

Pushing for Social Change: The Domestic Violence Movement in Taiwan

After a twelve-hour flight across the Pacific, I stepped off the plane into Chiang Kai-shek International Airport, disoriented and still shaking mini pretzels out of my hair. Already I could feel the humidity seeping in and smell the faint but ubiquitous scent of incense in the air. Only three days before I had been finishing my last final exam – now I was finally in Taipei to carry out exploratory research on the development of Taiwanese social programs and legislation for domestic violence against women. Suddenly the two-and-a-half months seemed like a long, long time. Niggling fears crept in. What if I was not able to find any research participants? What if my language skills were not good enough to carry on interviews in Chinese? What if all of my research notes and equipment were incinerated in some freak gas line explosion? I attributed my neuroses to the sleep deprivation within the last few weeks of school and the fifteen-hour time difference between Taipei and the Bay Area.

I moved into the eighth-floor Alumni House near National Taiwan Normal University and spent the next few days acclimating to life in Taipei. To describe Taipei... It was nearing the peak of summer, with stifling humidity and temperatures that fluctuated around thirty-six degrees Celsius. Despite its being a subtropical island, Taiwan had been experiencing a several month-long drought, and water rationing occurred once a week in the capital. Buildings were constructed around the concept of packing as many people as possible into a limited amount of space, yet living quarters were surprisingly comfortable and well-furnished inside. There seemed to be a permanent layer of combined grease from pot-stickers, beef noodle soup and traffic exhaust lingering in the air. Drivers often packed several more cars across the street than there were lanes and engaged in daring games of chicken with pedestrians. Public transportation

was cheap and convenient, particularly the newly-constructed MRT subway system.

Inexpensive and highly personalized, cell phones could be heard to go off every few minutes in the background. Because I lived around the university, I met quite a few people from the foreign student community. Everything was within walking distance, food was delicious, and the people were incredibly friendly – despite my occasional butchering of the Mandarin language. In short, I loved the city of Taipei.

When I finally settled down, I started on my research. The task seemed rather daunting at the time because I had not yet set up any interviews. I was trying to answer the question, “What are the changes in the definition of domestic violence in Taiwan and what has been the significance of these changes in terms of providing social programs for victims?” I intended to interview individuals active in the social movement of women’s rights, such as activists, academics, lawyers, and administrators in women’s social programs. I thought that I would find all of these individuals in the government-run Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention Center, which had been established one year after the 1998 passage of the Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Act. Data collection in the field consisted primarily of ethnographic open-ended interviews, taped with the participant’s consent.

I focused on these particular professionals for various reasons. First, they were usually at the forefront of women’s issues and would therefore have the most comprehensive knowledge of the available social programs for victims of domestic violence. Second, they would have a broader understanding of historical, political, and cultural trends that contributed to any changes in definition. Third, I did not feel that I was qualified to interview actual victims because my grasp of Mandarin and Taiwanese culture was not sufficient enough to interact with victims of domestic violence, most of whom were not ready to discuss their traumatic experiences with a

novice researcher from a foreign country. I also decided to remain in Taipei because I did not have the necessary resources or time to study domestic violence throughout Taiwan. Besides, as the capital of Taiwan, Taipei remained at the forefront of the domestic violence movement.

I began my search for research participants with crossed fingers. During one of my first few days in Taipei, I contacted and met with Dr. Hu Tai-Li, a senior researcher at the Academia Sinica Institute of Ethnology in Nankang. I was introduced to her through my Stanford thesis advisor, and we had emailed each other prior to my departure from the United States. Dr. Hu was an extremely gracious and accomplished woman who was familiar with Taiwanese women's issues and had some connections with relevant organizations. After our lunch meeting, Dr. Hu called up one of her colleagues, the Chief Executive Officer of a private domestic violence prevention center, and helped me arrange an interview session with her.

However, I then realized that I had mistakenly assumed that the government-run center was the only official domestic violence center in Taipei. I had underestimated the extent of Taiwan's prevention efforts, and I needed to adjust my sample population if I wanted to gain a more comprehensive picture of the development of social programs in Taiwan. I needed to find out exactly how many private and government-run organizations there were in Taipei, but most participants did not know the exact number. If there were too many centers, I had to find a way to draw a representative sample from the various organizations. If there were not too many centers, then I could interview at least one professional in each center. Finally, a social worker at the government-run domestic violence prevention center gave me a list of all the Taipei private and government organizations, their phone numbers, and addresses. There were three government organizations and six official private organizations on the list, so it was possible to go around to each center. There were probably other organizations as well, but they were either

smaller and more informal, or they did not deal specifically with domestic violence issues. I was able to contact more research participants through the “grapevine” method – I would ask each person I interviewed if he or she had a list of other organizations or could suggest someone who had time for an interview.

For the most part, the interviews ran quite smoothly. They gradually became shorter and shorter as I knew what to ask and how I would ask it. Although my general Mandarin ability improved, it was my vocabulary regarding domestic violence issues progressed astonishingly quickly. Sometimes I had to pause before saying what I wanted to eat for lunch, but the phrases “protective order” and “domestic violence legislation” slipped easily off my tongue.

Nevertheless, language remained as one of my greatest frustrations because I could not read most of the written material they gave me, and there were some spoken legal terms that escaped my understanding. After each interview, I would try to transcribe as much of the taped discussion as I could. Occasionally some of the local Taiwanese I met would help me translate what I did not understand, or I would save the printed material for future translation when I returned to the US.

After having learned the extent of the social movement, I shifted my research topic because I received such an activist perspective from the interviewees; they were far better at discussing the domestic violence movement than how definitions changed among the general population. I decided to examine domestic violence prevention efforts in Taipei as a social science case study of successful social activism. Obviously the movement was not successful in the sense that domestic violence was completely eradicated throughout Taiwan; however, it was successful in overcoming cultural, social, and political barriers so that domestic violence against women was finally identified as a major social problem and criminalized. According to interviewees, once structures like domestic violence legislation, social service institutions, and

education programs were established in Taipei, victims became more aware of the services made available to them and the general population began to change its way of thinking about domestic violence against women.

Up until the 1990's, the general public did not give much thought to the issue of domestic violence. Some people had never witnessed or heard about it, so they were not given the opportunity to reflect upon the issue. Even if domestic violence did occur, it remained an inappropriate topic of conversation. Taiwanese culture emphasized the preservation of family cohesion, even at the expense of the victim's safety. Many people did not view abuse as a serious offense. They felt that the victim must have done something to provoke the attack. Others felt that, as the dominant heads of household, men had the right to control and discipline their families. The government did not want to interfere in what it considered to be a domestic affair. Instead, the government depended on family and friends to mediate the situation; women were advised to patiently endure this treatment and to avoid provoking their husbands, especially if their husbands were having problems at work. In addition, women were not perceived to be a vulnerable enough of a group to justify government aid; people felt that social welfare efforts should be devoted to the elderly, children, or the disabled.

When they were young, interviewees themselves thought little more than the general public about domestic violence even though most of them would grow up and represent the group of people that was most educated about this issue. They came to their current understanding primarily through their working environments. They were either assigned to work with domestic violence or they worked in another department that had overlapping issues with domestic violence – like underage prostitution, elder abuse, and child abuse. Very few of the interviewees initially sought social service work that specifically handled abuse against women.

Eventually, their working environments provided more feminist discourse and they had more contact with victims of abuse from all kinds of backgrounds. The interviewees began to understand that domestic violence was not limited to physical abuse and it could happen between any kind of relationship. Because the underlying basis was the abuser's need for power and control, domestic violence encompassed verbal abuse, sexual abuse, and psychological abuse. They began to learn how Taiwan's patriarchal culture contributed to abuse.

With the lifting of martial law on July 15, 1987, private women's organizations became formally established. Most of them were started with private donations from their original founders or founders' associates. At first, these organizations focused on other women's issues, such as women's dignity and development. However, after more direct contact with abused women, these groups realized that it was unrealistic to address abstract concepts of empowerment if basic safety needs remained unmet. They began to develop more comprehensive services for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. They provided emergency shelters, legal aid, financial aid, and medical support. Government centers today have services that mirror these earlier models. Women's groups also became more active in trying to gain government support and make policy changes, especially since they felt that they represented victims who were too weak to speak for themselves.

Activists realized that they would make the greatest impact upon the violence problem by passing prevention legislation. It was too inefficient for women's groups and the government to only deal with individual cases. One interviewee commented that an individual could only do so much; even if she did not sleep and worked twenty-four hours a day, she might be able to help only one hundred victims a year, at best. This was not enough. Also, victims required services from various professional fields – law enforcement, legal professions, medical personnel, and the

government. No system existed yet that could coordinate these services. The government would need legislation to set the precedent for structural change.

Originally, the government considered domestic violence to be a problem isolated to only a minority of the Taiwanese population. It also felt that domestic violence should be resolved by the family and not by public resources, which were better spent elsewhere. Besides, abusers had the right to express themselves within the boundaries of their private properties. However, due to the increasing influence of women's groups and other grassroots organizations, and the fact that more women were entering leadership positions, the government began to set up basic services in the late eighties'. Women's groups attended government meetings and activities, citing important statistics on domestic violence. When hotlines became inundated with cases of marital violence, the government began to work together with women's groups to develop an appropriate response. Initially established in 1987, the Northern Women's Welfare Center in Taipei began to focus primarily on domestic violence against women after 1990. The government also established its first women's shelter at this time.

With the influence of women's groups, the government realized the need for new domestic violence legislation. Taiwan's traditional legal codes were problematic when it came to helping victims of domestic violence. First, traditional codes lacked preventative measures; they only dealt with the aftermath of domestic violence. Second, enforcement was ineffective and inconsistent, particularly among policemen and judges. Third, legal measures were scattered throughout civil and criminal codes without any sort of coordination. Thus, victims had few public systems of support and the general public remained ignorant of domestic violence. The government commissioned Judge Gau Fehng-shian to study American domestic violence law from June 1993 to April 1994.

What really gave momentum to the social movement of domestic violence prevention were three highly publicized cases involving violence against women. The first involved Deng Ru-Weng, a long-suffering victim of physical, mental, and sexual abuse who one day murdered her husband. When details of her case came out through the media, the public was shocked. As a ninth-grader, she had been repeatedly raped and eventually impregnated by Ling A-Qi. Ru-Weng eventually married A-Qi for fear that he would harm her family. After marriage, the situation worsened for Ru-Weng because A-Qi often became intoxicated and would beat her and the children. During a particularly bad period when A-Qi's business failed, A-Qi grabbed their youngest one-month old son by the feet and lowered the infant's head into washing machine that was still in operation. He later beat Ru-Weng for trying to stop him and confined her and the children in the house for two weeks. On October 27, 1993, Ru-Weng received a phone call from her sister and learned that A-Qi had unsuccessfully tried to rape both of her sisters. A-Qi returned home drunk later that evening and the two fought. After beating her and threatening to kill Ru-Weng and her whole family, A-Qi went to sleep in their bedroom. A few hours later, A-Qi took a hammer and fruit knife to the bedroom and bludgeoned and stabbed A-Qi to death. She then turned herself in to the police. Upon hearing her story, many women's groups and lawyers flocked to her side. Ru-Weng underwent a lengthy trial and appeals process. She was finally sentenced to three years in prison, a reduced sentence because she had turned herself in and the judge decided that she had been under great mental distress. This case drew attention to problems associated with treating domestic violence as a private family affair.

The general public began to realize that they needed some protective legislation for victims of domestic violence. Judicial agencies needed specific legal codes to try domestic violence cases. The Ministry of Interior Affairs requested scholars, judges, medical

professionals, law enforcement officials, and NGO's to study DV against women so the government could develop the best way to address the issue. This group worked on a marital violence report from December 1994 to June 1995, primarily examining DV in Taiwan, but also taking a look at Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, California, the UK, and Hong Kong. Presenters of the research concluded that the government needed to assume the authority and responsibility of handling DV through legislation.

On November 30, 1996, Democratic Progressive Party official and prominent women's rights activist Peng Wan-ru disappeared on her way home one night after a conference in Kaohsiung. Two days later, authorities found her brutally raped and killed in an isolated location. Her killers were never brought to justice. This case awakened the public to women's safety issues and violence in general. People saw how easily women could be sexually and physically abused, and the existing laws at that time were inadequate for facing these problems. The Sexual Assault Prevention Act was quickly passed in the Legislative Yuan and went into effect the following year. Originally the this Act had been pending in Congress for two or three years. After Ms. Peng's murder, legislators from all parties expedited its passage.

On April 14, 1997, seventeen-year old Pai Hsiao-yen, daughter of a Taiwanese celebrity, was kidnapped on her way to school. Her kidnapers demanded five million dollars in ransom. They sent photos of a half-naked and bound Hsiao-Yen with a severed piece of her little finger to her mother. The girl was later found naked and strangled in a drainage ditch. She had been tortured before she died. Her murderers eluded capture for weeks. Two of them were killed while on the run, and the last one was finally arrested after having kept a South African diplomat and his family hostage. Again, the public was horrified and women's organizations gained a great deal more support for their activist efforts. Because this case followed so shortly after the

murder of Peng Wan-ru, public pressure on the government to do something about violence against women in Taiwan intensified. Frustrated at what they perceived to be a lack of government action, thousands of people took to the streets to protest the recent acts of violence on March 4, 1997. They demonstrated again on May 14th to show their determination in making violence a top political issue that needed to be addressed immediately. These protests marked the first time in Taiwanese history that two consecutive demonstrations took place.

The development of the Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Act (DVPTA) resulted from years of coordinated efforts between Judge Gau, women's groups, legislators, legal professionals, and academics. In February 1995, Judge Gau went to Guam for the Eleventh South Pacific Judicial Conference. Coincidentally, there had been a domestic violence conference a few days prior to her arrival. Another judge in Guam assisted Judge Gau in attaining the new US Model Code on Domestic and Family Violence. Impressed by the prevention efforts and the women's rights movement in the US, Judge Gau followed the US Model Code closely when creating the first draft of the DVPTA. She completed the first draft in September. Judge Gau then asked the Modern Women's Foundation and other women's groups to help organize a drafting committee; the original draft contained so many foreign systems that a committee was needed to assimilate it to the Taiwanese legal system. In July 1996, a domestic violence drafting council of approximately forty people was established, consisting of academics, lawyers, public officials, social workers, and other judges. After studying the draft and related Acts from the US, New Zealand, Australia, England, and Guam, the council completed the second draft and later held five public hearings in the Legislative Yuan. In September, the third draft was completed and presented to the Legislative Yuan.

There were some major points of contention during the drafting of the DVPTA. For example, some people argued that the Act would cause the breakdown of the family structure. Taiwanese culture valued family harmony and improving relations. Those fearing family breakdown were countered by people who believed domestic violence caused family breakdown. They also argued that the protection of victims should be placed above maintaining family integrity; after all, the DVPTA was intended to preserve women's safety. Another problematic issue was that the target population of the DVPTA seemed too broad; it even included unmarried couples who cohabitated together. People did not want the DVPTA to encourage these types of relationships. Later on, this article was removed from the final draft. People also complained that the arresting powers of law enforcement officials were too broad under the DVPTA, which would mean an infringement of the civil rights of the abuser. They did not like the "warrantless arrest policy" in the US, Australia and New Zealand where officers had the power to make quick arrests. Opposing parties finally compromised by revising the criminal code to include a clause in which judges must reprimand abusers for DV. Arrest powers were limited.

Then there was also the issue of modeling the DVPTA on the American model code. The advantages of using the US model was that the US seemed to address the domestic violence issue earlier than other nations and had, according to Taiwanese policymakers, developed the most comprehensive legal system and social services to deal with domestic violence. Taiwanese policymakers could study the US model and try to avoid making the same mistakes the US made. The main concepts that Taiwan wished to transmit from America were protective orders and getting the abuser to leave the house. Before, women were the ones who had to leave the house, and there was nothing in the law to protect them. Often abusers had light penalties and would retaliate if victims reported them to the police. Thus, there had to be some protection

system for women in the DVPTA. However, some people protested against the effectiveness of assimilating American law into the Taiwanese legal code. They cited differences in legal systems. Taiwan had a continental legal system, which meant that it carried detailed codes on how to act in every kind of situation, whereas America allowed the courts to interpret how laws should be implemented. It was also difficult to enforce the concept of protection orders in Taiwan, where people lived closely together and communities were tightly knit. The revision process was and continues to be endless.

The Taiwanese legislature eventually passed the Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Act on June 24, 1998. The impact of the DVPTA resonated throughout Taiwanese society. The biggest change was the idea that the government could and should interfere in domestic affairs because domestic violence was a public crime. More public resources and manpower went into prevention efforts. Taipei City Government spent NT \$107,505,329 (US \$3,257,737) on these operations. The Ministry of Interior Affairs spent NT \$1,250,036 (US \$37,880). The Act required a prevention center to be set up in every county in Taiwan. The Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention Center was established at the Taipei Shin-yi Police Station one year after the passage of the Act. The Center provided a twenty-four hour hotline, emergency shelter placement, assistance in applying for protection orders, assistance in medical exams, legal aid, psychological counseling, referrals, job counseling, abuser's treatment programs, and other services related to family violence. The main idea was to coordinate these various services in a single-counter operation. Sometimes the government referred its domestic violence cases to private organizations and would arrange for compensation.

Through the power of legislation, different government sectors had to take domestic violence seriously, and they assumed new responsibilities in abuse cases. Policemen and social

workers could apply for protection orders for victims. Policemen had to enforce these orders. Judges had to issue protection orders. Social government authorities had to establish prevention centers. Medical professionals had to create batterer treatment programs. Education authorities had to create some departments in schools and universities to teach students about domestic violence prevention. The central government's Domestic Violence Prevention Council, headed by the Ministry of Interior Affairs, had to create a database for officials and victims about past cases.

There was also an enormous change in public perception. Although people did not have a profound understanding of the definition, prevention or treatment, the public began to understand that DV was a public crime, not a private family affair. The media began to report DV incidents more frequently, condemning batterers. People in younger generations were especially influenced. Victims knew that there was outside help. The younger the female victims, the more likely they were to seek outside help or divorce their husbands because they became aware of available services and believed in their own ability to be economically independent. Older women were less likely to seek help because their lives were more settled, they had less job skills, were more culturally traditional, and did not have domestic violence education in school.

Other Asian countries, like Japan, began to show interest in the domestic violence effort in Taiwan because Taiwan was the first country in Asia to pass such an Act. When the American model code came out in 1995, Japanese academics did not think that it would work in Japanese culture because American culture was too different. Yet, Japan needed some kind of legislation because the country had serious problems with violent and sexual crimes against women. When Taiwan passed the Act, Japan realized that the legislation could also work in its

government system. Japan sent academics and legislators to Taiwan to discuss domestic violence. Judge Gau was invited to Japan to speak on this particular topic. Japan eventually passed a similar Act although their definition of domestic violence only referred to physical abuse.

The movement certainly did not end with the passage of the DVPTA; despite its successes in criminalizing domestic violence, there have been many areas that still require improvement. In Taiwanese culture, the different professional fields do not coordinate with each other enough to provide the best service to victims. For example, a victim might request an injury report from her doctor in order to apply for a protection order, but her doctor might be hesitant to help her in order to avoid getting into trouble with anybody. Some women's groups have tried to recruit and train school counselors to help children who witness domestic violence or are victims of domestic violence. However, teachers and schools are unwilling to get involved because they do not wish to interfere with parents or affect the school's reputation. Most schools want people to believe that they do not have any problems. Even after the passage of the DVPTA, there is still a problem with people not wanting to interfere with other people's domestic affairs.

Some of the greatest challenges with the implementation of the DVPTA arise from law enforcement officials. The interviewees considered policemen to be the most important professionals in responding to domestic violence victims because they are often the first ones to arrive on the scene. Often the police response is not sufficiently supportive. Some policemen believe that abuse has to be very severe, with physical injuries as proof – a broken arm, blindness – in order for the abuse to constitute as domestic violence. They do not consider a single slap in the face or other forms of abuse, like psychological abuse, to be domestic violence. Other

officers still feel that abuse is not serious enough to devote time to; it is a common family problem, and policemen are too overworked to have to deal with such trivial matters. Even the policemen who try to follow the DVPTA by issuing protective orders encounter frustrations. Sometimes the wife of the abuser will kneel down and beg the policeman not to arrest her husband because he has already learned his lesson. The officer will then leave. Soon thereafter, the wife will call the police again after being beaten and she will request a protective order. In these situations, police officers are less inclined to take her requests seriously. In rural areas, particularly among the indigenous population, the policemen tend to be the friends or family members of abusers. Therefore, they are more hesitant to arrest people for DV.

Most DV organizations are entirely or partially funded by the government. Private organizations can apply for government aid if they are determined to have developed to a “professional level” – i.e. they contribute great social value to the community. It is difficult to determine what constitutes a successful professional level because success varies from case to case. Many victims still return to their homes after being abused. Social workers and professionals cannot tell a victim what to do; they only want to inform her so that she can make the best possible decision for her and her family’s future. Thus, divorce is not necessarily seen as a successful outcome unless it is the only way of escape for victims. The government now tries to base success on “quality and quantity.” It will establish a quota for the number of cases an organization has to handle per year. However, these services need to be effective, which means providing services the victims actually need. If a victim needs help applying for a protective order, she should receive legal aid. If she suffers from some psychological disorder, she should receive counseling. The government hires an expert about twice a year to make an

assessment of organizations. The expert reviewed records, case reports, and victim evaluations, and then makes a detailed report to the government..

However, recent government support has been tenuous. How much money the government decides to give depends on how much the issue is being discussed at the time. The recent string of financial difficulties have distracted the government and the public from social welfare issues, as more money is being spent on addressing unemployment rather than domestic violence. Because the public is also experiencing financial difficulties, fewer citizens are donating to private organizations. However, more money needs to be spent on training policemen, establishing and running prevention centers, and improving social workers salaries.

Sometimes the money being spent on domestic violence or social welfare is not appropriately utilized. The Domestic Violence Prevention Council carried out a recent survey to examine how much money was being spent on domestic violence and sexual assault issues. They discovered that, because local governments did not want to build treatment centers for women or curing batterers, they spent most of their social welfare budgets on the elderly, pregnant women, and small children, regardless of financial need. Some existing prevention centers have rudimentary services; there might be only one social worker per county center. There is a high turnover rate for social workers because they are overworked, underpaid, and are exposed to dangerous situations.

The domestic violence movement is a constant collaborative effort between women's groups and different professionals, the government and the public. Women's groups now focus primarily on education programs to change cultural ideology and improving domestic violence policy. Many of them would rather maintain good communication with the government through research projects, meetings, and seminars rather than publicly criticize the government for

inadequacies. However, if they really feel that the government is not being responsive enough, they ask supportive legislators to pressure the government into action – one example was to boycott the government budget proposal unless the government allocated some more funds to prevention centers. They have also held news conferences and demonstrations to alert the government and the public to domestic violence issues. Unfortunately, now the media is more interested in political issues other than social welfare ones, so the movement is no longer receiving as much media attention.

Many women's groups have devoted advocacy efforts to the courtroom because of the impact of judicial decisions on victim's lives. Some judges are still not very supportive or sympathetic of the victim's situation; they may think that husbands are free to beat their wives or that their wives provoked the abuse. By holding many discussions with judges, judges have become more wary of women's groups and how they must consider activists' professional knowledge when making decisions. One women's group stationed itself in the courtroom to make sure victims were being treated correctly. Other groups have held protests or criticized judges through the media to ensure victims' rights are protected.

Activists and legislators have tried to re-word parts of the Act to clarify how judges must deal with domestic violence cases. Right now they are trying to delete the part of the law that says one main goal is to improve family harmony. Too many judges focus on the concept of preserving family harmony, so when some women request a protective order, judges advise them to drop the request. The original intention of the law was not to preserve family relations but to protect victims of DV; family harmony cannot exist in a DV environment. And judges should not preserve family relations at the risk of an individual woman's life.

To educate the public and make domestic violence culturally inappropriate, women's groups publicize the issue through mass media – books, television, radio programs, billboards, advertisements on buses or MRT stations, films, and lectures in middle schools and high schools. Many people who call hotlines are the mothers or siblings of victims who want the women's organization to immediately remove victims from abusive situations. These calls provide another educational opportunity in which family members are educated on how to best help victims – they should provide whatever support victims might need. The victim needs to make the informed decision to leave by herself. Oftentimes, out of concern, family members threaten to pull all support channels if the victims do not leave their husbands. Social workers have to explain that these actions are detrimental to the victims' well-being. Organizations have published domestic violence literature targeted at the relatives of victims so they can understand how to handle abuse in the family.

To reach people in more rural areas, some organizations have given free services and classes, asked women if they have any friends who might want to learn more about domestic violence, and left information around in public areas. Other organizations have tried to create self-propagating education by targeting university students. They enlist the help of university volunteers to educate other university students about domestic violence and advocacy work. Volunteers learn about the issue and then spread it to other people. Another example of self-propagating education is when women's groups educate people on how to set up programs in their own local communities so victims can be helped in both rural and urban areas. They stress that domestic violence services must be tailored to the native cultural contexts and be a community effort in order to be successful. They have yet to come up with a solution on how to

help people who do not have telephones, like many of the indigenous peoples who live in the mountains.

The domestic violence movement in Taiwan has been a continuous effort in compromise and communication, with both successes and difficulties in adopting the DV model of another nation into Taiwan's own culture. Now that I have returned from the field, I have a more respectful perspective on the hard work that goes into effecting social change and maintaining that change. From interviewing a few people and understanding their roles in the greater fabric of social activism, I can see how a single individual can create a ripple effect throughout an entire society. Taiwan's domestic violence movement successfully criminalized abuse against women and began changing cultural ideology by coordinating the efforts of community-level women's groups with structure-changing legislation.

I was especially impressed during my interview with Judge Gau; through her research and legislative efforts, she changed the way Taiwanese society thought about domestic violence against women. And her efforts did not end there – she continues to write articles and books (because she believes that the written word will last far longer than whatever she might say), give speeches, and attend conferences around the world. I believe that meeting Judge Gau had a tremendous influence on my own intellectual development. To see how one individual could help produce structural change through the power of legislation was very inspiring – I am now determined to follow a similar path into legal studies.

I was actually surprised at the relative lack of setbacks I encountered while in Taiwan. The worst I could say about my research experience was that I had a couple of uninformative interviews and occasional periods of bad health (e.g. my stomach had to adjust to a new diet and I had a month-long cold exacerbated by insomnia). Yet my interviewees were generally friendly,

informative, and more than willing to point me to the next possible resource. Even when I realized that my research topic and sample population had changed slightly, my research methodology was broad enough to accommodate the new changes. Plus, after spring quarter's pre-field research seminar in which the instructor constantly reminded us to prepare for the unexpected, I was surprised that the unexpected had not been more overwhelming. When I returned, I was glad that I had transcribed the majority of my interviews while in Taiwan. My notes were far clearer than if I had tried to piece together illegible pencil scribbles and tape recordings back in the US.

However, there were still some aspects of my research experience that I would have done differently had I had the chance to do everything over again. First, I would have spent more time before departure improving my Mandarin abilities, particularly in speaking and reading. I could have asked more pointed questions (that I wish I asked now, especially since I am analyzing my data!) and perused the literature on domestic violence. Many of the interviewees gave me written material, like pamphlets, brochures, and newsletters about their organizations. Judge Gau gave me a copy of her book on the drafting, passage, and implementation of the DVPTA. I would have liked to depend less upon other people to help me translate these works. And even though I was only in Taipei for a short amount of time, I could have done more background research on the organizations I would be visiting before I left. The grapevine method was effective, nevertheless my questions could have been better targeted to the type of organization I visited; there was a slight difference between government prevention centers and private organizations. I would advise all novice researchers to have sufficient speaking and reading abilities in the language of their research location and to carry out extensive and specific background research on their topics of study.

Nevertheless, my research experience in Taiwan was the most amazing summer of my life. I was studying exactly what I wanted to be studying. I was excited by the fact that I was not learning from textbooks; everything I picked up came from firsthand sources outside of university academia! Being in Taiwan was also a valuable lesson in independence – I could not depend too much on friends or faculty members back in Stanford to help me carry out my research (granted, I was fortunate enough to have ample access to the internet and email). And I had to decide how to handle unexpected problems that might pop up every now and then. Now I am currently writing my honors thesis, trying to figure out what all of this information means in a greater analysis of successful social activism. Thus, my summer research project is still an ongoing effort, one that has characterized what I have been working towards during all my years at Stanford.