

Ladegaard

## The Discourse of Powerlessness and Repression

Life stories of domestic migrant workers in Hong Kong

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Drawing on a large corpus of narratives recorded at a church shelter for abused domestic helpers in Hong Kong, this monograph explores how the women discursively construct themselves in sharing sessions with other helpers. They see themselves as 'helpers' who have come to Hong Kong to help their families, to help the people in the city, and to serve God. A wide variety of competing identities are constructed in the narratives: submissive helper, sacrificial mother, daughter and wife, and powerless traumatised victim, but also resourceful indignant migrant women who, through sharing and peer support, become empowered to fight against abusive employers. This book provides a detailed discourse analysis of the women's narratives, but it also explores larger issues such as global migration, exploitation, language and power, abuse and the psychology of evil, intergroup communication, and peer support and empowerment.

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