Beyond the Cultural Horizon-
A study on Transnationalism, Cultural Citizenship, and Media
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Abstract

In many cases, the need to survive has been the reason for many individuals to leave their country and to start anew in a foreign land. Indeed, migration has played its role as one of the solutions to struggle against poverty among many migrants. Nevertheless, migration can also be an excellent way to improve or develop one’s linguistic, professional and cultural competencies. And one way of doing this is to be part of the au pair cultural exchange program. The interest to be an au pair as well as the interest to have an au pair has been the subject of colorful debates in Denmark, and pushing politicians to make an action due to reports of abuse by many host families. Where the au pair program will end up is still a question hanging up in the air. This study is about the journey of many young and educated Filipino migrants who have decided to embark on the au pair expedition. The theme is anchored on deprofessionalization and deskilling. Transnationalism, civic culture and cultural citizenship, and media are the central theories of the study.

Feedback from the participants indicates that there is a need to shift the discussion and focus. It is also important that the au pairs’ knowledge and skills are recognized.

The study recommends further research on how participatory communication can be utilized or applied to engage all the stakeholders: au pairs, host family, social organizations, sending and receiving countries, and mass media, in finding long term solutions. The ‘cultural exchange or cheap labor’ argument must not be ignored; however, debates should not be limited to this alone. Most of the au pairs are educated. Recognition of such qualifications must be done to create a new arena for discussions. Oftentimes, many au pairs themselves do not see this side of their background as something valuable. From a communication for development perspective, behaviour change- the au pairs should not see themselves as domestic workers, but as educated migrants, and this must be promoted and advocated, so that au pairs and members of the host society can acknowledge this unknown aspect of these unsung migrants. They are education migrants; it is only right and logical that the au pairs are supported to enhance their qualifications. Deprofessionalization and deskilling must be avoided.

Keywords: Transnationalism, Migration, Diaspora, Cultural Citizenship, Media, Deprofessionalization, Deskilling, Filipino Au Pairs, Denmark, The Philippines, Communication for Development
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1. The Filipino Au Pairs: Unsung Cultural Ambassadors?

What lies beyond the ‘expansion of one’s cultural horizon program’ of the au pair scheme? Who are the au pairs? What do they have to offer aside from doing light house work? I had always wondered why I would often see many young Filipino women in Copenhagen either at the Central Station, at the shopping street, or at the small store that sells products from the Philippines. I later found out that they were au pairs, and this caught me by surprise since I knew that it was not permissible, at that time\(^1\), to leave the Philippines on an au pair visa. An official forbiddance to send Filipinos to Europe as au pairs was initiated in 1997 due to the complaints about the plight of Filipino au pairs in Europe, and the complaints were mostly related to abuse by the host families. My speculation stopped for a while until two years ago after finishing a communication-themed field study on the Filipino community in Rome in November 2010. During this time, also the same period when I started the Communication for Development master’s degree program, I thought it would be ideal for me to focus my final project work on the Filipino au pairs in Denmark, and also because of the reason that the Philippine government had then lifted the ban on the deployment of Filipino au pairs to Denmark, Norway, and Switzerland in October 2010. The au pair restriction was immensely considered by the Philippine government and in the end it was decided that there should be a great emphasis on the welfare and safety of the Filipino au pairs (Source: POEA, 2010), hence, the Philippines once again started to, officially\(^2\), allow the Filipinos to apply for an au pair program to either of the three countries mentioned above. Since Copenhagen is much closer to my area of residence in Sweden, I find it more feasible to conduct my study in Copenhagen than in Norway or Switzerland. Only very recently, on the 22\(^{nd}\) of February 2012, the au pair deployment prohibition was once again lifted, and this time it covered the other remaining destination countries in Europe, moreover, the application process was made easier for applicants and, hitherto, it still promotes and highlights special considerations on the wellbeing and protection of Filipino au pair applicants (Source: DFA, 2012).

In December 2011, while conducting my ComDev pilot study in Copenhagen, I learned that many of the au pairs had finished their college/university education, and many of them decided to come to Denmark to support their family financially. After having been informed about their academic and professional backgrounds, I have been further told, by the au pairs,\(^1\) 

\(^1\) During my personal visits to Denmark in 2005-2009. 
\(^2\) The ban in 1997 did not stop the determined Filipinos to travel to Denmark and become au pairs. This was done unofficially by bribing migration officials at the airport.
that many of them are treated as domestic helpers by their host families despite the fact that they have come to Denmark to learn about the Danish culture in exchange of helping out the host family with light house works. However, there were also some Filipino au pairs who explained to me that they were in Denmark not for the cultural exchange program, but to earn a living as domestic workers despite having a Philippine university degree. As a transnational Filipino migrant myself, I can relate to some of the hindrances that a migrant is confronted by as well as the value of maintaining a community that a migrant can belong to. Therefore, the predominating rationale to pursue this study is founded on understanding further the lives of the participating Filipina au pairs in Denmark.

1.1 Aim of the Study and Research Questions

The study explores the non-mediated and mediated practices of the six Filipino participating au pairs in terms of their exclusion and inclusion\(^3\) in the Danish society, in relation to present academic discussions on transnationalism, cultural citizenship and civic culture. Consequently, the research questions were divided into three components:

- What functions does the Internet have for participants in relation to communication with their family, professional advancement, and civic participation?
- How do activities such as house works in the host families, cultural and language studies, and social interactions affect the civic engagement of the participants?
- How do they benefit or not benefit from being part of the religious and socio-cultural networks in terms of network building and access to knowledge and information about the host society?

1.2 Scope and Limitation

Study Timeline:

- November 2010- inception of the idea to conduct a study on au pairs in Denmark.

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\(^3\)“Social exclusion is a concept that is used in many parts of the world to refer to the complex processes that deny certain groups access to rights, opportunities, and resources that are key to social integration” (http://www.adler.edu/page/institutes/institute-on-social-exclusion/about) Accessed 22 May 2012, while inclusion is “characterized by a society’s widely shared social experience and active participation, by a broad equality of opportunities and life chances for individuals and by the achievement of a basic level of well-being for all citizens” (Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom*, Anchor Books 2000 cited in http://www.rwbsocialplanners.com.au/SOCIAL%20INCLUSION.pdf). Accessed 22 May 2012

*Hilary Silver’s three paradigms of exclusion can also be read on this online article (pp. 3-4)
November- December 2011 ComDev’s Research Methodology\textsuperscript{4} course- helped me to conceptualize how I could pursue the final project work through the pilot study I conducted with the representative of the Catholic Church in Amager.

January 2012- finalization of my project proposal.

**The study covered discussion and analysis of:**

- The lived-experiences of the six au pair participants. Their perspectives are the core of this study, consequently, their understanding and experiences about roles of diverse groups in Denmark are also integrated.
- Transnationalism, Citizenship, Culture, and Media

**The study did not fully discuss:**

- The possible inclusion of the au pairs as part of migration resolution to demographical changes in Denmark.

1.3 **Relevance to Communication for Development (ComDev)**

The study is anchored on ComDev’s concepts on culture, communication, and development combined with the field work on a particular case study, wherein the cultural aspect of the study is embedded on the notion of transnationalism, in which communication between cultures is greatly manifested. Faist (2010: 11) elucidated that transnationalism has been used to “[connote] everyday practices of migrants engaged in various activities and these include [...] reciprocity and solidarity within kinship networks [...] the transfer and re-transfer of cultural customs and practices”. Indeed, a network for migrants is an integral component of transnationalism, because it is through networks that migrants obtain valuable knowledge about welfare, rights, practical advices, and even amity among members. Proponents of communication for development argue that behavior change is a crucial factor for social change. However, Tufte (2005), in his essay about HIV/AIDS, explained that even massive information dissemination to help people understand more about the problem does not always result to behavior change. He added that advocacy or promotion of rights and problems, and communication for social change, wherein the “underlying causes are being recognized” (p. 117), are deemed to be significant complementary methods. A meaningful communication for development conveys understanding of “why people do what they do and understand the

\textsuperscript{4}See Appendix 3 for the summary of the assignment.
barriers to change or adopting new practices” (The World Bank, 2011). It is essential to obtain knowledge and understanding of the lived experiences of the Filipino participants in Denmark: their relationship with their host family; why they have chosen to come to Denmark among other things. To understand the conditions from the perspectives of the au pairs is one of the ComDev components of this study, and through this, it would be easier to define which solutions are applicable to the problems that they are experiencing. The other ComDev aspect is the mediated practices of the participants; the Internet, on how it can be utilized for participation and/or emancipation. The final ComDev element is related to the methodology of the study, which is based on or inspired by Participatory Research. Feedback from the au pairs who have been interviewed have been incorporated in this study, in view of the fact, that their perspectives and opinion as participants are vital. Furthermore, the published study will be shared with the Filipino community with the hope that further discussions leading to improvement and development of the status of the Filipino au pairs will be accommodated.

2. Contextualization and Relevant Studies

Discussion of migration related matters concerning both the migration practices of the Filipinos illustrating a common feature of the type of workers who leave the country and which types of jobs they end up doing abroad; an overview of the au pair program; and the Danish migration profile in relation to the au pair program are embarked upon in this section.

2.1 The Filipinos as Migrants

The presence of Filipinos abroad, either on the grounds of labour, academic, or spouse/fiancée status is greatly acknowledged. As of December 2010, there are a total of 9,452,984 migrant Filipinos in 217 countries. Openiano (2007: 5) explained that the term ‘permanent’ refers to Filipino migrants who either have been naturalized (acquisition of citizenship by a non-national after the person has met the conditions set by the host country) or have permanent residence and work permits; the ‘temporary’ migrants are those whose stay is documented but on a temporary basis; while the ‘irregular’ migrants or undocumented migrants are those

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5 These millions of Filipino migrants in 2010 sent a total amount of US$18,762,989 worth of remittances to the Philippines, and in 2011, there was a growth rate of 7.22% or US$20,116,992 according to the Central Bank of the Philippines (BSP, n.d.). (*in thousand US dollars)

6 According to the Commission on Filipino Overseas (CFO), Ninety-two percent (92%) of these migrants are considered to have permanent and temporary statuses, while the remaining eight percent (8%) are irregular migrants (CFO, 2010).

7 The US, Saudi Arabia, Canada, UAE, Australia, Malaysia, Japan, the UK, Hong Kong, and Kuwait are the top 10 destination countries of Filipinos.
whose stay abroad is not properly documented. Although, there is no outright distinction that the Filipino au pairs are temporary migrants, this study takes the position, based on Openiano’s definition of the term temporary, that the au pairs fall into the category of temporary migrants.

The movement of Filipinos as migrant workers can be examined through four waves of labor migration (Catholic Institute for International Relations, 1987 cited in Tulud Cruz, 2010: 17). Tulud Cruz pointed out that the first wave could be tracked back in the early 1900s when Filipino men were recruited for cheap labor in sugar and pineapple plantations in Hawaii and later to the US mainland as apple pickers. The second wave happened between the 1940s and 1960s, the time when immigration policies were more open, where the US, Canada, and Europe were the destinations of Filipino professionals, war brides, and highly-skilled workers. Moreover, these decades marked the ‘brain drain’ period of Filipino migration, since many of the emigrants were highly educated and skilled. The third wave was in the 1980s when the (deceased) Philippine dictator, Ferdinand Marcos, saw the implication and importance of the remittances sent by Filipino migrants to the nation’s economy. The exportation of Filipino migrants during this period consisted of diverse professions, from medical doctors, engineers to domestic helpers (p. 17). The third wave was also known for exporting the ‘brains and brawns’ of the country. The fourth wave happened in the 1990s and mainly characterized by, according to Beltran and Javate de Dios (1992: vii cited in Tulud Cruz, 2010: 18) the “feminization of Philippine labor migration”. This was due to the unprecedented emigration of Filipino women as nurses, entertainers, and domestic helpers (p. 18). Tulud Cruz added that the fourth wave resulted in to high quantity of Filipino domestic helpers in Hong Kong. However, it should also be noted that the Filipino domestic helpers in Hong Kong consisted of both educated and less-educated/skilled Filipino women. In Europe, Filipinos working as domestic helpers is also common, especially in the southern part of the continent.

In his study of migration, transnationalism, and class identity of Filipino migrant groups in Toronto, Kelly (2007:3) made clear that Filipino migrants undergo a process of “deprofessionalization, deskilling, and class deterioration”. The irony presented in this case study is that Canada selects its migrants according to their academic and professional qualifications but are “frequently found in the most precarious and marginalized segments of the labour market” (p. 14). Going back to the first wave of Filipino migrants down to the fourth wave, it seems that the Filipino workers are often considered to have less value when it
comes to labor placements that they can avail of. In Denmark, the focus country of this study, the same phenomenon holds true. Mongaya Høgsholm (2007: 314) wrote that the Filipino labor migrants (in the late 1960s) started as workers in the blue collar industry, interestingly, she further pointed out that this group of migrants did not mind the type of labor stratum despite their academic experience. Mongaya Høgsholm, in addition, noted down the arrival and presence of the “new generic Filipina in Denmark” (p. 315), the au pair, the participants of this study. According to Mongaya Høgsholm, these temporary migrants have eventually turned in to a good resource of cheap labor to many Danish families.

2.2 Coming to Denmark: Country Migration Profile and The Au Pair Program
Taking on the lens of a migrant in Europe, Denmark has been known for a country where the ‘happiest people’ live (United Nations, 2012). However, this is only one side of Denmark. Despite the fact that many migrants live in decency in the country, there are still advocacies to make migration to Denmark much easier. Stenum (2011a: pp. 181-184) explained that Denmark has a tight immigration legislation whose focus has been on prohibiting “non-white, non-Western, low-skilled immigrants, especially from Middle Eastern and ‘Muslim’” to come to the country (p.182). Interestingly, Stenum (p. 184) also pointed out that despite the fact that the Filipinos might belong to the non-white, non-Western race group, they seem to be exempted from this restriction despite in the context of race. What Stenum has failed to acknowledge here is the fact that the Filipino au pair migrants are not low-skilled immigrants, on the contrary, they are educated. The repercussion of non-acknowledgement in a doctoral thesis can be that the society might not see the academic and professional profiles of the au pairs and instead see them as ‘typical’ low-skilled migrants, since academic research can be crucial in creating public opinion. The Danish Radio (2012), a prominent media outfit, reported that majority of the Danish people see the au pairs as cheap labors. In another news article published by Information.DK (Kristensen, 2012) presenting an interview with a politician, who explained that it is not possible to change the category of the au pairs into a ‘work’ status, since the au pairs are neither employees nor servants and such change of status will be in collision with the European agreement on au pair placement. A Filipina au pair in greater Copenhagen had been interviewed recently by Information.DK about her unpublished

9 7 out 10 Danes see the au pair program as labor http://www.dr.dk/Nyheder/Ligetil/Kort_nyt/2012/01/2012/01/16124339.htm Accessed 27 May 2012.
10 Council of Europe, 1969
qualitative study on the au pairs in Gentofte, a municipality outside Copenhagen and a place notoriously known for having a lot of au pairs. The study was about the experiences of the au pairs as seen from the au pairs’ perspective, the author, Vanessa Faith Agreda\textsuperscript{11}, interviewed 50 au pairs who recounted their sad and bad experiences with their host family. It showed in her study that many au pairs were not happy with their situations mostly because of the abuse relating to the long hours of work and verbal mistreatment; and consequently, the conclusion of Agreda’s study stated that “80% of those interviewed wanted the au pair program abolished or changed and make it to a full time housework” (Elmelund, 2012: my translation). On the one hand, the effort of a Filipino au pair to conduct such study is commendable, as it shows the positive side of an educated Filipina au pair. On the other hand, it seems that she does not acknowledge the academic and professional backgrounds of the au pairs in Denmark. Does she take the stance of the opinion of the 80% in her study? Such general opinion about the status of a group, according to Freire (2002: 104), is typical reaction of middle class\textsuperscript{12} people: Individuals of the middle class often demonstrate this type of behavior […]. Their fear of freedom leads them to erect defense mechanisms and rationalizations which conceal the fundamental, emphasize the fortuitous, and deny concrete reality. In face of a problem whose analysis would lead to the uncomfortable perception of a limit-situation, their tendency is to remain on the periphery of the discussion and resist any attempt to reach the heart of the question.

\textit{Au pair} is a French phrase for \textit{of equal terms} in which the au pair should assume the role of being ‘a member’ of a family. To qualify for an au pair visa, the Immigration Service of Denmark (New to Denmark, 2012) explained that the applicant should be between 17 and 29 years old, not married, and do not have any children. Furthermore, the duration of an au pair visa can be up to 24 months. The au pairs will help with light household tasks for five hours a day and six days a week and one free day. Aside from these aspects, an allowance of 3,150 Danish Crowns (approximately 400 Euros) are given to them. The core of the au pair scheme is to offer a cultural exchange experience to interested individuals, under the stipulation of broadening the au pairs’ cultural horizon, professional skills, and as well as language proficiencies (New to Denmark, 2012). It is, therefore, further emphasized on the Danish Immigration Service’s website that the applicants must possess linguistic and cultural

\textsuperscript{11} Agreda came to Denmark to be an au pair according to the genuine rules of the au pair which is also followed by her host family.

\textsuperscript{12} The socio-economic status of the au pairs for this study takes the stand of middle class, since they have been able to reach a higher level of education and they have been able to travel abroad.
foundation to maximize this educational stay in Denmark. Highlighting the term *education*, it should be accentuated that the au pairs are given a type of student visa.

*Source: Tal og fakta på udlændingeområdet* (Udlændingeservice, 2012: 19)

Figure 1. An introduction to different types of student visa by the Danish Immigration Service

*Note: The following is my translated version of the information in Figure 1: “Introduction to the study section, etc. A foreign national can be granted a residence permit in Denmark as students at higher education, as students of basic and youth study programs and students at folk high schools, as au pair with a host family in Denmark or to work as an intern in Denmark etc.” (my emphasis)*

It is clearly stated that the au pairs belong to the category of ‘students’ in contrast to ‘workers’. Mongaya Høgsholm (2007: 316) construed that in 1994 there have only been 100 Filipino au pairs in Denmark, however, after more than a decade this has blown into a couple of thousands. In 2011, a total of 2,409 au pair visa was granted by the Danish Immigration Service (Source: Udlændingeservice, 2012: 21), and 1,950 of these visa were granted to applicants from the Philippines. The three tables below present the au pair migration trends in Denmark. It is noticeable that over the years, the Philippines has been the top receiver of an au pair visa.

Table 1. “Residence permits granted for educational purposes” (my translation) *Source: Tal og fakta på udlændingeområdet* (Udlændingeservice, 2012: 20)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kategori</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012 i alt pr. 31.03.2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Au pair</td>
<td>6.142</td>
<td>5.374</td>
<td>5.042</td>
<td>5.212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praktikant</td>
<td>2.775</td>
<td>4.670</td>
<td>4.670</td>
<td>4.334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanitært arbejde</td>
<td>0.520</td>
<td>0.450</td>
<td>0.401</td>
<td>0.373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religionsførkendt mv.</td>
<td>0.650</td>
<td>0.520</td>
<td>0.520</td>
<td>0.493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over</td>
<td>5.058</td>
<td>5.058</td>
<td>5.058</td>
<td>5.058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alt</td>
<td>16.837</td>
<td>15.273</td>
<td>15.318</td>
<td>15.318</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. “Residence permits granted to au pairs distributed according to nationality” (my translation) *Source: Tal og fakta på udlændingeområdet* (Udlændingeservice, 2012: 21)

The table shows that the Philippines (Filippinerne) in 2011 was the highest receiver of au pair residence permits, around 162 Filipinos came to Denmark on an au pair visa per month. As of March this year (pr. 31.03.2012), although comparatively lower than last year’s monthly average, the Philippines still tops the list among other nationalities.

### Table 3. Overview of the increase in au pair applications from the Philippines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>569</td>
<td>955</td>
<td>1,510</td>
<td>2,163</td>
<td>2,165</td>
<td>2,140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>594</td>
<td>539</td>
<td>467</td>
<td>522</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>1,471</td>
<td>1,793</td>
<td>2,207</td>
<td>2,937</td>
<td>2,773</td>
<td>2,649</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** Au pair residence permits were granted to Filipino applicants even before the ban was lifted in November, 2010. The remarkable aspect of these figures indicates that there has been a great interest for Filipinos to migrate to Denmark as au pairs OR a high interest for host families in Denmark to get a Filipino au pair. Despite the ban, an increase in au pair permits to Filipinos transpired during 2005-2008. Mongaya Høgsholm argued that the au pair scheme has become a recruitment process for cheap labor. The same criticism has been advocated by Stenum (2008, 2011). An interesting angle in Stenum’s 2008 research was the fact that it was commissioned by the Danish Union of Public Employees (FOA), which protects the rights of domestic workers, among others, in Denmark. It is intriguing to question FOA’s interest in the condition of the au pairs in the Danish households. The apparent cause of this could be that FOA saw the Filipino au pairs as domestic workers and not as cultural students. Did it mean that even the migration researcher, Stenum, saw the au pairs as domestic workers? The answer to this is rather complicated. Stenum’s 2008 qualitative research about the conditions of the au pairs was done during the period when it was not legal for the Philippines to send au pairs to Denmark, therefore, one could say that the Filipinos who travelled to Denmark as au pairs, before the ban was lifted, were not part of the au pair cultural exchange program. However, Denmark saw them as persons who are participants of the Danish au pair cultural exchange program according to Table 3. This conundrum has led to question the real
meaning behind the au pair scheme and it still is a distressing debate in Denmark. Stenum (2008) further explained that the Filipino au pairs remit their allowance to help support their family in the Philippines, an act which is very common among Filipino migrants worldwide. This practice of remitting the au pair’s allowance is even shown in the documentary film *Au Pair*13 by Horanyi and Andersen (2011). Stenum (2011b: 120) in her report to the European Parliament about the cases of au pairs in six EU countries recommended that to solve the dilemma attached to the au pair scheme in Europe is to revise the current au pair program and separate it into two different program: “one of cultural and educational exchange with less than eight hours domestic help per week in exchange for food and lodging; and one of domestic and care work on conditions meeting decent working conditions”. The recommendation seems to be sensible and ideal if the au pair scheme should be honored. This recommendation explicitly puts a stop on the conundrum of cultural exchange program or recruitment of cheap labor since it distinctly separates one from the other. The consequence is, of course, applications from the Philippines and other developing countries will decrease since they will not be able to afford to financially provide for their cultural exchange stay in Denmark. The other consequence is, perhaps, many Filipinos14 might not realize that the distinction also entails that application for a domestic job in Denmark might not be feasible since domestic work is currently not part of the Positive List15 (New to Denmark, 2012b), and I doubt that it will ever be part of it.

3. Theoretical Framework
Since transnationalism is the backbone of this research, it is inevitable to include migration and diaspora as equally important key theories, especially, when highlighting the Filipino migrants. Aside from these, citizenship and civic culture, intercultural communication, and theories on media are presented and discussed to highlight the socio-cultural components of the study, which discusses the social and cultural standings of migrants in a society.

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13 This film can be accessed through this YouTube link: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=57NM2uSsqRg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=57NM2uSsqRg).

14 These Filipino temporary migrants have left the Philippines with their talents, skills, and competencies, which can be considered as part of the ongoing brain drain in the country. However, their talents, skills, and competencies are not properly recognized. Deprofessionalization and deskilling, or brain waste as a more common term, are happening to these Filipino migrants. Ironically, there are demographic changes that are happening in Europe. The population of Europe, is growing old and the fertility rate is relatively low (Europa, 2005; United Nations, 2001), and these issues have to be addressed through the rationale of finding individuals and groups to replace the soon to be vacant posts in the continent to solve these demographic problems.

15 The Positive List is a list of professions needed in Denmark, from engineers, nurses, doctors to teachers and social workers.
3.1 Transnationalism

Vertovec and Cohen (1999: xxii-xxiv) explained that transnationalism can be best understood through five general frameworks: 1. as the reconstruction of ‘place’ or locality and as pointed out by Appadurai (1995) and Smith (1998) (cited in Vertovec & Cohen, 1999: xxii) transnationalism is “the growing disjuncture between territory, subjectivity and collective social movement” and as well as “the steady erosion of the relationship”. According to Harvey (1993:4 cited in Rantanen, 2005: 52) place is important to formation of identities, because place\textsuperscript{16} is where people can make sense of their world; 2. the movement of capital which explains the transfer of money in the form of remittances by migrant individuals to their country of origin; 3. mode of cultural reproduction and is associated with the construction of mixed or hybrid cultural consequences; 4. a site for political engagement and is focused on the participatory role of migrants in the global public sphere through technology; 5. The making of transnational communities and networks which carries the more popular or acknowledged meaning of transnationalism as social formations across borders. Dynamic networks of migrant communities facilitate the transformation of socio-cultural and political relationships beyond the territorial limits of nations. Gupta and Ferguson (1992: 9 cited in Vertovec & Cohen, 1999: xxv) argued that transnational public sphere redefined the locality and community by creating a form of solidarity beyond the physical perimeters of a place, since transnational communities can take action on events transpiring in other places as long as they have shared intentions with the help of technological tools.

The presence of social movements in migrant communities contributes to these socio-cultural transformations. Nick Crossley (2002) clarified that defining social movements is not an easy task, which is why he presents four definitions that describe each possible type of a social movement. However, Blumer’s (1969: 99 cited in Crossley, 2002: 3) classification seems to be the appropriate one when describing progressive Filipino organizations in Denmark.

Social movements can be viewed as collective enterprises seeking to establish a new order of life. They have their inception in a condition of unrest, and derive their motive power on one hand from dissatisfaction with the current form of life, and on the other hand, from wishes and hopes for a new system of living. The career of a social movement depicts the emergence of a new order of life.

\textsuperscript{16} Place in contrast to space, which is “thought to be out there, outside the borders of place” (Rantanen, 2005: 52), is “best conceptualized by means of the idea of locale, which refers to the physical settings of social activity as situated geographically” (Giddens: 1990: 18 cited in Rantanen, 2005: 51).
Filipino social movements in Denmark provide much more than being part of a Filipino network. They also empower its members, the au pairs in particular, by making them aware of their rights and welfares through information meetings.

3.1.1 Migration and Diaspora

Discussions about migration theories oftentimes focus on the economic, sociological, and political directions. However, Massey et al. (1993: 36) argue that there are several levels or sub-theories that further encompass each of them. For this research, the important economic theory dimensions are: 1. the *neoclassical macro theory* which examines that international migration is instigated by “geographic differences in the supply of and demand for labor”. This means that countries with overflowing labor resources but have low market wage supply countries with limited labor assets but have high market wage. This description can also be applied to the four waves of migration as discussed. 2. The *neoclassical micro theory* discusses that the individual decisions made by migrants is also part of the international migration. This is primarily due to the rationale of investment in human capital. People move to places where they can prosper, be productive with their skills and make a decent living. Massey and his colleagues (1993) further explained another migration theory that illustrates migrant networks\(^\text{17}\) as another factor why people migrate. The network theory (Massey et al. 1993) is a vital attribute when it comes to understanding the international movement of migrants. Because of the networks of migrants, individuals are more likely to take the risk and work abroad. Moreover, because of the networks abroad, the risks of not finding a job decline.

A very important subject in terms of migration is *gender*. Since the participants of this study are women, it is inevitable to discuss gender as a key factor in migration. From gender and migration perspectives, Tulud Cruz argued that migration is gendered, based on the argument that the international market itself is gendered “where poor and poorer women of color, continue to be segregated in jobs associated with the service sector or care work” (2010: 19). Women’s migration is oftentimes associated with working abroad as domestic workers; because of this, women’s professional competencies are quite often disregarded. Beneria (2003:135) pointed out an interesting argument that there is a good tendency that women’s labor contributions are underestimated in particular when it is categorized as domestic work. Not only that women have to work as household workers, but this type of work also connotes

\(^{17}\) Members of the network can be kinship, friendship, and members of local communities.
that it does not deserve proper remuneration. As stated earlier, the presence of Filipinos around the world is especially noted making the Philippines an excellent example of a poor country providing labor and development assistance to more developed countries. This ironic statement very much describes the truth that the Philippines is well connected to the world in terms of manpower, providing other nations with skills and fortitude necessary for their economic stability, while the country itself lags behind other booming countries. Migration has been an integral part of urbanization and industrialization. People leave their place of origin in search of a greener pasture to survive and make use of their knowledge, and develop their sense of being. This is mostly the case of a standard Filipino migrant. These migrants have eventually settled in many countries, thus, forming diaspora communities.

Bruneau (2010: 36) described the term diaspora as a community that forms bond with other groups invoking a common identity. A descriptive account of the notion of diaspora is discussed by Hall (1991 cited in Vertovec & Cohen, 1999: xx)

[diaspora does not refer us to those scattered tribes whose identity can only be secured in relation to some sacred homeland to which they must at all costs return, even if it means pushing other peoples into the sea. This is the old, the imperializing, the hegemonizing form of ‘ethnicity.’... The diaspora experience as I intend it here is defined not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of identity which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by hybridity. Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference.

The Filipino diaspora community in Denmark can be considered as the driving force of promoting hybridity among the Filipino community members, including the au pairs, by explaining to them the cultural differences between Denmark and the Philippines, and by encouraging the au pairs to participate in discussions concerning their rights and welfares in the host country. The identities that the au pairs can produce or construct can somehow be manifested through the way they see themselves in the Danish society, on how they can work out their way through the cultural differences that they are facing. In Denmark, Filipino diaspora communities are well organized and interconnected representing different socio-cultural dimensions such as women’s organization, religious groups, and bi-cultural (Filipino-Danish) collective blocs. The Filipino diaspora communities connect to its members and other Filipino diaspora networks over the internet18. They make use of social media applications to

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18 I found many Filipino organizations in Denmark through web search.
communicate with their members and impart messages about upcoming events and updates in the Danish migration legislation, for instance.

Religion is a valuable aspect when understanding Filipino migration. Warner (1998: 3) discussed that religion is important to diaspora communities in a sense that it becomes more meaningful to them being away from home. Filipinos are deeply religious people, which is why religion is a vibrant feature when looking into diaspora communities. Bramadat (2009: 2) also pointed out that religion typically functions as an element of social structures for migrant groups in host societies by providing them information about “moral standards and aesthetic sensibilities” and most importantly by giving migrants a sense of meaning and purpose throughout their settlement. In relation to the study, by being active members of the church, many au pairs see the advantages of being part of the religious community in connection to their access in to the Danish society, also as part of their cultural learning agenda.

3.2 Cultural Citizenship and Civic Culture

Although Hall (2003) had been explicit about the transformation process that migrants undergo; there are still questions about being able and not being able to go with the flow since migrants are confined within political and social dilemmas that hinder them to be active in society. Thus, the transformation that Hall is bringing up can either be delayed or do not materialized at all. Dahlgren (2009: 63) discussed that the notion of equality is based upon the framework of state-based citizenship. For this reason, migrant communities might find it difficult to fully participate in the new society because of how the economic and cultural systems function. Basically, this can be interpreted that migrants, being one of the many marginalized groups in a society, will find it difficult to be part of the cultural environment of a society since they are regarded as minorities, thus, they have a more toned down voice compared to members of the majority who know how their own system works. The concept of citizenship, according to Dahlgren (2009: 59) is built upon rights and obligations “historically evolved in society, and underscores universalism and equality”. However, Dahlgren (2009) further argued that universalism and equality as such are not often achieved

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19 It should be emphasized that religious or church membership can be a good start or an excellent aspect for the au pairs’ participation in society, for the reason that the church can be mediators between au pairs and society. Nevertheless, such membership can be crucial if members are mostly confined performing their church membership, which can eventually hinder the other possible social activities necessary for their cultural reproduction, for instance.
even in democratic societies, for the reason that questions concerning these aspects have not always been politically addressed. Because of the democratic imbalance, it will not always be easy for a migrant to see one’s self as a citizen; consequently, a migrant’s social and civic functions are hindered as well as engagements both in the private and in the public sphere. A much specific discussion of citizenship focuses on *cultural citizenship*\(^{20}\) as Dahlgren (2000: 317) elucidated as having the rights to “own traditions and language”, including a series of rights connected to both the “common good and minority needs”. Cultural citizenship focuses more on groups that are usually standing on precarious grounds and risk of having less space for participation, hence, a more specific type of citizenship ensures minority groups a certain degree of recognition of their existence. Dahlgren further expounded that it is important to see one’s self as a citizen to be able to act as a citizen (p. 318). Thus, if people feel inferior about themselves, either by self infliction or through harmful treatment by others, then they will perform less in society and instead enclose themselves in their security blanket. Hence, being able to take part in communication is crucial for any member of society, and in this case, the participation or civic involvement of the au pairs in the Danish society is crucial to their practice of citizenship.

The notion of civic culture as discussed by Dahlgren (2000: 320) explores an open prospect for engagement between different groups, a more heterogeneous environment where “different social and cultural groups can express civic commonality in different ways, theoretically enhancing democracy’s possibilities”. However, one might ask how civic engagement can be reached and what can be the conditions underlying one’s participation. The answers to these can be found in the four dimensions or empirical elements of civic culture (p. 320). The very basic of this is to get access to information. However, this can be, in some ways tricky. To have access is already problematic in many cases, since access to information is not only limited to both technical and economic factors, but as well as with “linguistic and cultural proximity” (p. 321). There should be access to basic information like current affairs, public discussions, and debates, and this should not be hampered by linguistic and cultural barriers, after all, 1. *knowledge and competencies* must be developed in such a way that people understand what is happening around them (p. 321). 2. In addition, essence of *loyalty to democratic values and procedures* must be respected, so that conflicts can be

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\(^{20}\) In contrast to the three known dimensions of citizenship as explained by Dahlgren (p. 317): 1. Civil aims “to guarantee the basic legal integrity of society’s members; 2. Political guarantees “the rights associated with democratic participation”; and 3. Social, which primarily “addresses the general life circumstances of individuals”,
resolved and compromise can be reached. This is because democracy is a vital component of any society and should be practiced constantly by its members. 3. To be able to be part of the civic culture, it is crucial that democracy should be part in everyday practice, routines, and traditions, since this is a an excellent foundation for creating personal and social meaning specifically when one has to be able take part in discussions or even argumentations (pp. 321-322). 4. Lastly, Dahlgren (p. 322) explained that knowing one’s identity as a citizen is crucial when it comes to claiming one’s social membership and application of democratic participation. It is entirely dependent on how people think and do in everyday life in order to be part of the civic culture. However, I would like to point out that the road to engagement and participation consists of complicated and gray matters, as Dahlgren also discussed it is critical that the many sets of rules are valued and practiced, and the individuals have a big role to play to break into a society.

According to Freire (1973: 17 cited in Morrow & Torres, 2002: 76) it is only when people “amplify their power to perceive… and increase their capacity to enter into dialogue not only with other [individuals] but with their world” can they become closer to a more critical view of their status, thus leading to a more participatory attitude. Nevertheless, involvement in dialogue can also be crucial since the essence of dialogue is the “word”, and this is not just an instrument of communication (Freire, 2002: 87). The ‘word’ consists of two interrelated dimensions, reflection and action, which means that if one dimension is sacrificed, then the other part suffers, because “to speak a true word is to transform the world” (p.87). In relation to the au pairs, if they want to be known as learners or cultural ambassadors, then it is important they understand the true meaning of their status and act according to how learners of culture should be. Consequently, if they see themselves and tell themselves that they are workers, then they will act as workers and be treated as workers. Furthermore, Freire argued that

true dialogue cannot exist unless the dialoguers engage in critical thinking-thinking which discerns an indivisible solidarity between the world and the people and admits of no dichotomy between them-thinking which perceives reality as process, as transformation, rather than as a static entity-thinking which does not separate itself from action, but constantly immerses itself in temporality without fear of the risks involved. (2002: 92)

Dialogue is an integral part of emancipation which leads to participation. Freire also mentioned about the culture of silence which is fatalistic, especially when one party, the dominant one, does not want to be involved in a dialogue and “use various manipulative
strategies to preserve their cultural hegemony and domination” (Morrow & Torres, 2002: 96). Overall, Freire’s advocacy is significant for marginalized groups; therefore, he also encouraged marginalized groups to “concretely "discover" their oppressor and in turn their own consciousness, [otherwise] they nearly always express fatalistic attitudes towards their situation (2002: 61).

3.3 Intercultural Communication

Denmark and the Philippines are two different countries, and as a consequence, the cultures can be contrasting. On his website, Hofstede explained that Denmark possesses the individualistic characteristic, while the Philippines belongs to the collectivistic one. Hofstede and Bond (1984 cited in Gudykunst & Kim, 2003: 56) discussed that in individualistic cultures people look after themselves and only their immediate family, while people from collectivistic culture usually look after their ingroups in “exchange for loyalty”. One might ask if there is a good and bad culture in relation to being individualistic and collectivistic. No. It must be greatly emphasized that neither individualistic nor collectivistic culture is good or bad, they are merely different. According to Gudykunst and Kim, low-context communication is usually applied by individualistic cultures, while high-context communication is used by collectivistic cultures. Hall (1976: 70 & 79 cited in Gudykunst & Kim, 2003: 68) pointed out that a message is high-context when the important aspects of the information is “either in the physical or internalized in the person, while very little in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message” while a low-context message is “one in which the mass of information is vested in the explicit code”. It is plausible that verbal differences can complicate the relationship between one party and the other in particular when both cultures possess different communication contexts, and one example of this is that Danes speak straightforwardly and the Filipinos are hesitant or timid when discussing important matters. The importance of understanding intercultural communication practices of the two concerned countries in this study is related to the domestic disagreements that arise between the au pair and the host family. This is also anchored on the behavioral changes that must transpire, so that a more clear communication lines between concerned parties can be established.

3.4 Interactive and Mass Media

Indeed, communication practices are not only limited to face-to-face conversations between people sharing the same household, but communication also transpires beyond the physical place. According to Rantanen (2005: 8) “[g]lobalization is a process in which economic, political, cultural and social relations have become increasingly mediated across time and space”. Rantanen’s definition of globalization highlights the importance of media in relation to different aspects of the globalization process. Thompson (1995: 81 cited in Rantanen, 2005: 9) explains how interaction has developed through the development of media. Thompson’s argument is that

the development of media and communications does not consist simply in the establishment of new networks for the transmission of information between individuals whose basic social relationship remains intact. Rather, the development of media and communications creates new forms of action and interaction and new kinds of social relationships- forms that are different from the kind of face-to-face interaction which has prevailed for most of human history.

One can say that migrants are connected to their friends and families through mediated communication. Hjarvard (2008: 114) argued that mediated communication or mediation refers to the use of a communication tool and should not be confused with the term mediatization, which refers to “a more long-lasting process, whereby social and cultural institutions and modes of interaction are changed as a consequence of the growth of the media’s influence” (p. 114). Indeed, our communication practices, with globalization, have changed, and consequently a certain medium has to be utilized in order to maintain our relationships and interaction beyond the realm of our physical space. To expand further on mediatization Hjarvard (p. 105) also pointed out that mediatization serves a double-sided role as a result of high modernity where in media “on the one hand emerge as an independent institution […]” and on the other hand “media simultaneously become an integrated part of other institutions like […] family, and religion as more and more of these institutional activities are performed through both interactive and mass media”. Since media play an important role in our life, Dahlgren (2000: 322) argued that media can contribute to newer forms of civic involvement. In relation to the four dimensions of civic culture: 1. the (mass) media “are the chief vehicles” (p. 322) for arming the citizenry with information that will help them increase their knowledge and competencies which is a pre-requisite for civic engagement; 2. Dahlgren (p. 322-323) also added that values and wisdoms are instituted in the home environment, social and academic institutions, from the private sphere to the public.
sphere, where in the individuals emerge as “fully formed citizens” able to take part in debates and discussion and where they can “attend to media and to civic culture with frames of reference and discursive competencies to a great extent pre-structured by the media (p.323); 3. Media practices and routines are crucial to developing new perspectives on how different types of media, both interactive and mass media, can be utilized and “relate to the development of civic culture” (p.323); 4. Indeed, citizen identity is a vital point for an individual’s civic engagement; however, Dahlgren (p. 324) further explained that “(political) engagement in transnational matters must operate within solidified institutional structures, an important factor in identity formation”. Social movements, diasporic groups and networks help out in achieving a certain degree of identity with the help of interactive media, like the Internet. The internet, according to Dahlgren (2009: 150) “has become pervasive; it has become an inexorable and commonplace feature of how societies, organizations, and individuals operate in the modern world”, and this is because the Internet has become so integrated in our everyday life that the sense of “separateness, its distinction, in regard to the way we normally get things done, has dissipated” (p. 150). Indeed, there seems to be no escaping from the claws of technology, and the upside of this is it can be utilized for empowering marginalized groups.

4. Methodology: A Constructionist Approach
I had several considerations regarding which tools are the most plausible for this type of study. After my experiences from the pilot study last December 2011, it occurred to me that there are several combinations of methods that I could use that could involve more than a few Filipino au pairs, chairpersons/representatives of Danish and Filipino organizations, and other institutions. However, with great consideration to time and availability of the study’s prospective participants, I soon realized that it was more ideal to have few selected participants, making the chances of carrying out the collection of empirical data feasible. For the reason that I have intended to present an understanding of the lived experiences of the Filipino au pairs, I have chosen to take the constructionist standpoint in this research. Crotty (1998: 8) described this briefly in contrast to positivism as “[t]here is no objective truth waiting for us to discover it. Truth or meaning comes into existence in and out of our engagement with the realities in our world. There is no meaning without a mind. Meaning is not discovered, but constructed”. He further explained that different people will have different construction of meanings to the same phenomenon (p. 9), and this is due to the fact that meanings cannot be transmitted only interpreted. Gudykunst and Kim (2003: p.6) discussed
that our way of transmitting messages is anchored on our cultural background, ethnicity, and individual experiences. As the researcher, it is necessary that I make critical reflections on the knowledge that will be produced within certain contexts. To supplement this standpoint, phenomenology, which is the study of lived-experiences, will also be adapted. Research that carries a phenomenological approach is used “to answer questions of meaning” (Cohen, 2000: 3). Phenomenology is particularly useful when the focus of the study is to understand the experiences of the participants, those who are actually experiencing the problems. This in particular is important for studies such as this, wherein “a fresh perspective is needed” (p.3), since most of the discussions, as intensified by the media, about the au pair subject in Denmark have been limited to the ‘cultural exchange or cheap labor’ argument. This approach is also compatible with the constructionist perspective. Cohen argued that the only access we have to people’s experiences of phenomenon is through “conscious interpretation and the only way one has to access a phenomenon is through the construction of meaning” (Cashin, 2003: 80). Since the concentration of the empirical data is focus on the lived-experiences of the au pairs, it is only appropriate that phenomenology is also employed.

4.1 Choice of Methodology

Participatory research or PR would be the ideal methodology for this type of study, in which the voices of the grass roots are taken into significant consideration by having them participate in finding a solution to the problems that they themselves are experiencing; where the beneficiaries are the main actors of the entire research process (Philippine Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas, 1986 cited in Servaes, 1996: 98). Freire (1983: 76 cited in Servaes, 1999: 88) advocated that the participatory model is not the privilege of some few men, but the right of every man. Consequently, no one can say a true word alone—nor he can say it for another, in a prescriptive act which robs others of their words.

The daintiness of PR is the various voices that are integrated for the purpose of uplifting a group’s status. One of the basic tenets of PR is to share the results with the ones who participated in the research, and that the inquiry must be “of immediate and direct benefit to the community” (Servaes & Arnst, 1999: 109). Moreover, PR is also about “conscientization and empowerment”, wherein the participants gain understanding of their situation and most specifically “ability to change that situation” they are in. Most importantly, it should be noted that PR involves ‘group analysis’ and ‘group action’ after that the ‘problems have been
identified’ (p. 111). Inevitably, one will ask in which ways is PR applied on this study. The methods that I have used are qualitative interviews and participant observations. In the interview, the participants narrated their experiences and the problems that they face by being au pairs. Therefore, identification of the problem through interview with the au pairs, which is an important factor of PR, has been administered. Going back to group analysis and group action, the study does not bear these features. I have solely written the analysis section. Before the interview, the participants were informed that the preliminary results would be shared with them; and afterwards they would be able to give feedback. I will also share the final thesis with the Filipino community in Denmark by sending copies to the representatives of the various Filipino organizations who have expressed their interest in the project. The group action feature of PR is, in practice and with great emphasis on finishing the thesis on time, not feasible to carry out. The study, in short, is partly inspired by the principles of PR.

There are several instances that my views could be regarded to be subjective: first, through the use of PR which is pro-marginalized groups and this type of research has been “conceived in reaction to elitist research bias” (Servaes & Arnst, 1999: 108). I would also like to highlight my view that I see the au pairs, in general, and the participants of this study, in particular, as a group of cultural learners, not workers, thus the issues on deprofessionalization and deskilling are advocated.; second, construction of meanings is considered by many researchers to carry subjective interpretations. Nonetheless, I have written the study according to the academic standard of research by presenting relevant theories and studies, which are adapted in the analysis.

4.2 Methods

The study mainly utilized qualitative methods namely: qualitative interview and participant observation. The choice to enforce these two tools is based upon the experiences that I have had during the pilot study. The methods proved to be helpful and practical.

4.2.1 Qualitative Interview

Kvale explained that “[i]f you want to know how people understand their world and their life, why not talk to them?” (1996:1), and to understand their life in the Philippines and in Denmark, the interview process focused on letting the participants narrate their experiences.

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22 See Appendix 2 for the summary of the qualitative interviews and participant observations
All the interviews were also semi-structured which, as explained by Kvale (p. 6) had, the purpose of obtaining “descriptions of the life world of the interviewee with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena”. One of the interviews that were conducted was through personal interview and the other five were written interviews through emails. The first (personal) interview was initiated during the process of writing the theoretical frameworks of the study, and through this interview, ideas of how the participant reacted when answering the questions were noted down, specifically, my assumptions of the participant’s comfort during the interview process. The concern of being comfortable during an interview was a vital factor, for the reason that my participant could think that some of the questions might be too personal. Through this experience, I modified my question guidelines into a much more detailed structure and emailed the questions, with revised theory-based questions, to the five remaining participants. Their responses were as I thought they would be: they preferred to take part in the interview through answering the questions in writing. Through the written interview, the remaining participants were given the chance to be ‘alone’ with their thoughts; there was no pressure of giving an answer right away. There are advantages and disadvantages of having an interview through writing, though. One obvious advantage is it is cost-effective for a student researcher like me; the other advantage is related to the transcription of data. Kvale (163) noted that transcripts are “artificial constructions from one context to another involves series of judgments and decisions”, so through the au pairs’ written answers, the notion of artificial constructions is avoided. Looking at the downside of written interviews, for my case, some of them have only written little and have answered very few questions.

The au pairs were interviewed using four different question guidelines. The first participant, Bernadette Legazpi, was interviewed in Copenhagen sometime in April 2012, and the guideline I used during the interview with Bernadette was primarily based on my initial writings of theories on migration, diaspora, and transnationalism. The dry-run interview with

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23 According to some of the participants, they preferred to write down the answers, because it was not easy for them to squeeze me in their busy schedules; one even took pity on my situation considering the distance between my residence in Sweden and her habitation outside Copenhagen (approximately 170 kilometers); and some thought that it would be easier for them to express themselves in a written interview instead of a personal one.

24 My experience with the personal interview with the first participant was both excellent and tense. It was excellent in various ways, since the participant was very enthusiastic about her participation, and that she liked the idea of brain waste. However, there were some moments when I thought that some of the follow up questions were becoming a bit uncomfortable for her to answer. This was a dilemma for me for quite some time, since I could almost foresee that the same could happen with the rest of the participants.

25 See Appendices
Bernadette proved to be an excellent way of digging more into the subject matter since this enabled me to test and modify the theories. From this experience, came a new set of interview questions intended for the other participants.

4.2.1.1 Participant Characteristics

The participants were six female au pairs: 1 fairly new in Denmark; 2 au pairs who were nearing the end of their contract; 3 former au pairs- 2 students, while the other one was waiting for her work visa as an au pair consultant. The basic criteria for eligibility were: they are or have been au pairs in Denmark; they have never been an au pair anywhere; and they are willing to participate in the study. Their academic qualification was not part of the criteria, since I knew that they’ve had college/university education in the Philippines. However, one can say that this presumption is implicitly part of the criteria. To protect the identity of the participants as well as their host family, the au pairs’ personal information are not disclosed: they are under an assumed name which I have provided; their academic and professional backgrounds have been modified but still related to the subjects of their education; information about the host families have also been adjusted.

Michelle Herrera- is a fairly new au pair. By the time of the interview, she has only been in Denmark for a couple of months. Michelle has a two-year education in reproductive health care and has practiced her profession by being a volunteer midwife in her hometown.

Analisa Morales- has been in Denmark since 2010, she will soon end her contract with her host family. Her education from the Philippines is in the area of welfare service, and she has worked for an organization. Aside from her bachelor degree, she has also started her master’s degree education, but has chosen to put it on hold for a while to experience the cultural exchange program by being an au pair.

Grace Ramos- has been an au pair since 2010. She has a bachelor’s degree in science and has worked as a university teacher and has been employed at a government agency. Grace has also worked in Hong Kong carrying out domestic work.

Eleanor Sanchez- has been an au pair, and recently finished her contract. She has a bachelor’s degree in education, and she has worked as a teacher on elementary and high school levels. She has also experiences working in Hong Kong also within domestic work. At present, she is waiting for her work permit in Denmark as a consultant for au pairs.
Bernadette Legazpi- has been an au pair, but is currently studying in a school in Copenhagen. Bernadette has two bachelor’s degrees from the Philippines, one in education and the other in health care.

Lorraine Castro- has also been an au pair. Her academic background is in computer technology. She is presently a student in Copenhagen.

4.2.1.2 Sampling Procedure
I was able to conduct this study, because of the help of my Filipino contacts. I never knew any Filipino in Denmark, although, I met many of my compatriots in public places. The search for contacts was done through web search and Facebook. It turned out that there were many Filipino organizations that had their websites and Facebook pages. After several exchanges of emails, they offered help and interest in the project. The access to the au pairs was administered through networks, and one could presume that I had been given an uncomplicated and kind reception by the members of various Filipino groups. Two of my contacts encouraged me to participate in the events during the Christmas holiday in 2011, which were organized at the church in Amager, at a café, and at public function places. Consequently, I met many au pairs and my ‘existence’ as a Filipino-student-researcher-living-in-Sweden-doing-a-research-on-au-pairs-in-Denmark was established. I met most of the participants at events that I joined in, while the others were recommended by the participants themselves. The initial idea was to interview as many au pairs as possible. Since time was a factor, it was foreseeable to narrow down the number of participants The motivation behind the choice of whom I would interview was to have a perspective of the different phases about the life and experiences of Filipino au pairs.

Language: During the interview, Filipino and English languages were used. The personal interview was not recorded, so I wrote down key words and short sentences. The participant was asked if she preferred to have the interview recorded, and after some reflections she opted to not have it recorded. The disadvantage of not having a recorded interview was not being able to keep track of all the information that the participant was sharing. Moreover, writing down her answers took some of the interview time that it felt almost ‘tiresome’ for the participant. Even though I wrote down keywords, sometime the whole context of the narrated information was not fully achieved. However, those who sent in their written responses answered only in English. Filipino and English were also utilized when I did the participant...
observation. It is usual for Filipinos to code switch in conversations, this is, perhaps, due to the fact that we are basically bilingual/multi-lingual.

**Location:** The personal interview and participant observations were conducted in greater Copenhagen in Frederiksberg for the APN and in Helsingør, circa 40 km north of Copenhagen for the CAP.

### 4.2.2 Participant Observation

Deacon et al. explained that participant observation means “the researcher is taking part, to some degree, in activities of the people being observed” (1999: 251). To take part in activities was essential, for the reason that, in my case, it opened other possibilities of knowing more about the network of Filipinos in Denmark. I was invited by my contact to attend some of the events, for example the 2011 Advent mass and Filipino Christmas party, which were organized by the Filipino community, so that I could meet more au pairs who might express their interest in participating in the study. Nightingale (cited in Pickering, 2008: 105) pointed out that participant observation is important, because of the interactions and exchanges between the researcher and the participants that designs and accounts “for the impact of the research process on the fieldwork”. Taking on the argument of Nightingale, participant observation proved to be good especially when constructing meanings. However, the downside of participant observation is the risk of “going native”. Malinowski (1922 cited in Deacon et al, 1999: 259) discussed that “close involvement with the observed situation carries with it the danger of […] ‘going native’. This involves acquiring such a strong familiarity with the people observed that their view of the world becomes natural and taken for granted, to the point where it simply becomes invisible”. Going native is, perhaps, an understatement in my case. I am a Filipino native; therefore it is easy to assume that I have been jaded by my extreme familiarity with our culture. Nonetheless, when I effectuated my observation, I had tried to keep an open mind by writing down notes of what was happening around me. The participant observations were conducted during the information meetings administered by the Au Pair Network (APN) and Center for Au Pairs (CAP). Prior to my participant observations, I asked for permission from the organizers of the event if I could be present at their au pair information meeting. I only attended two information meetings, one for each of the organizations, since the au pair meetings usually travelled around Denmark to reach as much au pairs as possible. The reasons behind joining these information meetings were; to know more about the au pair program; to know which problems were discussed during the meetings; to experience both information meetings administered by two organizations; to meet au pairs and talk to them about their situations and also to ask if they would be interested.
to participate in the study; basically, to have a deeper understanding of the whole structure and to know the up and downsides of these meetings. The immediate limitations of participant observation are: no matter how much focus one could be, there would always be something that you would miss out on; the information one could get would be fairly limited since this would be dependent on how much the participants of the meetings would share with others.

4.3 Cultural Competence
A researcher’s cultural competence is an essential attribute in any research. My cultural competence plays an important role by how I am conducting this research, for the reason that there are several barriers which oftentimes hinder researchers. Nonetheless, coming from the same cultural and linguistic backgrounds have its up and downsides, but my cultural competence entails more positive attributes than negative ones. Furthermore, Papadopoulos and Lees (2001: 262) explained that the four concepts of cultural competency are generic in nature, this means that this is applicable “across ethnic groups”, and that culture-specific competency should be applied since this competency is important to acknowledge in a specific ethnic group. Being a Filipino, I share many qualities with the participants of this research, thus, giving me more edge to be culturally competent. Nonetheless, one can also argue that although a native covers the characteristics of a competent researcher, the bottom line is, still, the differences that lie between an individual to another. Additionally, being a migrant for quite some time now, it cannot be ruled out that a part of my perspectives have changed, or have been influenced by the Western culture. Still, I argue that culture is something that is inherent, it does not just vanish from our sense of being, but it changes through time because it is culture is dynamic.

4.4 Analysis of the Empirical Data
The study’s analysis of the empirical data has been based on meaning interpretation (Kvale, 1996: 201). In meaning interpretation, the researcher assumes a certain perspective on what has been investigated and this leads to making interpretations of the data from the interviews. After this, the researcher goes beyond reading a text data and proceeds to constructing meanings that are not directly evident in a text (p. 201).
5. Analysis and Discussion

Based on the aim and research questions of the study, I analyzed how the participants’ mediated and non-mediated practices excluded and/or included them in the Danish society in relation to theories on transnationalism, cultural citizenship and civic culture, intercultural communication, and media use. I explored the internet practices of the participants on how they made use of this medium in terms of family communication, professional advancement, and participation and emancipation. I also investigated how private and public activities affected their civic participation, and I looked into the au pairs’ religious and social membership in diverse migrant networks.

5.1 Reconstruction of Places and Formation of Networks

Reconstruction of places and formation of networks are interrelated, thus, it is necessary that they are discussed together. When we say ‘reconstructed place’, our immediate insight of the phrase is ‘to construct something again’, because something has been broken or severed. The physical setting local that has functioned for activities (Giddens 1990: 18 cited in Rantanen, 2005: 51) has been abandoned or deserted, in this case, the migrants are no longer physically attached to the locales that they usually inhabit or utilize. The place can also carry a meaning of familiarity since it can be seen as a locale for individuals where they can identify themselves in (Harvey, 1993:4 cited in Rantanen, 2005: 52). Since the process of migration has forced the migrants to be physically disconnected from the used to be memorable locales, the need to re-establish the familiar places is inevitable. However, we miss the point of why and how such reconstructions of places develop, and this is where overarching migration theories come in.

5.1.1 Reasons behind Migration

Massey et al. (1993) formulated different theories and sub-theories to illustrate the movement of people and some of these are: the macro, micro, and network theories. The macro theory involved sending and receiving countries, and in this case, the Philippines functioned as the sending country, while Denmark was the one that received the au pairs. Based on the overview of the migration practices of Filipinos since the 1900s, indeed, the Philippines took the position of a sending country, like a
big factory ready to ship out its own products. The increase (Mongaya Høgsholm, 2007) of au pair applications of Filipinos to Denmark showed a great interest or a demand for this group of migrants in this Nordic country. As Massey et al. (1993) argued this type of migration has been instigated by the supply and demand differences between these two states. At the start of the interview, both personal and written, the participants were asked about their life in the Philippines (past), Denmark (present), and their future. The question primarily aimed at soliciting three words that would describe their experiences, but some of them gave a more vivid narration of how the situation was.

**Bernadette:** [Past] There was peace of mind, happy, and relaxed, because I am with my family and relatives. [Present] Hard time/difficult; lonely (missing my family); difficulty in adjusting in the culture. [Future] Optimistic; peace of mind (with my family); Career.

**Michelle:** My life in the Philippines is complicated in a sense that I am facing some problems; difficult; successful.

**Lorraine:** [It was] fine. Better. No plans yet

**Analisa:** In the Philippines, I was born out of poverty [...] I grew up with my grandparents and absentee/neglectful parents. In spite of that, I worked hard and was determined to finish my studies until college through a scholarship program from Elementary to College through the church. I am still happy even life is a bit hard and I only manage a very simple kind of living specially when I finished my studies and got a challenging, noble and good job as a social worker for children and youth.

**Grace:** My life in Philippines before was quite happy but in terms of my salary and intentions of helping my family’s need was hard for me. Although my salary was not enough I am very happy because I’m with my family, friends and relatives but still I decided to work in Hong Kong as a domestic helper.

**Eleanor:** I am an independent person and I managed to support my education in Philippines. After my graduation I worked and help supporting my brother and sister in their studies but as the economic situation of the Philippines even you are a graduate of a bachelor’s degree or in a high standard university, it is very hard to find a decent job/appropriate job that can sustain your family’s needs.

Bernadette, Analisa, and Grace answered that they were relatively happy with their life in the Philippines with considerations on the presence of their family, friends, and career contentment. Lorraine also expressed a certain level of satisfaction about her life in the home country. However, Eleanor articulated dissatisfaction about the economic and survival aspects of life. Michelle was the only one who was straightforward about a problematic life in the Philippines. It should be noted, though, that despite of being happy, Grace also had feelings of dissatisfaction, hence she went to Hong Kong to work. Nevertheless, Denmark, the present
place, seemed to be both difficult and better for the three participants. The Philippines, as the place of the past, carried a meaning of happiness and a degree of satisfaction for most of the participants, since their family was there and professional contentment was met for some. Denmark, of the three who described their experiences, took a more negative impression on them. The Philippines and Denmark, as both place of the past and present could carry two opposing meanings. The “erosion of relationships” (Appadurai, 1995; Smith; 1998 cited in Vertovec & Cohen, 1999: xxii) seemed to be a valid factor for understanding the “difficult” answers of the two participants, since the physical locales that had been associated with the participants did not exist in the present place. The other aspect that was implicitly brought up by the participants was that migration could also bear the meaning of survival. Returning to the macro level (Massey et al., 1993) theory, one could speculate that migration carried the underlying theme of survival, even in relation to the practices of the Filipinos since the early 1900s up to the present, for the reason that the country could not provide decent jobs for its inhabitants.

The macro-economic factor was not just one of the reasons why the participants left the country. Although Analisa explained in her answer that it was her own decision to apply for the au pair program, it was not merely because of financial reasons that made her sign a contract with her host family. An individual’s decision to migrate is the backbone of the micro theory (Massey et al., 1993).

**Analisa:** I was working as a residential case manager for 4 years [...]. When I got burn out and getting sickly I decided to quit and find work abroad but I haven’t known Denmark or Au pair. I was offered this contract by one of our program managers who was asked by one of the Filipina volunteers to refer someone who is legible to apply for Au pair in Denmark to the latter’s friend who is a Belgian and staying in Denmark in October 2010. [...] It is not because of our financial constraints that made me decide to grab the Au pair contract, but I really want to work and travel abroad for personal and professional growth and to find my place in the greater scheme of things.

Migration could be seen as a way of improving one’s personal and professional qualifications by exploring what is outside the perimeters of a country carried the meaning of something better than what the home country could offer. Another reason why people migrate could be because of their connections with other people. Analisa’s response could, actually, be seen from both the perspective of micro and network theory. However, one should also consider that her speculations to travel abroad was already set in her mind, therefore, in connection
with network theory, the participant’s acquaintance played a role to pursue her plans of travelling abroad.

5.1.2 Networks: Functions and Formations

The network theory (Massey et al., 1993) described the impact of relatives and friends on migrants to travel abroad.

**Question:** Can you tell me about your journey to Denmark in terms of what made you decide to be an au pair (family or own decision)? How did you know about the au pair system? Do you have friends or relatives who are abroad (or are in Denmark) who know about the au pair program?

**Michelle:** It was my own decision to apply as an au pair with the help of a friend working here (Denmark).

**Lorraine:** My relatives here in Denmark introduced the au pair system [to me].

**Bernadette:** It was my friend who told me about the au pair program, but she also explained that it is about cultural exchange, not working as a domestic helper.

**Grace:** My aunt who lived here in Denmark helped me to find a host and help me to process my papers. I paid under the table payment to one of the Immigration officer in order to pass the immigration check up. I paid 15 thousand pesos.

**Eleanor:** […] A friend of mine who’s been an au pair here in Denmark encouraged me to apply as an au pair here and I grabbed that opportunity coz as she mentioned it very different situation being an au pair to a domestic worker. […] She referred me to a Danish family whom she was working before as her extra (black job) […] without knowing that in return to her referral I need to pay her an amount of 5,000 kroner. I only knew this scheme the day that I arrived in here in Denmark (September 2011) […] I know that it is illegal but still I have chosen to pay her instead. This scheme of paying/collecting money in return of having host family is very rampant here in Denmark […].

Networks played a vital role in bringing in the participants to Denmark. The participants took the risk to move abroad since they knew someone in the host country and that there was a clear possibility of finding a host family/placement in the host society (Massey et al., 1993). As presented here, networks could also be a part of the black market. The networks’ role as informants could also be crucial, since they assumed the positions of ‘experts’ of the au pair program. Subsequently, trust was given to these experts, since the experts were family members and friends. Most importantly, the responses also showed that if an au pair had been informed about the cultural exchange aspect of the program, and not as domestic work, then the au pairs who would sign up for the program would have this in their mind. Therefore, the network migration theory could be one of the many ways of preventing recruitment problems.

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26 Grace applied for the au pair program before the au pair deployment ban was lifted in October 2010.
among migrant groups. If a migrant was well informed, the chances would be that migrants would see themselves differently in a society. Another aspect that was brought up here was the illegal ways of sending au pairs to Denmark by the Philippine migration office through bribery, nevertheless, the network who was in Denmark must knew about the au pair ban at that time. Hence, one could assume that family networks in Denmark could have contributed to the increase (see Table 3) of au pairs during the time when it was prohibited to travel on au pair visa. Since it was illegal to leave the country on an au pair visa, then from the point of view of the Philippine legal frameworks, they were not au pairs.

The responses provided for the reasons to migrate explored the different motivations of individuals who left the country, and this is where formation of networks comes into the picture, because the next phase that migrants go through would be settlement or finding one’s place in a host society. Reconstruction of place therefore could be related to networks, since networks would be the migrant’s immediate guide in the new society.

5.1.2.1 Understanding the Role of Networks

Formation of networks is a must thing to do for migrants since they need to find a place or a group that they can belong to, and this is why migrant groups are formed. Filipino diaspora community in Denmark is relatively immense. Churches, socio-cultural organizations, and even social movements provide membership and activities among Filipinos and Danes and the Filipino culture in Denmark is highly embraced by its members. Social traditions and events are held and supported with enthusiasm. These various organizations also promote awareness of the Danish culture. Bruneau (2010: 36) explained that formation of networks could happen when certain communities forged bond between those who would like to group themselves together and maintain relations despite the physical boundaries of the group as long as a shared identity could be invoked.

**Question:** How did you come to know about the Filipino and Danish groups (cultural and social)? Which of the groups do you belong to or mostly active in? How would you describe your membership in this group? In which ways do you benefit or not benefit from it? Why did you decide to be part of it?

**Eleanor:** Being part of the Filipino network in Denmark and other organizations is a good opportunity to broaden our knowledge and experience. For us Filipinos we share same interest, ambition and even problems of our own and with the same roots/causes why we are here as an au pair or as migrant workers that’s why involving in a Filipino organizations is a great help having a company sharing same issues and thru this you can feel that even though you are far away from your family you have a group/organization that you can depend on.
Grace: I’ve known Migrante Denmark first thru my friends who are a member of the organization and with them I am a member also of FOA; Union here in Denmark. I am the one who assigned the membership of the group. I benefited in the sense that I learned a lot and I experience a lot which I didn’t experience before. It is really good being organized.

Analisa: Mostly, from friends in the city of Copenhagen and St. Ann Parish who are mostly familiar with Filipino-Danish organizations and socio-cultural integrative activities [...]. I value my relationship with others and miss the Filipino community [...] so I am active in the social and cultural events that they are having and helps me to be well integrated in the Danish society as there are also cross-cultural information meeting being held by Babaylan Denmark. Since I am away from my friends and family I am treating them as my second family and community where I feel a sense of belonging, happiness and away from stress with my host family [...].

There were different ways that the participants made use of their membership in migrant groups (Vertovec & Cohen, 1999: xxiv). One way was through identification of one’s self to our own culture, awareness of one’s rights in a foreign country, and belongingness to both Filipino-Danish socio-cultural groups. Drawing on Hall’s (1991 cited in Vertovec & Cohen, 1999: xx) definition of diaspora communities, the au pairs recognized the importance of expanding one’s socio-cultural knowledge and even civic rights; hence their identity could be regarded to be in the process of transformation. Instead of a homogenous way of living, the participants engaged themselves in activities and developed their cultural knowledge to a more diversified one. Places where one could identify themselves with or find membership and belongingness are reconstructed through dynamically formed networks. In short reconstructed places and social networks served both the purpose of a ‘home’ and a ‘place for advancement of knowledge’. Indeed, the Filipino diaspora community, by and large, functioned as mediators between the participants and the Danish society. The participants mentioned three social organizations that they belonged to, one could assume that the participants themselves joined in these individual groups according to where they identified themselves the most. The Filipino community in Denmark could be assumed as both united and diversified, which could only indicate that diaspora community dynamism had been established. Analisa also mentioned the sense of belonging to a family in a church and social group. Warner (1998: 3) explained religion could be regarded crucial for diaspora communities, since religion could give meaning to migrants. Bramadat (2009: 2) added that religion could assume the functions as an established social feature for minorities in host societies providing migrants a sense of meaning and purpose. In her response below, we can see that Analisa transcended her church membership to continue practicing her faith.

Analisa: [...] I have been an active member in the choir and youth groups in our church since I was younger and until college. I also put high value on my faith and spiritual relationship with God as it gets me going from all the challenges, problems and trials I am facing with [...].
Analisa’s church membership had been from since she was young. Therefore, it was easier for her to renew her transnational church membership in Denmark. The church convenes its followers, making the church not just a place for worship but also a place for migrants to be together with fellow believers; the church and religion serve the purpose of expanding one’s network, finding and connecting like-minded individuals where they can develop their skills, and probably even find and improve their talents.

5.2 Movement of Capital
The intercultural communication differences between Denmark and the Philippines do not just show how different we communicate. The differences also illustrate the social welfare between the two countries. In Denmark, individuals are not obliged to look after or finance a family member’s food, education, or welfare expenses. However, one can also say that the whole concept of the Danish social welfare system makes everyone take care of everyone through tax payments, and this can also be understood that there is a slight hint of, implicitly hidden, collectivistic attitude. In the Philippines, the welfare responsibility is passed on to the children or siblings. Filipino migrants send several billion dollars worth of remittances every year to provide for their family. The au pairs are not an exemption to this. Despite the profoundly low allowance (3150 Danish Crowns or 400 Euros) the au pairs get from their host family, they allocate a decent amount of it to remit to their family.

**Question:** Do you support your family financially?

**Lorraine:** It is not only the cultural exchange that brought me here in Denmark. It is also the promise of how much help I can give to my family when it comes to financial matters.

**Analisa:** I support only my youngest sister in college and my ill grandmother. If I still have a budget I send them for their food.

**Grace:** I need to send almost all of my allowance and going to [the language] school for me was an additional expense especially the transportation is very expensive.

The collectivistic attitude of the Philippines (Hofstede & Bond, 1984 cited in Gudykunst & Kim, 2003: 56) might not be fully understood by many host families or the host country. For example, both Stenum (2008, 2011) and Horanyi and Andersen (2011) failed to emphasize this important cultural practice. Failure to understand the Filipino welfare system compromises the ‘cultural exchange’ theme of the au pair program, since the host family should also learn about the Filipino culture. The risk for not being able to understand this aspect of the Filipino culture by the host family and the host country is that the Danish society might regard the practice of remitting money to the Philippines as something that only
migrant workers do. Therefore, the participants or the au pairs might not be seen as cultural representatives or as learners of cultures, but basically workers. This can also be based on the possibility that the host families trust that they will make use of their allowance to improve their cultural knowledge, since from the perspective of the individualistic culture, the individual is the most important (Hofstede & Bond, 1984 cited in Gudykunst & Kim, 2003: 56). Thus, the participants/au pairs with their allowance could be expected by the host family or host country to use the money for herself not for the participants’ family in the Philippines. The movement of capital or remittances by migrants (Vertovec & Cohen, 1999: xxiii) can perhaps be a source of misunderstanding, especially, if one of the parties is not aware that it is relatively normal for Filipinos to make sacrifices for the good of the collective. Drawing on Dahlgren’s (2000: 17) argument on citizenship, to practice one’s own tradition is essential for transnational migrants, since this can be an excellent way to place one’s self in a society. Moreover, Dahlgren (p. 322) explained that recognition of one’s identity as a citizen is of extreme significance, and tradition is very much related to identity.

5.3 Mode of Cultural Reproduction

The au pair program is a very good example of expanding one’s cultural knowledge (Dahlgren, 2000: 320), and as a consequence, cultural reproduction is imminent. Vertovec and Cohen (1999: xxiii) pointed out that this entailed production of hybrid or mixed cultures. Much like what Hall (1991 in Vertovec & Cohen, 1999: xx) explained, cultural reproduction could be associated with identity transformation since both cultural reproduction and identity transformation support that hybridity could happen if individuals would recognize diversity. However, what could happen if an au pair had a different mindset before coming to Denmark? How can cultural reproduction materialize, and which kinds of understandings can be reproduced?

**Question:** Did you come to Denmark for the cultural exchange program as an au pair or to work in a Danish household? If the former, what are your cultural expectations or plans to improve your cultural horizon and how do you think you can maximize your stay in Denmark? And if the latter, why did you decide to work as a housekeeper in Denmark and not another profession abroad?

**Bernadette:** I came to Denmark for the cultural exchange experience. This was also the reason why I didn’t send money to my family. I wanted to know about the Danish culture, so, for example, I bought Danish food, and went to see movies. But I learned a lot about the Danish culture, especially their way of communicating. They are straightforward, and I like it because I am also a straightforward person.

Bernadette had the most different mindset about the au pair system; this could perhaps be related to her attitude before coming to Denmark. She used her time and allowance to experience the host country. She saw the au pair program as an opportunity to improve her
cultural knowledge. One could say that she found a certain degree of belongingness to the Danish culture since she could relate to the communication practices of the Danes, something that she found significant. It could also be argued that she perhaps already shared some of the individualistic attributes of the host country, since she saw the importance of investing in one’s development and improvement, which is a distinct attribute of individualism ((Hofstede & Bond, 1984 cited in Gudykunst & Kim, 2003: 56). Bernadette can be used as an excellent example, since her personality might be regarded different from a stereotyped collectivistic culture. This can mean that to over generalize a certain type of culture is not possible, since there will be individuals who do not always fit into a pre-defined category. It was also highlighted before that she came to Denmark knowing what the au program was all about.

**Analisa:** I don’t have any idea about au pair when I was back in the Philippines but when I was offered about it I did my research about this whole concept and I love the idea of having a cultural exchange program and not a domestic helper. [...] My only cultural expectations is that they treat me as an Au pair who is in equal terms with them and to help me adjust and integrate in the Danish culture and society so I can learn about their culture, beliefs, and attitudes and apply in my personal life those that will make me a better person during my stay with them. I should be open-minded, be flexible and adapt to them, as well as to explore around based on my interests and curiosity.

Like Bernadette, Analisa also had positive expectations about the program. However, she explicitly included the role of the host family in terms of proper treatment. Her position about equal treatment is constructive but also consequential: that through the help of her host family; she will be able to get, accordingly, the benefits of the au pair program. Nevertheless, Analisa was also implicitly explaining that if she was not treated equally by the host family, then she would not be able to maximize her stay in Denmark as an au pair. More importantly, she also pointed out her overall approach to the program: to have a positive outlook. Openness seems to be an important ingredient to hybridity, since only then one can recognize diversity and heterogeneity (Hall, 1991 cited in Vertovec & Cohen, 1999: xx)

**Eleanor:** My expectation of being an au pair here in Denmark is really a better condition than in a country that I worked before coz my mind was thinking that this is Europe. The salary/allowance is high, aiming to study and improved my situation and also the way that Western treated migrant workers is different but not all host families are complying with the cultural exchange rules. In reality, au pair scheme is a domestic work and still there were abuses that exist. Because of this cultural exchange program; not considering au pair work as work; au pairs don’t have specific laws applied to us.

In contrast to Bernadette’s and Analisa’s responses, Eleanor did not view the au pair scheme as cultural exchange program, but as domestic work. She made implicit reference to the
problems that the au pair scheme is confronted by for quite some time now. She inferred to it as a pretense or a cover. At the same time, she also referred back to her experiences in Hong Kong, that even though the au pair scheme connoted domestic work, it was still comparatively better than her experiences in Hong Kong; that Western approach was more humane. An interesting point that she brought up was the differences between host families, that there were those who did not comply with the rules. Eleanor had experiences working as a domestic helper and as well as being an active member of Migrante, a Filipino transnational organization. These two aspects could have influenced how she perceived the whole au pair package combined with the experiences she had with her host family. In such cases, one can assume that these factors might have a great effect on cultural reproductions. Hall (2003) argued that the transformation process that migrants undergo could be stalled by both political and social problems, and in the worse case, cultural reproduction might not happen at all.

Grace: In Denmark, I am happy because compared to the salary in Hong Kong and my situation in Hong Kong was a little bit high and the schedule here is quiet easy. Before I thought that I am very lucky compared to others coz my host family is kind but later on that I am aware of what really an au pair is because of my involvement in FOA; they abused me in other way around. I am not aware before that au pair is a cultural exchange and perform only light housework. [...] My cultural expectations were although it is cultural exchange but it is the same as domestic workers’ duty. I have planned to go to language school but it has not materialized. My host family was not that supportive in terms of schooling and also I am thinking that I need to budget my allowance also...

Like Eleanor, Grace compared her unpleasant Hong Kong experiences with the au pair system, while highlighting the fact that her au pair status in Denmark was relatively better. However, it should be emphasized that Grace was not aware of how the au pair system worked. She was not informed about the cultural exchange program that is attached to it. Instead, she assumed that it was also domestic work, but better compared to her Chinese employers. Her involvement with FOA (the Danish labor group) made her realized that her host family was abusing her. Not knowing one’s rights and responsibilities as an au pair was very crucial in Grace’s case. Again, this could be related to how her family network in Denmark recruited her. Her experiences could carry consequential impact on how her cultural reproduction would flow, since the host family had the responsibility of helping their au pair understand the Danish culture. As Hall (2003) argued, the transformation process would be delayed or could not happen at all. It seems that the au pair scheme is like a double-edged sword, it is both a benefit and a liability. However, who is really benefitting from it? Who is at the losing end? Another factor that is illustrated here is how the participants see themselves. If they see themselves as domestic workers, then they will be treated as domestic helpers.
Dahlgren (2009: 63) argued that equality is a state-based citizenship and implicates that marginalized groups like the au pairs will find it difficult for them to take part in the cultural atmosphere of their host society, and as a result the cultural exchange program will not make a difference on the abused participants, only the harsh experiences they have had with their host family will remain. Since Grace did not know about the program, she assumed the position of a worker; hence, her host family treated her as a worker. However, it could also be the other way around that Grace was never treated on equal footing, that even before she came to the family, she was already regarded as a domestic helper. Knowledge about what the au pair program must be emphasized as valuable, because an unknowing au pair can be easily abused by the host family. Nonetheless, it should also be considered if prospective host families are aware of their responsibilities or do they merely disregard the whole concept of the au pair scheme. Positive cultural reproduction will not be achieved if a person is not encouraged to experience culture; perhaps the only things that can be achieved are misconceptions of each other’s culture. It is also possible to engage in cultural reproduction if one is motivated, nevertheless this should also be supported by one’s immediate network, in this case the host family who happened to be the link between the au pair and the Danish society.

5.4 Site for Political Engagement
Filipino groups, either social movements, au pair related organizations, or labor movements, are very much engaged in pursuing the rights and welfare of the Filipino au pairs. Transnationalism as a site for political engagement involves the participatory roles of migrants in the global public sphere with the use of technology (Vertovec & Cohen, 1999: xxiv). Both Grace and Eleanor have mentioned their membership to the Filipino transnational organization, Migrante27. The organization is for the global Filipino migrants, and they advocate migrant rights against discrimination.

Eleanor: In Hong Kong and Philippines, […] I belong to some organizations and Union. They referred me and endorsed me to Migrante Denmark (part of Migrante International and Migrante Hong Kong). Thru Migrante Denmark, I joined with 2 other au pairs and members to an ILO Convention of Domestic workers held in Geneva Switzerland. They asked us about au pairs situation and encourage us to be a part of the Union who have concern on au pairs rights and welfare aside from the fact that au pairs are not workers and union is for the workers.

27 http://migranteinternational.org/
Eleanor explained that her participation with Migrante, a social movement according to Blumer’s (1969: 99) definition, made her and her colleagues to participate and discuss about the current state of the au pairs in Denmark. Her Migrante membership in Hong Kong and in the Philippines enabled her to be active in migration issues in Denmark. Such political participation is simply commendable. Gupta and Fegusson (1992: 9 cited in Vertovec & Cohen, 1999: xxv) argued that transnational public sphere has superseded a physical community by creating a form of solidarity beyond the concrete perimeters of a place. This transformation on transnational communities has enabled its members to take part in issues transpiring in other places. Eleanor further highlighted that despite the fact that the au pairs are not workers, forming a union would be beneficial to protect the au pairs’ welfare and rights. Indeed, Eleanor made a good point on that aspect. But what are the consequences of having a union for au pairs? Basically, it will depend on which type of union it is. If the au pair union is labor-oriented, then it will be in collision with the current EU convention on au pairs as explained by the politician on Information.DK, since the au pairs are not workers or servants. However, if an au pair union has a more student-related characteristic, then it would fit in the classification of au pairs as education migrants. The next question is, which organizations, both transnational and local should advocate for a student union-like for au pairs?

Aside from membership to Migrante, Eleanor also volunteers for Istasyon Pinoy, a Filipino radio station in Denmark.

I belonged to a radio program also which is Istasyon Pinoy in Denmark. It’s every Tuesday at 7-9pm at 95.5 fm radio. As the radio program just started, it reaches particular places in Denmark only but the radio program board is working out to join the station 2000’s website. This only purely tagalog songs, Philippine issues/news and listeners can call and be on air, request songs, greet friends and etc.

A Filipino local radio station is absolutely a great feature in the community. The radio station can function as a starting point to participation and engagement as part of the cultural citizenship (Dahlgren 2009: 59). Migrants, as mentioned earlier, are marginalized groups, therefore it is rather clear that their social participation will be hindered, and as a tragic consequence, they will not be able to see themselves as citizens. Cultural citizenship best describes the existence of a radio station in Denmark, since the radio station allows the Filipinos to practice their right to “own traditions and language” (Dahlgren, 2000: 317).
Furthermore, Dahlgren (p. 18) argued that it is important that people see themselves as citizens, since not seeing oneself as a citizen means that they will participate less in society.

5.5 Social Exclusion and Inclusion

At which point does social exclusion and inclusion happen? It is not always easy to assume when this happens, but the only thing that we know is it happens.

Question: Can you describe your relationship with your host family? How do they treat you, and how do you see yourself with them? Which are good, and which ones are not so appealing to you? Do you go to a language school (for how long)? How do you feel about going to a Danish language school (both positive and negative aspects)? Have you gained cultural knowledge (and/or language) during your stay in Denmark, and in which ways do you find it beneficial or not beneficial?

Bernadette: I had a good relationship with my host family, especially my host mom. She liked my sense of fashion, so she would sometimes ask me to help her with buying nice clothes.

Michelle: My host family is so good to me. They treat me so well.

Bernadette and Michelle wrote that they had fairly good relationship with their host family, however, it should be noted that both Bernadette and Michelle were informed by their au pair friends about the whole idea of the program. From their responses, one can presume that inclusion of the participants in their host families is apparent. Since the host families are the immediate networks of the au pairs, then it is only positive to have an ‘including’ atmosphere in their home, for a start.

Eleanor: My host family here in Denmark was not that bad compared to other au pairs I talked to. [My host parents are educated and they work from home]. I did all the housework and cooking but as others experienced 5 hours is not enough to clean a 3 storey house plus an office and do cooking every day but because of the Filipino mentality that as long as they treated you good it’s fine but sometimes the more you tolerate them they will find a way of abusing you coz they are thinking that even you work more than 5 hours is just fine with you. If they know that you didn’t know the law/rules they will close their mouth too off course it’s for their advantage.

This response is one example of abuse of the rules of the au pair scheme. There is a rather remarkable component in this answer. The host parents are very much focused with their profession; while Eleanor is busy juggling household tasks for her supposed to be family. She dedicates her time to attending to household chores even though she is only supposed to help out with light house work. This is also typical in collectivistic
culture (Hofstede & bond, 1984 cited in Gudykunst & Kim, 2003. 56), in which sacrifices are made for the sake of the family. However, Eleanor is also aware that if she does not speak up, then the abuse will continue. She further explained her experience:

For me if I knew that it is too much, I talked to them and explain. Even though they will tell you that you are part of the family but still there is a feeling that you are different. They are talking in the table while eating in Danish, you cannot understand them. They offered me to go to school to learn Danish but I will pay my own transportation so I preferred not to go coz how to budget my allowance. You’re considered as part of the family but still you need to ask permission if you want to eat something from the fridge or use their landline [phone].

Freire advocated that (1973: 17 cited in Morrow & Torres, 2002: 76) it is only when people comprehend that they need to amplify their voices and to try to enter into dialogue that they can be closer to the realization of their status, and this, eventually, leads to a participatory attitude. However, Freire also pointed out that the ‘word’ is crucial, for it connotes both reflection and action. This means that if an au pair wants to enter in dialogue, then she should be prepared to stand by her words. Although there is acknowledgement on the part of the host family that she is part of the family, alienation and exclusion still exists through linguistic barriers and to break such barriers Dahlgren (2000: 321) argued knowledge and competencies must be developed especially the language, so that one can communicate with the other members of the family, hence be part of and be included in the family. To feel alienated within the confines of the ‘home’, can mean that there is an invisible wall or a barrier, more than the linguistic barrier, which divides its members. The meaning of home, which is supposed to be a private sphere where in one can be comfortable, is far from the one that is described in this answer. The home has turned into a working place for both the host parents and the participant. As a consequence, the notion of ‘family’ is not achieved.

Grace: I don’t know how to describe my relationship with my host family. I called them ma’am and sir. At first they didn’t correct me and told me that it is only first name bases. I tried to call them by their name but they didn’t responded so I have nothing to do but continue calling them ma’am and sir. Before, they will call me and ask me to work even though it’s my day off, I pick up three kids alone, they don’t have concern if I got sick or need to go to the doctor. I do mower too and clean windows (outside and inside) and mop the kitchen floor by hand but later on I tried to talk to them. I talked to them on my extra time and they paid me 60 per hour. It’s fine with me compared before
that it’s nothing. I already have my weekends off and I made my own schedule which is only 6 hours a day.

It is rather obvious that Grace does not have a host family but an employer, an employer who exploits her, an employer who exploits the system. To address one’s supposed to be host parents by ma’am and sir is not related to the meaning of family. Furthermore, there is a first-name basis culture in Denmark; therefore, to be addressed by such is a clear display of hierarchy. Grace is not welcomed as a family member, but a worker who would do the chores; even the heavy ones. Grace seems to have ended up with an abusive family. It was a good move on Grace’s part to take courage and talk to her host family/employer about her extra working time. Freire (cited in Morrow & Torres, 2002: 96) pointed out that the culture of silence could be fatalistic, for the reason that the dominant party can use a manipulative strategy to preserve the “hegemony and domination”.

**Analisa:** Since my former host family moved to [another country last year], I transferred here with my present Danish family[...]. [Analisa had been taking care of the host family’s children for a week, and when the host mom came from her trip she thought the house was messy. The host mom complained about it][...]. They told me I should do more in my job to them but I said that it’s not a job it’s a cultural exchange program and my host dad said “We are not interested in the cultural exchange” and my host mom said that’s why we get Au pair just to help us”. When I try to explain my feelings and thoughts my host mom would say “No discussion”, “You are just wasting my time and energy” “I am the boss here and you are just my employee”. “I can throw you out of the house when I’m pissed with you”, my host dad said when I try to answer back’. I actually called them Sir and Ma’am, but as much as I can I try to avoid saying this because I still believe I am not their cheap domestic worker.

It is illustrated in this response that the participant and the host family can have different views about the au pair program. Also, the house is not participant’s house; she is there to work, nothing else. Again, it happens that the host family does not see the worth of the au pairs, since it is their house; therefore it is their rules that matter. They can decide when they want to kick their au pair out the house. This is more than just abuse, but a complete disrespect to another person’s life, a vivid display of power: the host family holds the future of their au pair. However, there is something more valuable for her than losing her contract.

**Analisa:** It’s not losing the allowance that I get that really saddened me it’s losing my right to voice out my feelings and fight for my right as an Au pair and as a person whenever I allowed them to trample me. It’s not about not being able to support my sister in college and my family anymore but losing my worth and my principles as a person because I feel so down in front of them I don’t like the way they are treating me though nothing really worst had happened except that I try to assert myself or answered back if I think and feel they are wrong or rude to me or I refuse sometimes whenever I feel being abused. I want to learn their language but since the school is far from my place I did not go and they don’t provide for my transportation anyway. So, sometimes
we misunderstood each other and don’t talk much even when we are having dinner later on I decided not to eat with them since they just talk Danish in front of me and they don’t speak or understand English well. [...] I did try to learn some basic Danish through self study, but I really hope my host family would teach me but they won’t.

One factor that is illustrated in the responses is the role of gender. Grace, Eleanor, and Analisa were regarded as outsiders who happened to be living in the house of the host family. The host families see the participants as domestic workers, and domestic helpers are usually women performing domestic services like cleaning and care of children (Tulud Cruz, 2010: 19; Beneria, 2003: 135). The au pairs’ worth was limited to employer-employee relationship: you-clean-my-house-and-I’ll-pay-you-in-return. Intercultural communication problems seem to be playing a big role with the way the au pairs and the host family express themselves. Being from a high-context culture (Hall, 1976: 70-79 cited in Gudykunst & Kim, 2003:68), the Filipino au pairs do not always speak their mind to stop the abuse; however, the Danish host families are very clear with the way they want their message to be sent.

Nevertheless, whenever there is an attempt to assume one’s place, then this is blocked by taking out the ‘I’m the boss card’. As Dahlgren (2009: 63) argued, the notion of equality is difficult to achieve, since citizenship is state-based. The better one’s citizenship is the more power one can take. To see oneself as a citizen is the key to assuming one’s place, however, if people feel that they are lower than others, either by self-infliction or by damaging treatment caused by others, they will, consequently, perform less in society and keep to themselves instead (Dahlgren, 2000: 318). To empower oneself and be part of communication, then it is crucial that people, especially marginalized groups like migrants, must see themselves as citizens. Access to basic information is an excellent way for persons to see their membership to society. The other way is to value democracy, although this is quite impossible to reach, since many democratic countries do not adhere to the essence of democracy, to aim to have better value for one’s rights is always an excellent thing to do, and for this to happen, democracy must be practiced continually. Since seeing oneself as a citizen is vital, it is therefore necessary to think and do things that are beneficial to be part of the civic culture (p. 322).
5.6 Media: Modes of Communication, Participation, and Emancipation

Reconstruction of relationships with those who are left behind can be established with the use of various communication technologies (Appadurai, 1995; Smith, 1998 cited in Vertovec & Cohen, 1999: xxii). However, availability of communication technologies in the place of origin and access to it define this reconnection of disjunctured relationships. One has to settle with what the other one has.

**Question:** How do you manage or maintain your communication with your family and friends?

**Bernadette:** I usually call them. We have a computer at home, but we don’t have connection to the Internet, since my family does not use our computer very often.

**Michelle:** To keep in touch with my mom and sisters on weekdays I just text them through Chikka28, then on Saturdays I call them.

**Grace:** I often use internet in chatting with them and sometime I used my mobile phone to call them.

**Eleanor:** Internet is a good communication to them or sometime called them by phone.

**Analisa:** I still communicate with them through phone call, facebook and Skype, but seldom with my parents they don’t know much about internet.

The Internet mediates the relationship between the participants and their family. However, telephones and mobile phones for calling and sending SMSs proved to be excellent ways of keeping in touch with their family as well. Knowledge to use the computer was also a deciding factor. One could assume that there was an extensive use of multi-media or polymedia by the participants and their family to maintain and bridge their broken ties. However, Thompson (1995: 81) argued that individuals’ social relationships had always been intact; and that new media, like the internet, had only paved the way in creating new kinds of social relationships. Therefore, reconstruction of severed relationships, although intact as claimed by Thomson, carried the aspect of mediated relationships. The use of a communication tool (Hjarvard 2008: 114) would be the defining component of understanding the communication practices of migrants. The application of polymedia by migrants to mediate their relationships with their families could support the claim of a mediatized interaction between individuals in our society, a phenomenon which Dahlgren (2009: 150) claimed to be a deeply embedded feature in our society that we could not avoid being part of it. Dahlgren’s claim could also be related to mediatization, since mediatization could be

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28 Chikka is used for sending free text messages/SMS.
further understood as the shifting of the socio-cultural interaction mainly due to the continuous influence of various interactive media tools (Hjarvard, 2008: 114).

Once can say that media and transnationalism are perfect dance partners. Aside from using the internet as a way of communicating with their families, the participants also make use of the internet for networking and information seeking.

**Analisa:** Every day I use internet but not only for Facebooking, checking emails on yahoo or chatting as I also like to research and study on my spare time. I also like to listen to music on YouTube and hear or download lots free educational audio, files, articles, ebook, etc. One of my favourite website is TED [...] I use my smart mobile phone outside or at home through wifi. I always use applications such as TED, Merriam Webster, Google, Yahoo, Facebook, Viber for free call and text. It’s educational, easy to use, and convenient for me. I also like taking pictures and copying some relevant articles on my phone.

**Grace:** I use internet at my host family’s home. They have given me free Wi-Fi connections. I open Facebook but not that often. I check my emails and most often I used my mobile phone in accessing internet connections.

**Eleanor:** During my stay with my host family, I shared their network so no need for me to pay. […] Skype is the most common. This way also you can read and watch news that’s happening in the Philippines and anywhere. I often check my emails and Facebook. Outside, I can use the library to access to the internet for free or free Wi-Fi if I will use my mobile phone.

**Bernadette:** I use the Internet for social networking, like Facebook, but I also read news articles from the Guardian, Yahoo, and Copenhagen Post. It is now easy to have access to news, since there are many news companies that use Facebook to offer their service.

Although it is clear that social networking is very popular among the participants, but they also practice information seeking. A smart phone proves to be a very useful medium for the participants, since they can move around anywhere and still get the possibility of connecting online through WI-FI connections. Interestingly, Analisa makes use of the Internet to improve her knowledge by taking advantage of free educational material that can be accessed online. To have an initiative to constantly improve one’s self is significant. Access to information through the electronic mass media appears to be common, since social networking sights are able to provide that access to mass media. Having the initiative and technology to access electronic mass media are outstanding bases for the possibility of engagement, since as it has been explained civic involvement and emancipation can begin through media use in terms of arming the citizenry with information; an individual’s media practice and routines is vital to developing new standpoints on how different types of media can be utilized in relation to development; and for the individuals, the participants particularly, to see themselves as citizens, so that they can participate in the civic culture. Overall, since we live in a modern society,
interactive media have the possibility to not just mediate relationships, but also to mediate user and information. Information that is necessary for improving one’s knowledge. Mass media’s role, as stated above, is also critical.

5.7 Participants’ Feedback
Out of the six participants, only two were able to send in their feedback. The participants received a copy of the analysis and were asked to give their feedback based on four subjects: Participant’s experience; opinion about how their data was used; how useful is the study for the future au pairs; and suggestions, recommendations, and critical views. Time, perhaps, had been a great factor for some of the participants who were not able to give their feedback.

Analisa’s Feedback
1. Your experience as a participant.
   • The type of questions was detailed, specific, open ended that allowed me to expound and delve more into my personal experiences as an au pair. It also helps me to be reflective as to how I see my situation with my family, host family, friends and other significant others in my social environment.

Analisa’s response to question number one shows the upside of research in bring out reflections and perspectives from participants.

2. Your opinion about how your data was used.
   • [No answer]

3. Do you think the study will be useful for the future au pairs in Denmark?
   • Depends on what is this intending to be used for: Is it trying to gather data that Au pair isn't for cultural exchange program anymore rather than a mere domestic cheap labor; Is it justifying that we Filipinas are only here to earn for money so we can support ourselves and family or what I'd hoped for is both host family and Au pair come to terms where both sides should be encouraged to learn and understand our cultural differences, reach out to one another towards harmonious relationship, to improve our way of communication and to respect the real essence of being an Au pair both the Au pair and host families.
Analisa’s comments about the au pair v cheap labor and sending of money to the Philippines echo the issues that have been going around in Denmark for quite some time now. She hopes that this study carries a different perspective focusing on improving the au pair system. This is a rather interesting comment since it brings out a possibility that perhaps the ‘old’ au pair discussions have been saturated already and that a new focus is necessary.

4. **Suggestions, Recommendations, and Critical Views**

- It made me realized that even if I stand firm to what I believe are my rights as an Aupair in the end I am still in the mercy of my host family and the rules of this country […]

- I am not totally negative of this whole situation as I've also gained and accomplished something with my au pair experience as far as I am concerned I've learned a lot and I'm thankful to my host family no matter what they are not really that bad ... They are just not interested with the cultural exchange program so I think they should just hire a plain domestic worker.

- There are still host families who are highly functional, aware and respect the Au pair program which we should focus more on encourage to increase their number by educating the rest.

- I find that it's so easy to just fill up, submit and process the contract without the host family being aware or understanding the whole contract and I'm not sure that the immigration service is doing some orientation about what is it really about and the au pair can just transfer to another host family anyway but what if I like me and some of my friends who chose to stay and it's too late already to change host they can't do anything more.

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29 Analisa’s further comments for question 3: My last encounter with my host family was when I told my host mom I am not your personal cheap maid the following week I was asked to move out and when I try to express my feelings and thoughts they would say no discussion we can ask you to leave whenever we like. I am not really that happy to stay with them anymore though, but I am willing to compromise and obey for the sake that I can have a positive experience until the end of my contract and I still like to go to Norway as an Au pair again. I was thinking that maybe next time I should allow myself to be abused and just don't complain or assert myself to what I believe is right for me because the truth is they don't care what have you been through and what's going to happen with you in spite of all the great help you have been done for them. They only hire you as a house helper and baby sitter sometimes they ask you to be their car washer, grass cutter using lawn mower, window cleaner, etc some of my friends complained to me about those and the problem is they will do it anyway and doesn't complain to their host family because as I said we have to earn money anyway or have no better options or have been used to being a domestic worker at home or in Hongkong, middle east.
The lack of participation and cooperation of other Au pairs to those organizations that raises and uphold our rights and conditions are also an obstacle to the optimum development and betterment of the plight of the Au pair.

Her comments for this question implicitly convey that the problems regarding the au pair scheme can be described as scattered: the au pairs who need to participate, the host families that need to be educated, the Danish immigration office’s role to orient the prospective host families about the rules and regulations. What seems to be just appropriate to say to this chaos is to have a participatory communication wherein all the stakeholders are united in finding solutions to the problems affecting the Filipino au pairs. Analisa mentions the important role of organizations in facilitating discussions about rights and welfare.

Bernadette’s Feedback

- In my own standpoint, the study is very useful in the sense that it shows the real situations in Denmark and the different circumstances they left behind in the Philippines. Au pair who had better circumstances in the Philippines are more open to their host family because they are not afraid of being thrown out of the host family’s house because they left no responsibility in their homeland. And yet those who had more responsibilities are more afraid because they have so many responsibilities at home and finding another family is difficult […].
- It is indeed true that there are so many college degree holders among au pairs and yet life and opportunities are limited to just being an au pair.
- Au pairs can contribute more in the society not only in the household aspect but in general aspect of the society as well as long as they were given the chance to practice what they had learn and explore broader knowledge.
- this study is very helpful in the sense that it talks about how au pairs intelligence slowly deteriorating because of the nature of their job and its limitations---

Bernadette sees the importance of this study in relation to the oftentimes overlooked academic aspect. She also believes that family welfare responsibilities, that some of the participants carry, are factors that contribute to limiting and expanding the cultural horizons that the program offers.
6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study presented discussions on migration, culture, and media from the standpoint of transnationalism, and the narrative lived-experiences of the participants opened up perspectives on the various situations that they have to go through. Indeed, there are cases of abuse that are going on, but there are also stories that are relatively good with consideration on the relationship between the host family and the au pair. The interview questions were able to solicit wide-ranging responses and critical views regarding the participants’ experiences. For this reason, one can argue that there are diverse opinions about the whole au pair scheme; therefore it is not always easy to say that one argument should be valid for everyone, since coming to Denmark to be an au pair entails different personal motivations. Deprofessionalization and deskilling of the young Filipino au pairs were the underlying themes of the study.

Going back to the aim, the study explored the non-mediated and mediated practices of the participants in terms of their inclusion and exclusion in the Danish society. Three questions were formulated to support this, and they are all independent questions but also very much interrelated.

For the question what functions does the Internet have for the participants in relation to communication with their family, professional advancement, and civic participation, the findings of the study are:

- The Internet mediated relationships between migrants and their family; nonetheless, knowledge to use a computer is a factor. In the absence of the Internet, SMS and phone calls assumed the role.
- Social networks were quite popular for the participants. Social networking sites function as a way of keeping up with friends as well as a place to get news updates.
- Information seeking for self improvement through different social media, educational files, e-books, and entertainment.
- Access to electronic mass media through different social media for news both in the home country and the host country.

The overall significance of the Internet is it gives the participants the possibility to explore how different types of media, both interactive and mass media, can be utilized for personal development and participation in the civic culture.
For the question *how do activities such as house works in the host families, culture and language studies, and social interactions affect the civic engagement of the participants*, the findings of the study are:

- In terms of inclusion, a couple of the participants seemed to have/have had a good relationship with their host family. The upside of this is one of the participants appreciated her cultural journey in Denmark.
- Inclusion happened most in the Filipino community through membership in different social organizations, religious group, and even in a transnational group.
- In terms of exclusion, in particular in the context of home: at least three of the participants were treated as house maids by their host family, despite the fact that one of them constantly reiterated her position as an au pair and not a servant.
- Language studies were hindered due to expensive transportation. Cultural studies were limited to house works for some. The consequence of not being able to have access to language and culture is critical to one’s social participation.
- Some of the participants were told that the host family did not care about the cultural exchange program; hence, the notion of family was transformed into the framework of employer-employee relationship.
- Motivations to coming to Denmark can be influential to one’s participation and emancipation.

To summarize, both the participants and their host family have the responsibility of respecting the au pair program, since this can be helpful for the participants to expand their cultural horizons and improve their language and professional skills. However, it becomes complex if one party does not want to honour the meaning of the program.

For the third research question *how do they benefit or not benefit from being part of the religious and socio-cultural networks in terms of network building and access to knowledge and information about the host society*, the findings of the study are:

- The participants became members of the group where they could identify themselves with. This is due to the reason that the Filipino migrant community in Denmark composes of a variety of dynamic organizations.
- Social organizations and religious group/church served carried the meaning of ‘home’ and a place for the advancement of knowledge. This can also be related to inclusion.
• Membership to organizations allowed the participants to practice their language and traditions.

The participants recognized the importance of expanding one’s socio-cultural knowledge and civic rights through participation in different organizations; and this was vital since it helped them, in their own way, to be aware of their capabilities.

Some of the findings that can be useful for further studies are:

• Both the Philippines and Denmark have specific roles to play in the lives of migrants. Abuse of the au pair program is still happening, and the Philippines must help those who want to be au pairs understand the essence of the program, so that prospective applicants will be armed with knowledge about their rights and responsibilities, and most importantly how they can make the most of it in terms of academic and professional advancement. Denmark must take a further step on ensuring that the host families follow the rules and hold abusers accountable for their doings.

• Family networks in a host society can play a vital role in explaining or not explaining the idea behind the au pair programme. Therefore, networks of friends and families must be informed that they should promote the benefits of the program.

• Intercultural communication problems can contribute to misunderstanding each other’s culture. Dialogue is extremely important for many reasons: to explain why one has to send money to the Philippines; to voice out one’s view of unwanted situations. The latter is vital, since this can influence how people see themselves in the context of home and society.

Feedback from the participants indicates that there is a need to shift the discussion and focus. To educate more host families, to get more au pairs to participate, and for the Danish immigration office to be more vigilant against the abuse that is happening. It is also important that the au pairs’ skills are recognized.

The study recommends further research on how participatory communication can be utilized and applied to engage all the stakeholders: au pairs, host family, social organizations, sending and receiving countries, mass media, in finding long terms solutions. The ‘cultural exchange or cheap labor’ argument must not be ignored; however, debates should not be limited to this alone. Most of the au pairs are highly educated. Recognition of such qualifications must be
done to create a new arena for discussions. Oftentimes, many au pairs themselves do not see this side of their background as something valuable. From a communication for development perspective, behaviour change - the au pairs should not see themselves as domestic workers, but as educated migrants must be promoted and advocated, so that au pairs and members of the host society can acknowledge this unknown aspect of these unsung migrants. They are education migrants; it is only right and logical that the au pairs are supported to enhance their qualifications. Deprofessionalization and deskilling must be avoided.

Note:

1 Papadopoulos and Lees (2001) advocated that a researcher has to be culturally aware when it comes to how researchers examine and challenge their own personal value and to understand “how these values are socially constructed” (p. 260). My personal values are based on how I make meanings of the objects around me, therefore, it should be emphasized that these constructed values differ from time to time and from person to person. Hence, one should be careful from jumping in to immediate interpretations of objects without carefully considering the possible aspects that could have affected the participant’s own construction of meanings. Moreover, Leininger (1995 cited in Papadopoulos and Lees, 2001: 259) argued that “without cultural awareness researchers tend to impose their beliefs, values and patterns of social behavior upon cultures other than their own”, because we share common values and beliefs, I can, with no trouble, relate to these without enforcing what and how I believe things should be; the researcher should be knowledgeable. In this respect, my knowledge about our own culture is an important factor, since this somehow creates mutuality that we both understand what we mean; the meaning can be preserved, not lost; and also sensitive so that partnership between the researcher and the participant is achieved, therefore, “power relationships are challenged and real choices are offered” (p. 261). Sometimes, the concept of power in research is defined through color and race, however, the possible differences that color causes is irrelevant in this case since we both see ourselves as members of the same group; and lastly, the researcher must be competent, so any form of discrimination is eliminated.
List of References


Appendices

Appendix 1

Question Guidelines

(Written Interview with the New Au Pair)

1. Can you tell me about your education in the Philippines? What and how much you have studied and, if possible, your professional experiences.

2. How would you describe your life in the Philippines? How about in Denmark? What about your future? (in three words, please)

3. What are you goals? How do you think you can reach your goals?

4. Can you tell me about your journey to Denmark in terms of what made you decide to be an au pair (family or own decision)? How did you know about the au pair system? Do you have friends or relatives who are abroad (or are in Denmark) and know about the au pair system?

   Did you come to Denmark for the cultural exchange program as an au pair or to work in a Danish household? If the former, what are your cultural expectations or plans to improve your cultural horizon and how do you think you can maximize your stay in Denmark? And if the latter, why did you decide to work as a housekeeper in Denmark and not another profession abroad? Do you support your family financially?

5. Are you familiar with some of the Filipino and Danish groups (cultural and social)? Which of the groups do you belong to or mostly active in? How would you describe your membership in this group? In which ways do you benefit or not benefit from it? Why did you decide to be part of it? Do you contribute in improving or making the Filipino community in Denmark and as well as yourself? Can you tell me more about the Filipino community in Denmark? How does it feel to be part of the Filipino network in Denmark?

6. Being far from your family and friends; how do you manage your communication with them or how do you maintain your connection with them?

7. Do you join any religious groups in Denmark? Have you always been active in the church even before coming to Denmark? Why is being part of a religious group important to you, what are the advantages and disadvantages for being active in religious groups?

8. Can you describe your relationship with your host family? How do they treat you, and how do you see yourself with them? Do you go to a language school? How do you feel about going to a Danish language school (both positive and negative aspects)? Have you so far gained cultural knowledge (and/or language), and in which ways do you find it beneficial or not beneficial?
9. How do you see yourself in the Danish society? Where do you think is your place in the Danish society? Do you think you have working possibilities in Denmark with consideration to your education from the Philippines, do you think your education is valuable and is your education and competencies valuable for the Danish society?

10. How do you make use of the Internet? What does the Internet mean to you? Which websites do you usually access and why do you find these websites valuable? Do you only use the Internet at home (host family’s house) or as well as outside? If you use the Internet outside the house, is it through your smart mobile phone or a computer tablet? Which applications do you use and why?

11. Are you familiar with the possibilities of studying in a Danish school? If yes, would you consider getting an education in Denmark despite of the fact that you have to pay a great amount of tuition fees?

12. Have you, so far, learned something valuable in your short stay in Denmark that you think is worth sharing to others? (competency improvement, self-improvement etc)

(Written Interview with Au Pairs for more than a year)

1. Can you tell me about your education in the Philippines? How much you have studied and if possible, your professional experiences.

2. How would you describe your life in the Philippines? How about in Denmark? What about your future? (in three words, please) How long have you been in Denmark (as au pair)?

3. What are you goals? How do you think you can reach your goals?

4. Can you tell me about your journey to Denmark in terms of what made you decide to be an au pair (family or own decision)? How did you know about the au pair system? Do you have friends or relatives who are abroad (or are in Denmark) and know about the au pair system?

Did you come to Denmark for the cultural exchange program as an au pair or to work in a Danish household? If the former, what are your cultural expectations or plans to improve your cultural horizon and how do you think you can maximize your stay in Denmark? And if the latter, why did you decide to work as a housekeeper in Denmark and not another profession abroad? Do you support your family financially?

5. How did you come to know about the Filipino and Danish groups (cultural and social)? Which of the groups do you belong to or mostly active in? How would you describe your membership in this group? In which ways do you benefit or not benefit from it? Why did you decide to be part of it?
Do you think you contribute in improving or making the Filipino community in Denmark and as well as yourself, in which ways? Can you tell me more about the Filipino community in Denmark? How does it feel to be part of the Filipino network in Denmark?

6. Being far from your family and friends; how do you manage your communication with them or how do you maintain your connection with them?

7. Do you join any religious groups in Denmark? How did you come to know this group? Have you always been active in the church even before coming to Denmark? Why is being part of a religious group important to you, and what are the advantages and disadvantages for being active in a religious group?

8. Can you describe your relationship with your host family? How do they treat you, and how do you see yourself with them? Which are good, and which ones are not so appealing to you? Do you go to a language school (for how long)? How do you feel about going to a Danish language school (both positive and negative aspects)? Have you gained cultural knowledge (and/or language) during your stay in Denmark, and in which ways do you find it beneficial or not beneficial?

9. How do you see yourself in the Danish society? Where do you think is your place in the Danish society? Do you think you have working possibilities in Denmark with consideration to your education from the Philippines, do you think your education is valuable and is your education and competencies valuable for the Danish society?

10. How do you make use of the Internet? What does the Internet mean to you? Which websites do you usually access and why do you find these websites valuable? Do you only use the Internet at home (host family’s house) or as well as outside? If you use the Internet outside the house, is it through your smart mobile phone or a computer tablet? Which applications do you use and why?

11. You are perhaps aware of the possibility of studying in Denmark, would you consider getting an education in Denmark despite the fact that you have to pay a great amount of tuition fees? Why and why not?

12. Have you, so far, learned something valuable in your stay in Denmark that you think is worth sharing to others? (competency improvement, self-improvement, the what to dos and what not to dos) How do you think the au pair experience can be maximized, in particular, from the perspective of improving one’s competencies?

13. What do you think are the problems that most au pairs encounter, and how can these problems be met? How did you overcome the hindrances you met along the way?

14. What would you like to say to the newly arrived au pairs so that they can have tips on how they can best make use of their experiences in Denmark?

(Former Au Pairs/Students)
Guideline No. 1 (Personal Interview with Bernadette)
1. How would you describe your life in the Philippines in three words? How about in Denmark? What about your future plans (in three words)?
2. What were your reasons for coming to Denmark?
3. Can you tell about your life in the Philippines before you came to Denmark (school, work experience, and interests)? Are you supporting your family financially?
4. Which organizations are you member of in Denmark? Can you tell more about them, both the benefits that you are enjoying and as well as suggestions for the organizations. (How have these organizations helped you?)
5. Can you tell about the experiences you’ve had as an au pair in Denmark. Which are good, and which ones are not so appealing to you.
6. How do you think the au pair experience can be maximized, in particular, from the perspective of improving one’s competencies?
7. What are you goals? How do you think you can reach your goals?
8. Why did you decide to study in Denmark?
9. Can you explain how you found out about the education you are taking? How do you finance it? What should an au pair do in case she/he is interested in pursuing academic studies?
10. Are there ways where one can get a free education in Denmark?
11. What can you advice the newly arrived au pairs about the possibilities of improving their competencies while they are in Denmark?
12. Do you have access to a computer? Internet? Which websites do you usually access? Why?

Guideline No. 2 (Written Interview)
1. Can you tell me about your education in the Philippines? How much you have studied and if possible, your professional experiences.

2. How would you describe your life in the Philippines? How about in Denmark? What about your future plans? (in three words, please) How long have you been in Denmark?

3. What are you goals? How do you think you can reach your goals? Why did you decide to study in Denmark?

4. Can you tell me about your journey to Denmark in terms of what made you decide to be an au pair (family or own decision)? How did you know about the au pair system? Do you have friends or relatives who are abroad (or are in Denmark) and know about the au pair system?

Did you come to Denmark for the cultural exchange program as an au pair or to work in a Danish household? If the former, what are your cultural expectations or plans to improve your cultural horizon and how do you think you can maximize your stay in Denmark? And if the latter, why did you decide to work as a housekeeper in Denmark and not another profession abroad? Do you support your family financially?

5. How did you come to know about the Filipino and Danish groups (cultural and social)? Which of the groups do you belong to or mostly active in? How would you
describe your membership in this group? In which ways do you benefit or not benefit from it? Why did you decide to be part of it?

Do you think you contribute in improving or making the Filipino community in Denmark and as well as yourself, in which ways? Can you tell me more about the Filipino community in Denmark? How does it feel to be part of the Filipino network in Denmark?

6. Being far from your family and friends how do you manage your communication with them or how do you maintain your connection with them?

7. Do you join any religious groups in Denmark? Have you always been active in the church even before coming to Denmark? Why is being part of a religious group important to you, and what are the advantages and disadvantages for being active in a religious group?

8. Can you describe your relationship with your host family? How did they treat you, and how did you see yourself with them? Which were good, and which ones were not so appealing to you? Did/do you go to a language school (for how long)? How do you feel about going to a Danish language school (both positive and negative aspects)? Have you gained cultural knowledge (and/or language) during your stay in Denmark as an au pair and as a student, and in which ways do you find it beneficial or not beneficial?

9. How do you see yourself in the Danish society? Where do you think is your place in the Danish society? Do you think you have working possibilities in Denmark with consideration to your education from the Philippines, do you think your education is valuable and is your education and competencies valuable for the Danish society?

10. How do you make use of the Internet? What does the Internet mean to you? Which websites do you usually access and why do you find these websites valuable? Do you only use the Internet at home (host family’s house) or as well as outside? If you use the Internet outside the house, is it through your smart mobile phone or a computer tablet? Which applications do you use and why?

11. Have you, so far, learned something valuable in your stay in Denmark that you think is worth sharing to others? (competency improvement, self-improvement, the what to dos and what not to dos) How do you think the au pair experience can be maximized, in particular, from the perspective of improving one’s competencies?

12. What do you think are the problems that most au pairs encounter, and how can these problems be met? How did you overcome the hindrances you met along the way?

13. What do you want to say to the newly arrived au pairs so that they can have information on how they can best make use of their experiences in Denmark?

14. Can you explain how you found out about the education you are taking? How do you finance it? What should an au pair do in case she/he is interested in pursuing academic studies?
15. Are there ways where one can get a free education in Denmark? What can you advice the newly arrived au pairs about the possibilities of improving their competencies while they are in Denmark?
Appendix 2

Summary of Qualitative Interview and Participant Observations

Qualitative Interview: Personal and Written Responses

- Two participants, Michelle and Lorraine, were not able to provide answers to all of the questions. Michelle gave direct comments to the first part of the questions, not the supplementary ones, while Lorraine only managed to respond to questions 1-4, and this was probably because she didn’t have enough time to allocate, since she was busy with her studies. I sent a follow up inquiry to Michelle about what she thought or felt regarding the questions: if the questions were too uncomfortable for her to answer or if the questions demanded too much of her time. Unfortunately, I was not able to get her feedback regarding this matter. The limited but applicable data provided by Michelle and Lorraine were also included when applicable. Bernadette, Analisa, Grace, and Eleanor provided very comprehensive responses to the questions.

- Four of the participants left the Philippines to be au pairs in Denmark based on economic reasons (because of low salaries in the country and also to provide financial support to their families in the Philippines) and to experience the cultural exchange program of the au pair scheme. Bernadette was the only one who mentioned that her decision to be an au pair in Denmark was solely based on the cultural exchange program, not for economic grounds. However, Grace did not know that the au pair program was about cultural exchange.

- Three of them are members of Filipino groups: either church associated groups or social movements. Michelle and Lorraine failed to provide the data about this matter, while Bernadette exclaimed that she could imagine joining a Filipino group in the future.

- Five of the participants finished their college/university education, and two of whom were self-supporting students. Only one of them completed two out of a four-year university studies.

- All the participants expressed positive remarks about the au pair program. It should be emphasized that the focus of their appreciation was on the program.
All the participants were introduced to the au pair program through their networks of family/relative (in Denmark) and friends. Some of these friends’ network were former au pairs in Denmark.

Only two of them stated contentment with their host family; three of them expressed their dissatisfaction with the host family, in particular, the host parents. One of them did not provide her data for this matter.

**Participant Observation:** Au Pair Network (APN) and Center for Au Pair (CAP)

- The au pair information meeting provided by the APN had a representative from the au pair division of the Danish Immigration Service, who explained to the attending au pairs about their rights and responsibilities. There was also a presentation about the legal rights of the au pairs by the Au Pair Support, an organization that provides free legal counseling to au pairs. Most of the au pairs who attended the meeting were fairly new (some of the attendees were former au pairs in Norway), and they were appreciative of the information they received. It turned out that not many of them were fully aware of an au pair’s rights and responsibilities. The APN cooperates with FOA labor group and KIT (Kirkernes Integrations Tjeneste or Integration Service of the Churches). English was used during the meeting; the attendees were mostly Filipinos, but there were few au pairs from other countries, this was held at a non-profit café/restaurant in Frederiksberg.

- CAP also provided an information meeting for the au pairs. The information they offered was based on the Danish Immigration Service- au pair division’s presentation of rights and responsibilities, however this was explained by one of CAP’s organizers, a Filipino, and he used English and Filipino when explaining these matters, and also because the audience were all Filipinos. There was also a cross-cultural orientation given by a representative of Babaylan Denmark, a Filipino organization focusing on women’s issues. A very interesting part of this event was the sharing of experiences by former au pairs; by those who started to venture in studying at a Danish academic institution after their contract had ended. This was welcomed with enthusiasm by the present au pairs. CAP is associated with St. Anne’s Church in Copenhagen. The information meeting was held in a church in Helsingør.
• There were no host families present in either information meetings. However, problems that were encountered by the au pairs with their host families were discussed; most of the concerns were related to long hours of house work.

• Since the CAP information meeting was presented by a Filipino, the overall ambiance of the meeting was light and cheery. The moderator would occasionally throw jokes to lighten up the mood of the meeting.
Appendix 3
Summary of ComDev Pilot Study December 2011

I conducted a qualitative interview with St. Anne’s Church’s Rev. Fr. Joe Toms in Amager, Denmark. In the interview, he explained to me the immediate problems that were confronting the au pairs. Many au pairs, according to him, were abused by their host family; working long hours every day, and were unable to attend language classes. He also mentioned that some of the au pairs sought the church’s help for counseling. Aside from this, the church functioned as a place for communicating with Danish locals, since there were church volunteers who were more than willing to talk in Danish with the au pairs who come. The church also helped au pairs in cases when they were thrown out by their host family. In addition, the church was recognized as a place for convening those who were interested in polishing their talents in singing through a small group that was set up for young adults organized mostly by Filipinos who have been in Denmark for quite some time.

In addition to the qualitative interview, I also conducted participant observation at the church locales where I met some of the prospective participants of this study.