which led to

employers placing restrictions on their movement. As a result, employers denied FMDWs' off time and kept them at home, despite the inevitable increase in their workload.

Furthermore, job insecurity among FMDWs also increased during the pandemic. The coding process showed that FMDWs faced numerous challenges in terminating the contract during the pandemic. One way of losing their job was a change in employers' situation during the pandemic, such as employers relocating to other countries for work, going back to their home country, employers being in debt and not being able to afford MDWs, or mistreating the them (Canete, 2022; Reuters, 2022). Another way of losing their job was FMDWs displaying COVID symptoms and/or testing positive. For example, Reuters(2022) showed that the Hong Kong Federation of Asian Domestic Workers Unions(FADWU) received more than 20 cases of DHs who had tested positive for COVID being fired in one week. Thirdly, FMDWs also faced contract termination when the employer asked them not to leave the house on their rest day: those who insisted on taking their day off outside of work were subject to contract termination. The above situations of how their contract can be terminated demonstrate FMDWs' job insecurity. These cases show how the COVID-19 pandemic intersects with FMDWs' labor force identity leading to their working precarity in terms of wages, working hours, workload, leaves, and job insecurity.

5.2 Financial Precarity

As a labor force, FMDWs receive a salary based on the SEC. However, Helper Choice and Enrich HK (2021) showed that MDWs had been severely impacted financially by the pandemic, with 69% of the respondents experiencing financial difficulty during the pandemic. Moreover, their wages were reportedly not enough during the COVID-19 pandemic. As Mission for Migrant Worker (2021) showed, almost 70% of DWs thought their monthly wages were insufficient. Most got extra money by reducing their expenses in HK or taking a loan from financing companies (both 40%); others borrowed money from friends (31%). The financial precarity can be connected to the termination of the contract and social exclusion. As analyzed above, several reasons lead to the sudden cessation of contracts for MDWs. According to the SEC, FMDWs in HK depend on their employers for housing, food, and other basic needs, which has increased FMDWs' financial precarity during the pandemic, for example, in cases of sudden contract termination analyzed in the previous section.

Secondly, as immigrants, FMDWs are denied full citizenship rights in HK. Some newspapers describe FMDWs as "second-class citizens," "third class, fourth or no class at all" (Chandran, 2020; Carvalho, 2021). Their weak citizenship aggravates FMDWs' financial

precarity, further intensified during the pandemic. FMDWs are excluded from the social well-being protection system. For example, HK permanent residents could apply for a cash handout of nearly \$1,300 (HKD 10,000) in 2020 (Siu, 2020). However, MDWs could not apply for the money because they are not eligible to apply for permanent residency in HK. In another example, DHs were excluded from the government's consumption voucher scheme in 2022, which had been established to stimulate the economy during the pandemic (Li, 2022).

Also, MDWs have higher expenses compared to before the breakout of COVID-19. For example, Mission for Migrant workers (2021) showed that 85% of respondents' monthly expenses in HK have increased since the start of the pandemic. Around 60% claimed their monthly expenses increased between HK\$100 and HK\$1,000. In addition, if they end their contracts earlier during COVID-19, DHs need to pay "a high price," including having to pay a large sum to employment agencies and facing a wait for a new work visa (Leung, 2023).

In addition, financial precarity affects not only FMDWs themselves but also the remittances sent to their families back home. As migrants, FMDWs are usually the breadwinners of their families. Helper Choice & Enrich HK (2022) demonstrated that many FMDWs' families were unable to find work during the lockdowns, which increased FMDWs' financial strain: 40 percent said they felt stressed because of their financial situation, 27.6 percent said they had to send more money to their family than before, and almost 20 percent had an increase in expenses. While the HK dollar has strengthened against the Philippine peso in the past six months, inflation in the Philippines also rose in the first half of this year, meaning Filipinos in HK needed to send more of their salaries to families back home. Therefore, as I have shown, being part of the labor force and being an immigrant has intersected with the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, intensifying the financial precarity of FMDWs.

5.3 Housing Precarity

Due to the live-in policy described above, MDWs are required to live in the employer's house. FMDWs' living conditions have become a serious social problem during the pandemic.

Firstly, due to the compact size of HK, FMDWs share a small living area in their employers' homes. Mission for Migrant Workers service report (2021) shows that two of five MDWs do not have a private room. As Reuters (2022) reports, FMDWs usually live in tiny spaces or share the bedrooms of the children they care for.

Secondly, FMDWs live in their employer's homes. These living arrangements often increase gender-based violence during the pandemic. During the government-mandated lockdowns, FMWDs in HK have faced increased levels of physical and sexual abuse. Mission

for Migrant Workers service report (2020) found the reports of sexual abuse and harassment suffered by the workers in their work households tripled in 2020, and those of physical abuse increased by 2 percent. The number of severe physical abuse cases by HK employers, including beatings, groping, rape, long work hours, and sleep deprivation, has risen significantly because of pandemic restrictions imposed on DHs (Hong Kong Free Press, 2021). Wang (2021) quotes a DH named Mary Lobo “They verbally insulted me every day, criticizing me for being ‘smelly, dirty and disgusting.’ I was hurt and felt enslaved.”

Thirdly, once FMDWs get infected by the virus, their living conditions become an emerging crisis in HK. There are two scenarios. The first one is that the FMDWs are infected by the virus within the normal contract performance. Carvalho(2022) shows that some DHs have nowhere to go after becoming infected, having been told by their employers that they could not live with them while carrying COVID-19, even though it is legally mandated that MDWs must live in their employers’ home for the duration of their contracts. In this case, FMDWs are forced to live outside, such as in the streets, parks, and the vicinity of hospitals. Others are treated badly or quartered inappropriately after getting infected. The data shows that instead of sleeping in beds, many DHs are forced to sleep on mattresses in their buildings’ dirty staircases, rarely used by residents, where they are not able to rest appropriately. There is no running water, and they are banned from using their bosses’ bathroom; they have to go out to use a public toilet.

The second scenario happens when a FMDW gets infected after the contract ends or during the job change period. Under the “New Conditions of Stay,” also referred to as the two-week rule, if their contract is terminated for any reason other than documented abuse or exploitation, a FDW must find a new contract or leave the country within two weeks of termination of employment (Zelman et al., 2019). The two-week rule remained a determining factor for decreasing the bargaining power of FDWs: it was detrimental to the FWDs’ well-being and welfare during the pandemic since they could not negotiate their employer’s increasing demands for fear that they would be terminated. FMDWs are legally required to live with their employer according to the standard contract, and losing their job means losing not only income but also housing. Help For Domestic Workers claimed that “they were assisting more than 100 workers left homeless, including at least a dozen who were fired or ordered not to return to the home” (Davidson, 2022). Therefore, as can be seen above, the living-in policy affected FMDWs’ intersecting identities and positions as both workers and women, leading to FMDWs’ living precarity during the COVID-19 pandemic.

5.4 Health Precarity

As a labor force living in their employers' homes, MDWs' physical and mental health was seriously affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The analysis of health conditions is divided into three categories.

First is physical health. As mentioned in the previous section, during the pandemic, the live-in policy blurred the division of private life and worked for FMDWs. Meanwhile, due to the live-in policy, FMDWs were easily infected by their employer families who travel abroad. Furthermore, isolated in employers' homes, they relied on them for information on the pandemic and the lockdowns. However, DHs have not had sufficient access to health equipment since the breakout of COVID-19 (Lui et al., 2021). DHs have also been under physical and mental strain due to an increasing workload as children cooped up at home, creating extra work for them. When they got infected, FMDWs often faced pressure from their employers to not seek medical help over fears about the virus. After being infected, FMDWs either did not seek medical help or did not get immediate attention. Moreover, the FMDWs are forced to live outdoors for quarantine and cannot rest properly.

Secondly, FMDWs experience discrimination and stigmatization during the pandemic as an ethnic minority and as immigrants. FMDWs are stigmatized as a "high-risk group" regarding COVID-19, facing various forms of discrimination. MDWs face increased discrimination during the pandemic. For example, the government has ruled that only FMDM vaccinated in HK can travel between the city and the Philippines, meaning that vaccines administered in other countries were not approved. Meanwhile, the government prohibited FMDWs from taking holidays outside the home; they were accused of spreading the virus on holidays. The police also handed out HK\$5,000 in penalties to more than fifteen DHs for breaking social distancing rules (Agarwal, 2022). The fines were more than DHs' minimum monthly wages, prompting outrage from the local community. FADWU claimed it was difficult for MDWs to navigate the latest restrictions and that they had demanded the authorities revoke fines for all MDWs, saying that policy information was not provided in languages that workers would understand.

Thirdly, mental health has also been affected by COVID-19. Mission for Migrant workers (2021) showed almost 70% report increased stress and anxiety, and half of the respondents report physical pain: one out of four report feelings of depression. Doctors Without Borders & Uplifters (2020) showed that 72% of MDWs who responded to the survey report signs of depression. According to the results, they were most stressed by being separated from their families and worrying about their family members' health and financial difficulties back

home. Many FMDWs faced a mental health crisis, with many forced to quit their jobs due to intolerable working conditions. In most cases, employers refuse to pay for mental health medical treatment. The pandemic has thus exacerbated the physical and mental health issues of MDWs, as they are often overworked, underpaid, and subjected to isolation and discrimination. Therefore, this thesis argues that FMDWs face physical and mental health threats during COVID-19 as a labor force living in their employers' homes. Moreover, threatened by COVID-19, they face discrimination and stigmatization due to an immigrant and ethnic minority identity.

5.5 Social Precarity

Social life is significant for FMDWs. Nevertheless, FMDWs have their social lives highly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Their social precarity manifests in two ways during the pandemic.

Firstly, FMDWs' most important social connection is with families or friends back in their home country. MDWs cannot be granted permanent residency in HK, even if they stay in the city for more than seven years, which is the case for most foreigners (Lui et al., 2021, p.2). Consequently, as migrant workers, their only social connection is through vacation and leave. However, Helper Choice (2022) showed 62.5% of MDWs in HK haven't been Home For more than 3 years. Mission for Migrant Workers (2021) showed 54% respondents spoke of having few or no gatherings with friends, and around 22% reported a loss of communication with family and friends. These challenges stem from the stricter visa application and traveling restrictions in HK. FMDWs are often the main breadwinner in their families, and many have young children they cannot visit for long periods due to travel restrictions (Summers, 2020). Therefore, denying time off during the pandemic has reduced family time. In addition, the border closings also lead to the transnational care chain being in danger, as other FMDWs cannot visit HK.

Furthermore, financial precarity has also exacerbated social precarity. The following quote demonstrates how financial and job insecurity make it difficult and embarrassing for FMDWs to ask others for help, contributing to their social precarity.

They can barely find a person who is impartial and helpful and can put their hearts at ease", said Mahee Leclerc, general manager of Helper Choice. "It's awkward for them to talk about it with their employers. They don't want to discuss it with their friends either for fear their friends might have a vested interest in their finances. It's also uncomfortable for them to raise the problem with their families who might

force them to make some financial decisions, or they just don't want to make their families worry.” (Wang, 2021)

Secondly, social precarity also results from a lack of social time with peers in HK. The workplace fails to provide space to develop social life due to the live-in policy. After six days of work, FMDWs usually have a social and relaxing day on Sunday. FMDWs traditionally gather in the city's public spaces to enjoy their Sunday day off or congregate in shopping malls, parks, or bus stations; they take mats to sit on and crowd around rice cookers, sharing meals (Summers, 2020). Gathering with friends once a week is the most precious social time for workers. However, they have been deprived of this in many cases due to the public health crisis (Wang, 2021). Living with their employers almost daily instead of taking Sunday holiday breaks has deepened their stress (Carvalho, 2021). “I (MDW) want to meet some of the needs of DHs in HK, who because of COVID-19 cannot leave their employers' homes, see friends, or seek help” (Carvalho, 2021).

The pandemic has worsened the already challenging situations of the workers and has shrunk some of their only safety nets, such as religious activities and community gatherings. MDWs have lost their rest day activities during the pandemic. The rest days have been characterized by dislocation or physical isolation. Mission for Migrant Workers (2021) showed half of the respondents reported having fewer celebrations (birthdays and festivals) and, 48% reported fewer religious practices (worship and fellowship), 38% said having a different gathering place. One-third reported having a virtual gathering instead. Meanwhile, being isolated in the employers' home also led to information isolation. FMDWs must rely on their employers for information about the pandemic and the latest social distancing rules (Chau, 2022). As seen from the above, multiple identities intersected, leading to the social precarity of FMDWs in HK during the COVID-19 pandemic.

6. Conclusion

The present study has examined the precarity of FMDWs in HK with an intersectionality approach in the context of the extreme public health crisis in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. This thesis is based on a CA of data mainly from newspapers, reports, surveys from NGOs, and academic articles, guided by an intersectionality approach and Pitrou's framework of precariousness in employment. I argue that FMDWs are facing a series of structural issues related to their identities which are linked to their precarity during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The findings provide evidence for the hypothesis that FMDWs' multiple identities intersect, shaping the five forms of precarity during the pandemic. Firstly, the COVID-19 pandemic

intersects with their labor force identity leading to the FMDWs being more precarious in terms of wages, working hours, workload, leaves, and job insecurity. Secondly, FMDWs face financial precarity during the pandemic. As a labor force, they are at risk of losing their job during the pandemic. Meanwhile, as immigrants, they also face a social exclusion in HK, which leads to a financial precarity. Thirdly, FMDWs live in their employers' homes in very limited living conditions. Due to their female identity, FMDWs are at more risk of sexual harassment, verbal abuse, and physical abuse during the pandemic. Therefore, this thesis argues that their intersecting female and worker identities, combined with the living-in policy, leads to a housing precarity during the pandemic. Fourthly, FMDWs' physical health and mental health have been heavily threatened by COVID-19. Moreover, they face discrimination and stigmatization due to the intersection of their immigrant and ethnic minority identities. In addition, multiple identities intersect with the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to the social precarity of FMDWs in HK, which makes FMDWs have less time with family and friends back in their home country, and with peers in HK as well.

Consequently, resonating with previous research, this thesis recommends a long-term policy for providing the necessary care to promote the integration and inclusion of FMDWs in HK. There is an urgent need for policymakers to recognize the importance of a new emergency mechanism in times of crisis (Chan & Piper, 2022, p.287). Policies such as the requirement to live in their employer's home have brought a series of dilemmas: they connect the five forms of precarity during the pandemic, increase workload and decrease living space, and increase health and social precarity. Therefore, this thesis claims that the government should introduce better protections and revise the live-in policy to improve FMDWs' working and living conditions, alongside the establishment of a full-fledged social care policy and emergency care mechanism for MDWs, especially when there is a general social crisis (Chan & Piper, 2022, p.287). In addition, even though FMDWs' employment precarity during the COVID-19 is significant, there is no South-South Cooperation between the sending and receiving countries, which tend to have their own policy towards FMDWs. Therefore, this thesis also calls for a necessary SSC. As mentioned at the beginning of the thesis, if FMDWs could be praised as "unsung heroes" of HK society, they should also not be treated like "slaves".

Thirdly, this thesis also presents paths for future study on the precarity of MDWs. Within my knowledge, only one article (Zhang et al., 2022) made use of an intersectionality approach in analyzing migrant workers' precarious employment. Consequently, this thesis calls for an intersectionality approach to analyzing the precarity of FMDWs in future studies.

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Appendix List

Appendix A Data analysis sources

Number	Source 1	Source 2	Author	Date	Title
1	Newspaper article	The Guardian	Helen Davidson	2022, February 23	Hong Kong domestic workers left homeless after being fired for contracting Covid-19
2	Newspaper article	The Guardian	Hamish Sumners	2020, December 15	Day off denied: how Covid confined Hong Kong's domestic helpers
3	Newspaper article	The guardian	Corinne Redfern	2021, January 27	'I want to go home': Filipino domestic workers face exploitative conditions
4	Newspaper article	CNN	Michelle Toh & Lizzy Yee	2022, March 15	Hong Kong's Covid divide: Expats get more perks while domestic workers lose their homes
5	Newspaper article	CNN	Rebecca Wright	2020, March 30	Hong Kong asked domestic workers to stay in to stop the spread of coronavirus. But some got infected at home by their employers
6	Newspaper article	The New York Times	Vivian Wang	2021, May 18	For Hong Kong's Domestic Workers During Covid, Discrimination Is Its Own Epidemic
7	Newspaper article	The New York Times	Al-jen Poo	2020, March 9	Protect Caregivers From Coronavirus
8	Newspaper article	The New York Times	Vivian Wang	2022, March 2	Hong Kong, buckling under covid, leaves its most vulnerable in the Cold
9	Newspaper article	Reuters	Reuters	2022, February 28	Hong Kong domestic helpers abandoned as COVID takes toll
10	Newspaper article	Reuters	Rina Chandran	2020, December 24	Asian migrant workers locked up, dumped as coronavirus curbs ease
11	Newspaper article	Hongkong Free Press	Candice Chau	2023, January 29	'The frontline in our homes': Covid-19's lasting impact on Hong Kong's migrant domestic workers
12	Newspaper article	Hongkong Free Press	Selina Cheng	2021, June 29	Hong Kong domestic workers faced wave of sex attacks and physical abuse during pandemic 'lockdown'
13	Newspaper article	Hongkong Free Press	Guest Contributor	2023, March 4	Int'l Women's Day: Let's take time to appreciate Hong Kong's unsung heroes
14	Newspaper article	Hongkong Free Press	Candice Chau	2023, March 2	Rights group urge better working conditions for Hong Kong's domestic workers ahead of Women's Day
15	Newspaper article	Hongkong Free Press	Mercedes Hutton	2023, March 8	Women in Hong Kong urged to call for greater rights, as equality watchdog data shows continued imbalance
16	Newspaper article	Hongkong Free Press	Hillary Leung	2023, March 23	Changing jobs a 'human right,' domestic workers say as Hong Kong ramps up crackdown on 'job hopping'
17	Newspaper article	Hongkong Free Press	Candice Chau	2022, February 17	Foreign domestic worker spends 2 nights in Hong Kong park after contracting Covid, as NGO warns of 'emerging crisis'
18	Newspaper article	Hongkong Free Press	Guest Contributor	2022, June 19	Covid-19: Let's sack a new deal for domestic workers as Hong Kong gets back on its feet
19	Newspaper article	Hongkong Free Press	Candice Chau	2021, April 30	Anger as Hong Kong orders compulsory Covid tests for city's 370,000 domestic workers amid mutant strain fears
20	Newspaper article	Hongkong Free Press	Kelly Ho	2021, May 4	Hong Kong leader insists move to mass test domestic helpers for Covid-19 was not discriminatory
21	Newspaper article	Hongkong Free Press	Almond Li	2022, June 15	Hong Kong domestic worker activists slam gov't for 'heartless' exclusion from consumption voucher scheme
22	Newspaper article	Hongkong Free Press	Hongkong Free Press	2021, July 4	Abuse of Hong Kong domestic workers by employers increased dramatically during pandemic lockdown
23	Newspaper article	South China Morning Post	Raquel Carvalho	2020, February 28	Struck, isolated: Migrants face increased mental health risks amid coronavirus crisis
24	Newspaper article	South China Morning Post	Raquel Carvalho	2020, October 11	Coronavirus: death of Filipino domestic helper in Hong Kong underlines stark health care gap amid pandemic
25	Newspaper article	South China Morning Post	Raquel Carvalho	2022, April 3	Sick domestic workers left homeless and jobless in Hong Kong after catching Covid-19, highlights a deeper problem
26	Newspaper article	South China Morning Post	Kathleen Magsama & Erika Na	2022, April 2	Coronavirus: Hong Kong employment agents expect thousands of Filipino domestic workers to arrive as city lifts travel ban
27	Newspaper article	South China Morning Post	Phila Su	2021, April 24	Coronavirus: 14-day travel ban to Hong Kong leaves Filipino domestic worker stranded, feeling 'helpless'
28	Newspaper article	South China Morning Post	Raquel Carvalho	2021, February 14	Coronavirus: Filipino domestic worker in Hong Kong offers webinar booster for fellow migrants
29	Newspaper article	South China Morning Post	Raquel Carvalho	2020, February 19	Hong Kong's first Filipino domestic worker infected with coronavirus 'in good spirit'
30	Newspaper article	South China Morning Post(Video)	Lea Li	2022, February 20	Infected domestic helpers become homeless amid Hong Kong's fifth Covid-19 wave: NGOs
31	Newspaper article	South China Morning Post	Kate Whitehead	2022, September 5	Hong Kong domestic helpers under financial stress in pandemic, and are not getting enough sleep
32	Newspaper article	South China Morning Post	Raquel Carvalho	2021, May 21	Hong Kong's domestic workers are everyday heroes. Don't treat them like second-class citizens
33	Newspaper article	South China Morning Post	Phila Su	2020, September 21	Coronavirus: Hong Kong government to give one-time handout of HK\$10,000 to non-permanent residents in need
34	Newspaper article	China Daily	Wang Yida	2021, September 4	Living on the breadline
35	Newspaper article	Sunday Examiner	Sunday Examiner	2020, February 28	Foreign domestic workers urged to take precautions on holidays
36	Newspaper article	Sunday Examiner	Sunday Examiner	2020, March 20	Foreign domestic workers deprived of rights during pandemic survey says
37	Newspaper article	Coconuts Hong Kong	Coconuts Hong Kong	2022, September 30	Minimum wage for foreign domestic workers with new contracts in Hong Kong to be increased by 2.2%
38	Newspaper article	Coconuts Hong Kong	Coconuts Hong Kong	2022, September 29	Salaries for foreign domestic workers in Hong Kong drop by about HK\$1,000 as city eases travel curbs
39	Newspaper article	Hong Kong News	Carazon Amaya Canete	2022, March 20	Almost 5000 fewer Filipino domestic workers (FDWs) in HK in the 5th wave
40	Newspaper article	NPR	Julie McCarthy	2022, March 17	Seen as heroes at home, Filipino workers feel 'abandoned' amid Hong Kong's COVID surge
41	Newspaper article	Fair planet	Ananta Agarwal	2022, April 26	Hong Kong's foreign domestic workers: end our abuse
42	Newspaper article	news.gov.hk	news.gov.hk	2020, January 30	Health advice for foreign helpers
43	Report	Report	Mission for migrant worker	2020	Mission for migrant worker service report 2020
44	Report	Report	Mission for migrant worker	2021	Mission for migrant worker service report 2021
45	Report	Report	Mission for migrant worker	2022	Mission for migrant worker service report 2022
46	Report	Report	United Nations	2023	Concluding observations on the third periodic report of China, including Hong Kong, China, and Macao, China*
47	Survey	survey	Helper Choice & Eritich HK	2022	3 Out of 10 Domestic Workers in Urgent Financial And Emotional Support in The Fifth Wave
47	Survey	survey	Helper Choice & Eritich HK	2021	Migrant Domestic Workers Financial Survey
48	Survey	survey	Mission for Migrant workers	2021	Quick Survey Results on COVID-19 Impacts on Migrant domestic workers
49	Survey	survey	Doctors Without Borders & Uplift	2020	Findings of A Mental Health Need Assessment Survey for Migrant Domestic Workers in Hong Kong
50	Survey	survey	Helper Choice	2022	52.5% of Foreign Domestic Workers in Hong Kong Haven't Seen Home For More Than 1 Year
51	Academic Paper	Academic paper	Lui et al.	2021	"We also deserve help during the pandemic": The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on foreign domestic workers in Hong Kong
52	Academic Paper	Academic paper	May	2021	The impacts of Covid-19 on foreign domestic workers in Hong Kong
53	Academic Paper	Academic paper	Chan & Piper	2022	Sanitized boundaries, sanitized homes: COVID-19 and the sporadic hyper-precarity of migrant domestic workers in Hong Kong
54	Academic Paper	Academic paper	Sembrino	2020	Migrant Domestic Workers: Their COVID-19 Burdens
55	Academic Paper	Academic paper	Vilag & Piscou III	2021	Community of Care Amid Pandemic Inequality: The Case of Filipino Migrant Domestic Workers in the UK, Italy, and Hong Kong
56	Academic Paper	Academic paper	Setyaningsih	2022	Political Economy of Remittances of Indonesian Migrant Domestic Workers in Hong Kong during the Covid-19 Pandemic
57	Academic Paper	Academic paper	Liem et al.	2020	The neglected health of international migrant workers in the COVID-19 epidemic
58	Academic Paper	Academic paper	Kang	2022	COVID-19 and Overseas Filipino Workers: Return Migration and Reintegration into the Home Country—the Philippine Case
59	Academic Paper	Academic paper	Yu et al.	2022	Social Network Analysis on the Mobility of Three Vulnerable Population Subgroups: Domestic Workers, Flight Crews, and Sailors during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Hong Kong

Appendix B The standard contract

Appendix A: Standard Contract for Migrant Domestic Workers in Hong Kong

EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT

(For A Domestic Helper recruited from abroad)

This contract is made between (“the Employer”, holder of Hong Kong Identity Card/Passport No.*.....) and (“the Helper”) on and has the following terms:

1. The Helper’s place of origin for the purpose of this contract is
2. (a) The Helper shall be employed by the Employer as a domestic helper for a period of two years commencing on the date on which the Helper arrives in Hong Kong.
(b) The Helper shall be employed by the Employer as a domestic helper for a period of two years commencing on, which is the date following the expiry of D.H. Contract No. for employment under this contract.
(c) The Helper shall be employed by the Employer as a domestic helper for a period of two years commencing on the date on which the Director of Immigration grants the Helper permission to remain in Hong Kong to begin employment under this contract.
3. The Helper shall work and reside in the Employer’s residence at
- 4.(a) The Helper shall only perform domestic duties as per the attached Schedule of Accommodation and Domestic Duties for the Employer.
(b) The Helper shall not take up, and shall not be required by the Employer to take up, any other employment with any other person.
(c) The Employer and the Helper hereby acknowledge that Clause 4 (a) and (b) will form part of the conditions of stay to be imposed on the Helper by the Immigration Department upon the Helper’s admission to work in Hong Kong under this contract. A breach of one or both of the said conditions of stay will render the Helper and/or any aider and abettor liable to criminal prosecution.
5. (a) The Employer shall pay the Helper wages of HK\$..... per month. The amount of wages shall not be less than the minimum allowable wage announced by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and prevailing at the date of this contract. An employer who fails to pay the wages due under this employment contract shall be liable to criminal prosecution.
(b) The Employer shall provide the Helper with suitable and furnished accommodation as per the attached Schedule of Accommodation and Domestic Duties and food free of charge. If no food is provided, a good allowance of HKS \$a month shall be paid to the Helper.
(c) The Employer shall provide a receipt for wages and food allowance and the Helper shall acknowledge receipt of the amount under his/her* signature.

6. The Helper shall be entitled to all rest days, statutory holidays, and paid annual leave as specified in the Employment Ordinance, Chapter 57.

7. (a) The Employer shall provide the Helper with free passage from his/her* place of origin to Hong Kong and on termination or expiry of this contract, free return passage to his/her* place of origin.

(b) A daily food and traveling allowance to HK\$100 per day shall be paid to the Helper from the date of his/her* place of origin until the date of his/her* arrival at Hong Kong if the traveling is by the most direct route. The same payment shall be made when the Helper returns to his/her* place of origin upon expiry or termination of this contract.

8. The Employer shall be responsible for the following fees and expenses (if any) for the departure of the Helper from his/her place of origin and entry into Hong Kong:

(i) medical examination fees;

(ii) authentication fees by the relevant Consulate;

(iii) visa fee;

(iv) insurance fee;

(v) administration fee or fee such as the Philippines Overseas Employment Administration fee, or other fees of similar nature imposed by the relevant government authorities; and

(vi) others:

In the event that the Helper has paid the above costs or fees, the Employer shall fully reimburse the Helper forthwith the amount so paid by the Helper upon demand and production of the corresponding receipts or documentary evidence of payment.

9. (a) In the event that the Helper is ill or suffers personal injury during the period of employment specified in Clause 2, except for the period during which the Helper leaves Hong Kong of his/her* own volition and for his/her* own personal purposes, the Employer shall provide free medical treatment to the Helper. Free medical treatment includes medical consultation, maintenance in hospital and emergency dental treatment. The Helper shall accept medical treatment provided by any registered medical practitioner.

(b) If the Helper suffers injury by accident or occupational disease arising out of and in the course of employment, the Employer shall make payment of compensation in accordance with the Employees' Compensation Ordinance, Chapter 282.

(c) In the event of a medical practitioner certifying that the Helper is unfit for further service, the Employer may subject to the statutory provisions of the relevant Ordinances terminate the employment and shall immediately take steps to repatriate the Helper to his/her* place of origin in accordance with Clause 7.

10. Either party may terminate this contract by giving one month's notice in writing or one month's wages in lieu of notice.

11. Notwithstanding Clause 10, either party may in writing terminate this contract without notice or payment in lieu in the circumstances permitted by the Employment Ordinance, Chapter 57.

12. In the event of termination of this contract, both the Employer and the Helper shall give the Director of Immigration notice in writing within seven days of the date of termination. A copy of the other party's written acknowledgement of the termination shall also be forwarded to the Director of Immigration.

13. Should both parties agree to enter into new contract upon expiry of the existing contract, the Helper shall, before any such further period commences and at the expense of the Employer, return to his/her* place of origin for a paid/unpaid* vacation of not less than seven days, unless prior approval for extension of stay in Hong Kong is given by the Director of Immigration.

14. In the event of the death of the Helper, the Employer shall pay the cost of transporting the Helper's remains and personal property from Hong Kong to his/her* place of origin.

15. Save for the following variations, any variation or addition to the terms of this contract (including the annexed Schedule of Accommodation and Domestic Duties) during its duration shall be void unless made with the prior consent of the Commissioner for Labour in Hong Kong:

(a) a variation of the period of employment stated in Clause 2 through an extension of the said period of not more than one month by mutual agreement and with prior approval obtained from the Director of Immigration;

(b) a variation of the Employer's residential address stated in Clause 3 upon notification in writing being given to the Director of Immigration, provided that the Helper shall continue to work and reside in the Employer's new residential address;

(c) a variation in the Schedule of Accommodation and Domestic Duties made in such manner as prescribed under item 6 of the Schedule of Accommodation and Domestic Duties; and

(d) a variation of item 4 of the Schedule of Accommodation and Domestic Duties in respect of driving of a motor vehicle, whether or not the vehicle belongs to the Employer, by the helper by mutual agreement in the form of an Addendum to the Schedule and with permission in writing given by the Director of Immigration for the Helper to perform the driving duties.

16. The above terms do not preclude the Helper from other entitlements under the Employment Ordinance, Chapter 57, the Employees' Compensation Ordinance, Chapter 282 and any other relevant Ordinances.

17. The Parties hereby declare that the Helper has been medically examined as to his/her fitness for employment as a domestic helper and his/her medical certificate has been produced for inspection by the Employer.

Signed by the Employer _____

(Signature of Employer)

in the presence of _____

2. Toilet and bathing facilities ___ Yes ___ No
3. Bed ___ Yes ___ No
4. Blanket or quilt ___ Yes ___ No
5. Pillows ___ Yes ___ No
6. Wardrobe ___ Yes ___ No
7. Refrigerator ___ Yes ___ No
8. Desk ___ Yes ___ No
9. Other facilities (please specify) _____
3. The Helper should only perform domestic duties at the Employer's residence. Domestic duties to be performed by the Helper under this contract exclude driving of a motor vehicle belongs to the Employer.
4. Domestic duties include the duties listed below.
 - Major Portion of domestic duties:-
 1. Household chores
 2. Cooking
 3. Looking after aged persons in the household (constant care or attention is required/not required*)
 4. Babysitting
 5. Child-minding
 6. Others (please specify)
5. The Employer shall inform the Helper and the Director of Immigration of any substantial changes in item 2,3 and 5 by serving a copy of the Revised Schedule of Accommodation and Domestic Duties (ID 407G) signed by both the Employer and the Helper to the Director of Immigration for the record.

(Name of Witness)

(Signature of Witness)

Signed by the Helper _____

(Signature of Helper)

in the presence of _____

(Name of Witness)

(Signature of Witness)

*Delete where inappropriate.

SCHEDULE OF ACCOMODATION AND DOMESTIC DUTIES

1. Both the Employer and the Helper should sign to acknowledge that they have read the contents of this Schedule, and to confirm their consent for the Immigration Department and other relevant government authorities to collect and use the information contained in accordance with the provisions of the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance.

1. Employer's residence and number of persons to be served

A. Approximate size of flat/house.... square feet/square metres*

B. State below the number of persons in the household to be served on a regular basis:

.....adult.....minors (aged between 5 to 18) minors (aged below 5).....expecting babies.....persons in the household requiring constant care and attention (excluding infants)

(Note: Number of Helpers currently employed by the employer to serve the household.)

2. Accommodation and facilities to be provided to the helper

A. Accommodation to the Helper

While the average flat size in Hong Kong is relatively small and the availability of separate servant room is not common, the Employer should provide the Helper suitable accommodation and with reasonable privacy. Examples of unsuitable accommodation are: The Helper having to sleep on made-do beds in the corridor with little private and sharing a room with an adult/teenager of the opposite sex.

___ Yes. Estimated size of the servant room.....square feet/square metres*

___ No. Sleeping arrangements for the Helper:

___ Share a room with child/children aged

___ Separate partitioned area of square feet/square metres*

___ Others. Please describe

B. Facilities to be provided to the Helper:

(Note: Application for entry visa will normally not be approved if the essential facilities from item (a) to (f) are not provided free.)

1. Light and water supply ___ Yes ___ No