Asia in Transition 2

Kwen Fee Lian
Md Mizanur Rahman
Yabit bin Alas *Editors*

International Migration in Southeast Asia

Continuities and Discontinuities

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Asia in Transition

Volume 2

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Preface

The contributions in this volume are the outcomes of a Workshop on Mobility in Southeast Asian Societies: the Road Less Travelled, held at the Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam, in April 2014. At the time that it was conceived, the organizers put out an open call for papers from scholars actively engaged in the fieldwork in Southeast Asia on migration. The purpose was to cast a net wide enough to identify both conventional and unconventional work on migration research currently undertaken in the region. We were pleasantly surprised by the range of interests, which reflected the diversity of migration trajectories and experiences particular to the region. The workshop brought together young and senior scholars, gave them the opportunity to reflect on their work, and facilitated a rethink of some of the conventional views of migration scholarship. The contributions in this book will hopefully encourage a more critical reflection on how we approach migration research in Southeast Asia.

We thank the Director of the Institute of Asian Studies, Professor Tong Chee Kiong, for his support in making the workshop possible. We are also grateful to the administrative staff at the Institute, Hamimah, Zainah, and Liyana for their superb facilitation and organization.

Kwen Fee Lian
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Chapter 1
Making Sense of Inter and Intraregional Mobility in Southeast Asia

Kwen Fee Lian, Md. Mizanur Rahman and Yabit bin Alas

Abstract Migration has no respect for either borders or boundaries. Although the title of this volume is 'International Migration in Southeast Asia,' the movements of people have occurred and continue to be within the region, between regions in Asia, and across the North-South divide. The region is home to some of the largest labor surplus countries, namely the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, and Myanmar. Research on contemporary migration in Asia are dominated by the view that migration is an economically driven phenomenon; hence, the overwhelming interest in labor migration. However, if migration is regarded as more than an economic phenomenon, then we can appreciate how incredibly diverse it is as a human and social experience. When we do capture the diversity of such migration trajectories within the interstices of conventional flows of people recognized by the state and mainstream scholarship, we can see how the experience of migration can be treated in a novel way.

Keywords Region · Mobility · Migration · Labor · Southeast Asia

Migration has no respect for either borders or boundaries. Although the title of this volume is 'International Migration in Southeast Asia,' the movements of people have occurred and continue to be within the region, between regions in Asia, and across the North-South divide. The region is home to some of the largest labor surplus countries, namely the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, and Myanmar. What complicates any attempt to make sense of migration in Southeast Asia is, Hugo

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(2004: 290) comments, the vast size and cultural, ethnic, political, religious and economic complexity of the region. For this reason, the region defies any kind of generalization. Research on contemporary migration in Asia are dominated by the view that migration is an economically driven phenomenon; hence, the overwhelming interest in labor migration at the expense of the social, political, and cultural dimensions (Asis and Piper 2008: 429). Much of the descriptive studies and empirical data focus on documenting the flows of labor migrants and the development of policy regimes. However, if migration is regarded as more than an economic phenomenon, then we can appreciate how incredibly diverse it is as a human and social experience. Such an attempt to capture some of the diversity of the migration experience, temporally and spatially, was made in a recent collection of contributions by Lai et al. (2013). When we do capture the diversity of such migration trajectories within the interstices of conventional flows of people recognized by the state and mainstream scholarship, we can see how the experience of migration can be treated in a novel way: as rupture between the present and the past, as memory and representation, and as location and identity-making.

Asis and Piper (2008: 424) stated that in contemporary migration in Asia, the movement of workers driven by the demand for the less skilled and highly skilled has dominated the interests of research and scholarship since the 1970s. To be more specific, these workers cover the range of the semi-skilled in the construction industry, the service sector so central to a consumption economy inclusive of the need for domestic help and care, and the so-called foreign talent demand in the knowledge economy. What is common to such labor is that they are mostly located in an urban-based economy. The origins of such an economy may be traced to the formation and expansion of the world market precipitated by European exploration and colonization more than 300 years ago. Now referred to as the globalization thesis, the process has assumed new and intensified forms since it was recognized by social scientists as a significant economic process in the mid-1980s, with widespread social and political consequences. As Stuart Hall described it in (2000), "Contemporary globalization is associated with the rise of new, deregulated financial markets, with global capital and currency flows large enough to destabilize medium-sized economies, transnational forms of production and consumption, the exponential growth of the new cultural industries powered by new information technologies, and the rise of the knowledge economy." In sum, globalization is primarily responsible for accelerating the international movement and mobility of populations, particularly from labor surplus to labour-deficit economies.

To put international migration in Asia in perspective, more than 53 million (28 %) of the estimated 191 million international migrants in 2005 were from the region; much of which is intraregional (Asis and Piper 2008: 423–427). Intraregional migration within Southeast Asia (ASEAN) is particularly significant. In 2011, intra-ASEAN constituted over 32 % outward movement of the world total migration and even higher for inward bound at nearly 39 % (Aldaba 2014: 199). Within the region, outward migration from Malaysia is mostly to Singapore, migrants from Myanmar are drawn to Thailand, and Indonesians gravitate toward Malaysia. The region has two of the largest labor exporting countries in the world:

namely the Philippines whose nationals are widely dispersed throughout the world including the Middle East, and Indonesia (Asis and Piper 2008: 425–426). The other major source of labor in Asia is the South Asian countries. The Bangladeshi diaspora is as widespread as the Filipino, particularly in the Middle East and in Malaysia. Overall widespread international movements of labor in Asia and ASEAN began as globalization kicked in; first in the oil-rich Gulf countries in the 1970s, then later in the 1980s with the rise of the newly industrialized countries in East and Southeast Asia. Vietnam has been a late starter in the global movement of workers, first to Thailand and Malaysia and now increasingly toward the East Asian economies. Until the 1990s, Asis and Piper (ibid: 427) comment, labor migration in Asia was dominated by less skilled workers. Since then, highly skilled and professionals in the information technology, financial, and healthcare sectors have been sought after by the better performing economies in Asia.

The singular and most distinctive characteristic of labor migration in Asia, in contrast to Europe and North America, is that it is recognized by all governments as temporary even though it is accepted by scholars that receiving countries are permanently dependent on migrant workers to keep their economies going. It is a matter of interest, though not here, to address the reasons why immigration and immigrants are treated so differently between the receiving countries in the Western world and those in Asia. It is worth pointing out, however, that the presence of political institutions (such as religious organizations and the judiciary) in the liberal democracies of the west in exercising influence in protecting and extending the rights of individuals and migrants and the commitment of western governments to their international obligations in human and minority rights together with the interest of capital to encourage the free movement of labor—referred to by Hollifield as the 'liberal constraint'—which support immigration and the presence of immigrants (Boswell 2007: 79–80). The liberal constraint is absent in the receiving societies in Asia. Hence, migration policy in the region is about immigration control and regulation and is fundamentally premised on the principle of exclusion (Rahman 2012: 20). In contrast, the policy in Europe and North America has largely shifted to immigrant incorporation.

There are two other characteristics of contemporary international migration that stand out. First, the participation of women in labor migration has seen a sharp rise since the 1980s. Intraregional migration in East and Southeast Asia is gendered. Male labor migration is largely concentrated in the formal or productive sector while female migrants gravitate toward the informal and "entertainment" sector (Piper cited in Rahman 2012: 27). Second, students in the 1960s and 1970s were expected to return to contribute to the development of sending countries on completion of their tertiary education in western institutions. The globalization factor has changed international student migration, from the training of manpower for development to their potential as highly skilled workers and as long-term migrants in the countries that once only educated them. Although the movement is largely from the east to the west, especially with the better performing students, more Asian students migrate intraregionally in East and Southeast Asia. It is only in recent years that the high performing economies in Asia, Singapore being the exception, are

putting in place programmes to recruit international students for their permanent workforce.

There is a temporal dimension to international migration in Southeast Asia that is easily overlooked as much of migration scholarship has and is focused on labor movements under conditions of globalization. It is not always appreciated that the scale of migration in the colonial years was no less significant than contemporary migration. Asian labor migrations to Southeast Asia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries coincided with the growth of world trade in commodities, European territorial expansion, and the development of commercial and trading networks (Kaur 2013: 317). It was estimated that between 1911 and 1929, gross migration into Burma, British Malaya and Thailand was more than twice the gross migration into the United States; and even though a high proportion of these migrants returned home, the net inward migration was about 1.55 million (Huff and Giovanni in Kaur 2013: 322). Furthermore, Southeast Asia had a much faster population growth in the late nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century than either China or India (Maddison in Kaur, ibid.). The labor movements of the colonial period were fuelled by growth in the world demand for commodities, namely rubber, tin, rice, and sugar. They were dominated by interregional flows from the labor surplus countries of China and India to a lesser extent. In the 1930s, the Chinese and Indians were the largest migrant communities in the region (Kaur 2009: 281). Intraregional mobility of indigenous populations, in contrast to contemporary migration, was very limited because most countries in Southeast Asia were lightly populated. The exception was Java which had a huge and poor population and has been a labor exporter since the colonial years (ibid: 278).

Between the 1850s and 1930s, colonial capitalism in search of primary commodities was primarily responsible for opening the economic corridors that connected southern China and south India to the region. To address the problem of chronic labor shortage and the needs of the economy, the colonial powers practiced a free and open immigration policy. Despite recognizing political spheres of control, they kept the borders open (Kaur 2009: 277). As a result, migrant workers from these two traditional sources, especially China, flooded the colonies and moved easily across territories controlled by the British, Dutch and French—in search of economic opportunities. It is no coincidence that the unprecedented movement of populations interregionally in Asia also paralleled that of European migration within Europe and to North America for the same period. Strikwerda (1999: 376) described European migration between the 1840s and 1914 as the greatest international migration in world history. By the mid-nineteenth century most western European countries abandoned protectionist policies. Governments lowered tariff tariffs, liberalizing international trade, financial and commercial transactions; and promoted freedom of navigation and maritime commerce—ushering the era of free trade. States imposed little control, Europeans largely did not require passports and visas to travel around Europe until the World War in 1914 (ibid: 383–384). People could move relatively freely across borders. “Thousands of Belgians, Italians, and Spaniards” Strikwerda remarked, “immigrated to France by simply walking in.”

Cross-regional migration in a frontier situation in Asia was more challenging. Labor movements were regulated—unrestrained movements notwithstanding—and sponsored by colonial administrations working in collusion with private brokers or agents and mercantile interests. Indian workers for the rubber plantations were recruited either through indenture or *kangany*. Under the former Malayan planters used recruitment agencies or their own agents to advance money to potential migrants, who on arrival in the receiving countries signed a contract to be under indenture for a fixed period of 3–5 years (Kaur 2013: 327–328). The *kangany*, a senior overseer or foreman already employed in the plantation, was sent to his village in South India to recruit workers and in the process establish chain migration. This system later became the preferred practice because it was less costly and ensured better control of labor through the kinship network. The recruitment of Chinese workers for the tin mines followed similar lines either through indenture for a fixed contract or credit advanced to cover the cost of passage to be paid off (Ong 1995: 52). Direct recruitment utilizing the kinship network in villages was also a common practice. The recruitment of workers for the tin mines was undertaken by the Chinese *kongsi*, a cooperative that maintained security, control, and social bonds through a system of kinship and clan networks and provincial connections (Kaur 2013: 334–335).

Several points of continuity and discontinuity between colonial migration and contemporary migration in Southeast Asia are worth highlighting. First, the demand for labor in a colonial economy was restricted to mostly participation in the production of primary commodities and related commercial activities. A global economy requires a more diversified and gendered workforce, ranging from the informal sector in domestic work and entertainment to the formal construction and service industries, and the knowledge economy including information technology, finance, and health. The locale of migrant concentration has shifted from the rural frontier of the past to the urban conglomeration of the present. Second, the current increase in women's participation has enhanced the role of the household in receiving societies particularly through the remittance process. While remittances in the past were used to pay off debts and underwrite subsistence they may now be used as investment in physical or human capital—a practice favoured by female migrants. Third, the use of kinship and personal networks localized in rural communities by agents was the preferred and effective method of recruitment of migrant workers. Such recruitment was sponsored by the colonial administration and the companies. Remarkably, this practice has continued in contemporary migration but it has significantly become more elaborate and institutionalized at several levels. There are now more agents involved, spread over a wider geographical region that now covers north China and north India in addition to the traditional sources of the south of both the sending countries. The pool of labor also currently extends to most countries in Asia, particularly Bangladesh, Indonesia, and the Philippines. Labor movements in Southeast Asia are now both interregional and intraregional, meeting a more diversified labor market, managed by governments through regulations and policies—sometimes on a bilateral basis. Typically, the recruitment process begins at the first level with government bodies specifically dedicated to oversee manpower recruitment and

export from the sending countries. Then comes the private recruitment agencies which may be located at both the sending and receiving points. The third level is the subagents or brokers who are locally connected and active in recruiting prospective migrants from the communities of origin.

Much of migration research have focused on the mobility of population groups as an aggregate phenomenon, made sense of explicitly or implicitly if not simplistically as a consequence of adversity and attraction, the so-called push and pull pressures. Such a view which has informed conventional migration research is valuable in giving us an overview and the extent of movements of people in the past as in the present. However, the aggregation of mobility, Lindquist (2010: 6–7) points out, obscures the particularity of such movements. People move for many reasons—not always clear to them—but they must make sense of the uncertainty that accompanies migration in their own way and from their cultural perspective. It is often overlooked that migration is a very human and emotional experience that can only be understood in its cultural context. The *Minangkabau* in Sumatra in their wandering refer to *merantau* (circular migration), which obliges them to return home, and is regarded as a rite of passage (Kato in Lindquist 2010: 29). The villagers of Samar, one of the Visayas islands in the Philippines, view their migration in terms of *suwerte*, looking for good luck to improve one's life (Hosoda 2008: 322). Bangladeshi migrants to the UK from the district of Sylhet have evolved a bifocal orientation in managing the cognitive tension that comes with migrating: between home or *desh*, the source of their personal and religious identity, and overseas (*bidesh*) where they seek economic opportunities and success (Gardner in Vertovec 2004: 975).

The feminization of migration in Asia is usually predicated on the premise that structural oppression is inherent in a global economy (Ueno 2013: 37–38), ignoring the agency of women in the migration process. Ueno draws attention to studies that women leave to work in other countries not only to support their families but also to escape domestic violence, unhappy marriages or social exclusion inevitably seeking intimacy—weighing up not only the financial but the emotional costs of staying abroad. Women also leave their homes to acquire autonomy. Elmhirst (2002) documented how single women from North Lampung in Sumatra migrated to work in the garment and shoe factories near Jakarta, not by way of recruitment by agents and brokers, but through contacts of friends and relatives already working there. These young women made independent decisions to relocate: motivated that by acquiring social skills in working in a modern urban environment and remitting their earnings to purchase items that would eventually help to set up a home, they will enhance their value in the marriage market on returning home.

In sum, migrants are at one level forced to deal with the outside world anchored within their community and culture of origin. Filipino migrant workers, as Aguilar (2014: 2) describes, bring the "inside" to engage with the outside. At another level, migrants deal with the anxiety of uncertainty, risk, and the lack of closure (Lindquist 2010: 12). Hence migration, Lindquist reminds us, is a very temporal experience. Migrants make sense of it only by valorizing time and space.

The contributions in this volume represent the work of scholars actively engaged in migration in Southeast Asia. They relate in a general way many of the issues discussed in this introduction but they also capture the particularity of the migration experience in the region. The following accounts do aggregate the phenomenon of migration but they also reveal in between that migrants have to traverse the boundaries of crossing cultures and circumvent the borders of exclusion imposed by states. The contributions in this volume reflect the richness and diversity of people who move within and without the region and how they manage the risks and uncertainties that come with leaving home.

Angie Tran (Chap. 2) documents the peripatetic lifestyle of an ethnic minority, the Cham Muslims who engaged in seasonal work in buying and reselling used clothes and other household items within and outside their district of origin in Vietnam. Their background as itinerant peddlers facilitated their migration into Malaysia to do the same or to seek employment in the garment industry. Their involvement in garments-related work stem from the traditional skills of Cham women in weaving and sewing. The Chams found their non-Muslim employers in Vietnam and Malaysia unwilling to accommodate their religious practices in contrast to the Muslim employers they encountered. Vietnam was a late starter in international migration outside of Indochina despite being a labor surplus country. In the early 2000s, the Vietnamese government committed itself to a labor export policy to send workers from the poorer districts for employment overseas. For this purpose, state-sponsored banks were established to lend money to prospective migrants. The active involvement of the government in exporting labor resulted in the participation of retired and semi-retired officials in private recruitment companies.

Filipinos arrived in significant numbers in the Middle East in the 1970s. 80 % of the total population of the United Arab Emirates are foreigners. The Filipinos, the fourth largest group, are found at all occupational levels in the private sector. Naomi Hosoda's contribution (Chap. 3) examines the middle class Filipino perspective of living abroad. The UAE government adopts a liberal immigration policy especially toward professionals and the highly skilled. These better-paid migrant workers are given 3-year residence permits, easily renewable, and are allowed to sponsor family members to join them. As a consequence, this group of Filipino migrants, who regard the Middle East as a stepping stone to settling permanently in a Western country, have lived many years and established roots in the UAE. They have become an overseas middle class Filipino community, in contrast to the majority of their low skilled and transient counterparts. However, overseas Filipino migrant professionals find themselves in an ambivalent position: they enjoy the benefits of a middle class lifestyle; yet, they are unable to fulfill their aspirations in a society they cannot regard as their own. The result is the proliferation of voluntary associations to meet a range of needs that include recreational, occupation-relevant, or alumni activities. Hosoda singles out the development of social support organizations that look after the less fortunate and vulnerable nationals employed as domestic workers. Going beyond the traditional voluntary association that uses the church as its base, middle class Filipinos overseas have developed voluntary

associations as a way of mediating the rupture between home and away and as a means of fulfilling their identity aspirations in a place they live but cannot call their own.

Balik Kampung (to go home to your village of origin) is a common and culturally significant Malay expression. The Malays in Malaysia have traditionally been rural communities primarily dependent on agriculture for their economic livelihood. The last 40 years have seen a massive relocation of the Malays to an urban and capitalist-driven economy. For those who grew up in these rural communities, the expression is of particular significance: part nostalgia, part memory, and part representation. Mohd Khamsya's ethnographic study (Chap. 4) details how a group of elderly Malay retiree citizens from Singapore chose to cross the border to live in a *kampung* in Johor. The opportunity to see out their years in a village environment they have been familiar and culturally comfortable with—having lived in *kampungs* in Singapore before the government rehoused the population in high rise apartments in the 1970s—outweighed the risk of building homes on land they did not own but were affordable. In the *kampung* community, they found ready social support and face to face contact which they had lost living in densely populated housing estates in Singapore. As long as they worked toward maintaining the local network through social reciprocity and obligations, the uncertainty of legal tenure was never an issue. The only cost to the Singaporean retirees was that they were, because of their citizenship status, left out of political discussions and activities dominated by the local branch of the ruling party UMNO. The contribution of this richly textured ethnography is in how a group of low-income elderly manage their retirement by using informal strategies and non-institutional connections.

We earlier highlighted points of continuity and discontinuity between colonial and contemporary migration in Southeast Asia. The prevailing wisdom is that the international student migration (ISM) is a direct consequence of the globalization of the economy and the internationalization of higher education. Hence, much of the research on ISM, an interest that developed at the turn of the twenty first century, focuses on destination countries rather than sending societies. The concern for the pull factors has resulted in overlooking the push factors. These issues are taken up by Koh Sin Yee (Chap. 5) in her case study of Malaysians who go abroad for their tertiary education and who constituted the majority of foreign students in Commonwealth universities in the 1970s and 1980s. To make sense of why so many Malaysians study abroad especially today, she argues, one must go back to the divide and rule policy of the British. The colonial administration was content to allow vernacular schools (taught in Malay, Chinese or Tamil) to flourish for the majority while setting up a few elitist schools in English language to educate a minority. A racialized system of education was further consolidated after independence when the government, dominated by the Malay ruling party (UMNO), adopted positive discrimination in the 1970s. The *bumiputra* policy as it is known today privileged indigenous citizens and restricted the access of non-Malays to educational and economic opportunities. At the same time, the shift to a Malay medium education in all national schools resulted in a marked decline in quality and

eroded non-Malay confidence in sending their children to local schools. The consequence is the proliferation of private colleges and universities in collaboration with partners from Western universities to cater to the demand especially from non-Malay students for affordable post-secondary training. Those who are able to afford it continue to go overseas directly after high school. Sin Yee describes this as education-induced migration. Although ISM is associated with contemporary migration and appears to be discontinuous with the colonial period, this particular trajectory of student migration has its origins in a racialized system of education set up by the British in Malaya.

The continuities and discontinuities between colonial and contemporary migration are well highlighted by Mahalingam Marimuthu (Chap. 6) in his discussion of postcolonial Indian labor migration to Malaysia. There are remarkable similarities between the colonial and postcolonial phases in terms of origin, recruitment, status, and predominance of unskilled workers. The majority of Tamil migrant laborers were drawn from the lower castes in the southern and eastern coastal districts of Tamil Nadu in the colonial years, a pattern that has remained largely unchanged today. The colonial authorities in both the sending and receiving societies were directly involved in regulating and managing Indian labor migrants; such labor migration has now largely passed into the hands of private recruiters while governments are mainly responsible for setting out policies and implementing regulations. Economic globalization has created a diversified labor market that ranges from the unskilled to the highly skilled and this is reflected in contemporary migration. Skilled and highly skilled workers, especially in the IT industry, are now recruited from all over India. Recruitment through personal network directly or indirectly related to kinship continue to be practiced in the present as in the past. However, for the highly skilled category the use of alumni or the recommendations of colleagues are preferred. An innovative method is the use of "body shop" used by Indian consultancies to recruit IT workers who are then seconded to different clients on a project basis.

One difference identified by Marimuthu is the frequent changes in labor migration policies adopted by the Malaysian government since the 1970s. The flip flop in policies began with the liberal recruitment of foreign workers in the 1970s, the more managed policies based on bilateral agreements in the 1980s, and the authoritarian measures to curb illegal immigration that threaten to get out of control in the 1990s. The frequent inconsistencies and changes in policies are partly the result of sudden economic fluctuations, partly in response to domestic political issues, and partly the refusal of the government to recognize the permanent dependence on foreign labor for its economy. Indian workers in IT and in the hotel and restaurant business have been vulnerable to such temperamental changes on various occasions.

The continuities and discontinuities of Indian migration to colonial Malaya and Malaysia after independence is exemplified in the dichotomy between old migrants and new migrants. The majority of the old Tamil migrants and their offsprings have gained citizenship status but remained a racialized minority and have evolved into an underclass in Malaysian society. Local businesses dependent on Indian labor

have been quick to use the local Indian criminal network to enforce control over semi-literate and unskilled new migrants employed by them. On the other hand, the local Indian middle class are indifferent, if not hostile, toward the increasing presence of highly skilled new migrants employed in the IT and financial sectors.

A new source of South Asian migrants to Malaysia is Bangladesh. Since the 1980s it has been a popular destination of Bangladeshi migrant labor at a time when it joined the East Asian tigers as a high performing economy. The second highest concentration of Bangladeshis is located in Malaysia, the Middle East being the first. Rayhena Sarker's work (Chap. 7) is the first major documented and revealing study of one of the largest migrant communities in the Klang valley in the post-colonial years. The systematic transfer of labor from the Bangladesh as a result of a bilateral agreement began in the early 1990s, at first for the plantation sector but later for the construction industry. She estimated that there could be about 300,000 undocumented migrants who have come to Malaysia in 2010 via Thailand, taking advantage of the lower transaction costs and the greater flexibility of labor mobility in order to maximize their incomes. Because the labor brokers come from the rural villages where the migrants are recruited, they are particular effective in convincing their compatriots to migrate through sheer persistence. The villagers finance their migration either through borrowing or sale of livestock, the consequence of which their remittances in the first year are used for partial repayment of loans and for day to day expenditure of their families back home. Despite sharing a common religion with the majority Malay Muslim population in Malaysia, Bangladeshis are often racialized and discriminated by the public and exploited by employers and enforcement agencies.

Scholarship on contemporary migration, as this volume will attest, implicitly or explicitly draws on the master narrative of the interconnections between globalization, regionalization, and nation-states. Teresita Rosario (Chap. 8) departs from the conventional path in her discussion of the precolonial migration of the Hadramis to the Sulu islands in the southern Philippines in the thirteenth century. A historical approach to the study of migration is hardly novel; however, its methodological implications for understanding human mobility has yet to be fully realized by migration scholars. Using secondary sources, Rosario argues that there were three critical influences that contributed to the Hadramis establishing their presence in Southeast Asia. First, she draws on Abu-Lughod in identifying three nodal points central to propelling trade globalization in the twelfth–thirteenth century, one of which is the route that links Europe to the Middle East carrying trade via the Indian Ocean to India and China. It was through this Asian circuit that Muslim traders were able to conduct trade between island Southeast Asia and China. Second, one important group of Muslim traders were the Hadrami Sayyids (who were also teachers and missionaries) from the southern tip of Yemen who plugged into this circuit. Claiming direct descent from Prophet Mohammad, they were obliged to spread the message through migration. Third, following Ho, they lived in an inhospitable land-locked and drought-ridden terrain that put pressure on them to migrate. The confluence of these historically specific influences in the case of the Hadramis offer an alternative narrative and understanding of migration. The contestation that

accompanies the use and interpretation of such historical evidence, however, should not detract from the potential value of applying history to migration research, namely the particularity of migration—by avoiding methodological nationalism—is appreciated by linking global, regional, and historical processes and recognizing agency.

Migration studies, Piper and Roces (in Ueno 2013) contend, have treated Asian women either as workers or brides. The lives and decisions of female migrants are often subsumed under economic motives and utility maximization, ignoring the struggles of such women to secure intimacy in destination countries (ibid: 38, 42). Ahsan Ullah's study (Chap. 9) of premarital pregnancies of foreign domestic helpers in Hong Kong is a rare foray into the intimate and sexual lives of single Filipinas, Indonesians, and Thais working abroad. Based on a sample of 236, 91 % reported having premarital sex of which 32 % had pregnancies. Of the 68 women who became pregnant, a significant 38 % were "intended" pregnancies. Filipinas are more likely to engage in premarital sex (hence pregnancies) than Indonesian and Thai women. Many respondents reported that their marriage prospects in the country of origin declined because they had spent the prime time of their lives overseas; hence, they were driven to seek intimate relationships in the receiving country. The women who got pregnant did so out of fear that their partners would desert them or they wanted to have babies toward the end of their contracts. Most of their partners were male migrant workers in Hong Kong—Nepalese, Bangladeshis, Indians, and Pakistanis—the last group were preferred because they were good looking. Ullah's study is a revealing account of the hidden part of the lives of foreign domestic workers, all too often ignored by the migration literature and so thoroughly regulated by employers and government policies.

As we have outlined earlier, the globalization of the economy has resulted in the diversification of the labor market and created a demand for workers from the highly skilled to the unskilled. Much of the research on contemporary migration have focused on either end of the spectrum, much less on those in between. One such occupation is performers in live music entertainment or those involved in the creative/cultural industries. Anjeline de Dios (Chap. 10) examines how agents/managers, as labor market intermediaries, recruit and package overseas Filipino musicians (OFM) for entertainment in clubs, hotels, and cruise ships throughout East and Southeast Asia. Unlike recruiting agents in the conventional migrant labor market, OFM agents are cultural intermediaries involved in branding, marketing, training, grooming, and managing musicians; and thereby able to exercise significant influence over the terms and conditions of employment. Invariably, de Dios argues, the desire for white and black performers in live music entertainment is reproduced in venues to satisfy the need for racialized authenticity in Western popular music. OFMs fulfill a niche in the Anglophile Asian market for live music entertainment because of their willingness to play a variety of music, including local genres, to meet the eclectic taste of a mass audience. As a consequence, they are relegated to a category low down in the live music entertainment hierarchy, which she describes as racialized flexibility. OFMs, she concludes, are paradoxically engaged in high skilled work in low skilled labor conditions.

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Chapter 2
Weaving Life Across Borders: The Cham Muslim Migrants Traversing Vietnam and Malaysia

Angie Ngoc Tran

Abstract Focusing on the understudied Cham (Sunni) Muslims who live in the Mekong Delta region of southern Vietnam, decades after Vietnam joined the market system, I found that they have sustained their century-old mobile ways of life—including retailing, fishing, and sewing—in close connection with the global Islamic community to make a living and to continue their religious studies. But a mixed picture emerges in their response to Vietnam's labor export policy since 2002: practicing *geographical agency* with short-term successes but facing more risks as both men and women engage in *extra local* journeys, crossing borders into Cambodia, Thailand, and Malaysia.

Keywords Vietnam · Cham Muslims · Mekong delta · Labor export · Malaysia · Migration · Migrant labour

This paper contributes to the topic of Vietnamese migration to Peninsular Malaysia with a focus on the Cham Muslims, a small ethnic minority in the Mekong Delta in the south of Vietnam.[1] Nationwide, the Cham ethnic group accounts for about one-thousandth of the whole Vietnamese population—over 100,000.[2] Historically, there is an evidence of vibrant political, religious, and trade activities among the

[1]The Kinh accounts for about 85 % of the Vietnamese population (2013 estimates). https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/vm.html.

[2]Yoshimoto (2012) argued that there were already 100,000 Cham in two central coastal regions (Ninh Thuan and Binh Thuan), of which there were 44,000 (of both Cham Bani and Cham Islam) based on 2010 official statistics, (pp. 492–493). Taylor (2007) gave a much lower statistic: 100,000 in the whole Vietnam, using 1989 census (p. 59).

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Muslim traders, Islamic Arab merchants, and the Cham from the Kingdom of Champa on the central Vietnamese coast, dating back to the thirteenth century (Li 2006).[3] This process gave rise to two major groups of Cham who practice a variety of Islam. The first group of Cham (90 % of all the Cham in Vietnam) consists of the Cham Bani who live in the central of Vietnam.[4] About less than half of the Cham Bani practice a Vietnamese religious category that includes Islam but not one that is connected to the wider Islamic community; more than half practice Hindu or animist (Yoshimoto 2012, p. 502). The second group of Cham consists of the remaining 10 % of the Cham in Vietnam who practice Sunni Islamic faith with contacts and connections with the Islamic community through pilgrimages to Mecca, or studies abroad in Malaysia, Indonesia, and Saudi Arabia (Yoshimoto 2012, p. 488) These Cham (Sunni) Muslims concentrate in the Mekong Delta region of southern Vietnam (including An Giang, Tay Ninh, Dong Nai provinces and Ho Chi Minh City) with a population of 13,000 Cham (Taylor 2006, p. 238).

This paper focuses on the second group of Cham Muslims and their connections with the global Islamic community to make a living and to keep up with their religious studies. It examines understudied themes: gendered patterns and practices *within* the Cham Muslims and relations *with* other ethnic groups (such as the Kinh and Hoa) while working in peninsular Malaysia and upon returning to Vietnam. While this Cham Muslim community is small, it exhibits some key concerns in migration studies; migration strategies in a predominantly agrarian society, network and trust in migration, and the role of family and local villagers.

What attracted me at the beginning of my fieldwork was to provide a critical assessment of the Prime Minister labor export policy (PM Decision 71/CP, 2009–2020), and how it attracts and impacts the Kinh and other ethnic minorities who pay to work in Malaysia. But as I interviewed different ethnic migrant workers, the Cham Muslims stood out with their rich migration connections, beyond the official

[3]Another source argues that in the first millennium B.C.E., the Cham had sailed from the west coast of Borneo across the East Sea (or South China Sea) and settled in what is now central and south-central Vietnam. According to Nakamura (2000), there are two waves of Muslim arrivals in Champa. Persians, Arabs, Indians, and Chinese Muslims were the first Muslims who came to Champa in the ninth century and established a presence there by the eleventh century. At that time, conversion to Islam was limited to people who enjoyed special relationships with the foreign communities. The second wave comprised Malay Muslims who had contacts with the Cham during the peak of Southeast Asian maritime trade in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This was the time when a significant number of the local population converted to Islam. The contemporary Sunni Muslim Cham in a Giang province in Vietnam, a border province with Cambodia, has close associations with Cham Muslims in Cambodia. They speak the same dialect and some have kinship ties. Moreover, the Malays were responsible for converting the Cham refugees to Sunni Islam; both the Cham Muslim and Malay Muslim follow the same school of Islam (Shafi'i) and share similar religious customs (pp. 63–64).

[4]Some key central and south-central coast provinces include Ninh Thuan, Phan Rang, Phan Ri, Phan Thiet, Khanh Hoa.

channels of the labor export policy.[5] Moreover, this analysis sheds light on historical networking among the Cham Muslims, Malaysia, and Cambodia.

Why the focus on An Giang (a province in the Mekong delta)? It is not only because most Cham Muslims concentrate there, but also because of its connection to Cambodia. Historically, the Cham Muslims migrated to Cambodia and then to the Mekong Delta, practicing a more intensified form of Islam through contacts with the Malays (Nakamura 2000).[6] Sharing a long border with Cambodia, separated both by land and by river, An Giang province is a convenient launching pad for the Cham to cross into Cambodia to reach Thailand and continue on to Malaysia by plane, by car, and by foot. So, tracing labor mobility from An Giang reveals fascinating migration patterns—formal and informal—of the Cham Muslims traversing four countries: Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, and Malaysia, and then returning to Vietnam.

Focusing on districts with high concentrations of the Cham, my assistants and I conducted our interviews in An Phú District, one of the three poorest districts in An Giang province, with about 5900 Cham Muslims living in five communes (xã): Đa Phước, Nhơn Hội, Quốc Thái, Khánh Bình, and Vĩnh Trường (An Phu District labor official, interview, August, 2012).[7] Interviews were conducted in three communes out of five Cham-concentrated areas in An Phu District: Đa Phước (total population: 21,123), Quốc Thái (14,774), Vĩnh Trường (15,560). I did not have a chance to visit Nhơn Hội (13,539), and Khánh Bình (11,704).

Organizationally, the first section (*Labor Brokerage State*) explains the significance of global labor migration to a socialist economy, and how a socialist government has organized migrant labor recruitment and sent them to work in the global capitalist system since the early 2000s; second, *Sustaining Life in Motion* examines the diverse forms of migration, beyond the PM labor export policy. This analysis extends beyond Taylor's analysis of the impact of market-based policy up to 2005; the third section (*Risks in the Twenty-first Century Migration*) sheds light on the Cham Muslims' migration trajectories, strategies, network, and trust; and finally, *Forms of Agency and Empowerment* presents the complex realities and offers interesting insights into how this small group of Muslims in Vietnam not only copes with the challenges of labor migration, but also keeps up with their mobile livelihoods and religious and cultural practices.

[5]A broader-in-scope manuscript (Tran 2015) which examines the Kinh, the Hoa, the Khmer, and the H-Re migrant workers in manufacturing industries in Malaysia is work-in-progress.

[6]Taylor (2007) made the same argument: the Chams are concentrated in Cambodia and Vietnam (pp. 2, 67–81, 20, 112, 140–141), cited by Kiernan (2014).

[7]He was very proud to say that "all 5900 Cham residents, every single one of them, received free health insurance from the government." And that is why he remembered the number of Cham population in An Phu District.

I pay special attention to gender differences (which are significant in a Muslim society), the role of parents and neighbors because migration is often a family or household strategy, a characteristic of sending agrarian societies in Asia. I also compare the Cham patterns with those of the Kinh who went to work in Malaysia and returned.

2.1 Methodology

The narratives of the Cham interviewees (between 2008 and 2014) have been woven in throughout the paper. We used convenience sampling due to the strict controls by all levels of the local government who escorted us around—provincial, district, and commune levels. The Cham Muslims constitute a minority, only about 8 % (5900 Cham out of the total population of 76,700) of all five communes in An Phu District, intermingling with the Kinh, the Khmer and a small percentage of the Hoa (ethnic Chinese). Between August 2012 and June 2014, together with two research assistants, we interviewed 23 Cham returnees (11 males and 12 females) and 8 relatives (parents, sisters, spouses) and neighbors. While my interview sample is not representative, the in-depth analysis reveals the workers' migration patterns and strategies, their network and trust in migration, forms of their agency and empowerment, and the influence of their families. We conducted the interviews during Ramadan, so we had a chance to meet many workers who had temporarily come home to fast and celebrate the new year (at the end of Ramadan) and organizing a feast. This is the time to show off whether one is doing well, so they need money to buy food items to offer guests visiting their houses. Some parents lamented to me that they have no money to even entertain the guests when they come to visit at the end of fasting. This has some interesting *class* implications.

I triangulate secondary statistical data with firsthand fieldwork interviews, which we conducted in Vietnamese. Overall, I have conducted interviews in several Cham Muslim communes in An Phu District (An Giang Province) with the assistance of two Vietnamese research assistants from 2012 to 2014. All the names presented in this paper are pseudonyms to protect and respect returnees' privacy and confidentiality.

In most interviews, we were escorted to the houses of the migrant returnees by local government officials from the provincial down to the ward/village levels. While this is a clear form of government control and surveillance, we did not face censorship from the officials and were able to ask all the questions that we wanted; at times, we even received translation help from these officials when the Cham workers did not understand the questions posed in Vietnamese.

2.2 Conceptual Concerns

Many scholars have highlighted cultural factors as forms of agency and empowerment for both factory and domestic workers. *Migrant networks* play important roles in the lives of migrant workers by facilitating information exchanges and resource assistance in both home and host countries (Gold 2005; Guarnizo 2003). *Social capital*, defined as preferential treatment and commitment, can induce people to extend and receive favors (Gold 2005, p. 259).

Focusing on female migrant workers, Oishi (2005, pp. 190–192) discusses broad labor migration in all sectors of the global economy (manufacturing and domestic/service types of work) and stresses the need to recognize both forms of empowerment: *structural empowerment* (to combat systemic exploitation on behalf of all workers in the world) and the more subtle subjective, *internal empowerment* (cognitive processes of reflection and analysis). She found evidence that international labor migration can be a positive *internal* empowerment experience: learning new skills (such as administrative, organizing, leadership), new languages, self-development, self-rationalization, self-confidence, and independence (pp. 188–192).

Existing studies on the Cham in Vietnam focus on the history the Cham from the Kingdom of Champa (Li 2006), the coming of Islam to Champa (Nakamura 2000), the Islamic religious practices of the Cham Bani (Yoshimoto 2012), the historical linkages among the Cham, the Vietnamese populations, and other Asian cultures (Trần and Lockhart 2011), and the impact of Vietnamese market policy on the Cham up to 2005 (Taylor 2007). On the impact of the neoliberal market system on the Cham, the most relevant work is Taylor's longitudinal study (1999–2005) of the Cham Muslims of the Mekong Delta. He argued that the Cham community of devout Muslims has maintained their way of life constrained by the delta's riverine ecology. They are also prolific traders, specializing in trading far beyond their home villages, or *extra-local* trading (both across national borders and within Vietnam). However, there have only been brief and general references about Chams traveling to Malaysia, making products to sell to the Malaysian markets, and sending remittances to their families (Taylor 2007, pp. 175–176; Taylor 2006, p. 244). But his most interesting argument is about the Cham's response—*geographical agency*—to Vietnam's move to a market-based economy. He argues that they "reinvent economic space through local and extra-local trading practices that draw upon and also sustain their distinct cultural competencies and institutions" (Taylor 2006, p. 248). As Vietnam moved to a market-based economy, the Cham have become disadvantaged locally (compared to the Kinh majority) in their economic ventures, but they have been successful *extra-locally* in making their living by moving across national borders and within Vietnam.

This paper examines these issues but goes beyond the market policy to explain how the Cham Muslims have fared under the Prime Minister's labor export policy, as well as their mobile tradition including the circular migration patterns and informal recruitment networks.

2.3 Labor Brokerage State in Global Capitalist System

The concept of labor brokerage state explains negotiations between governments to send and receive workers who sign fixed-term contracts and then return home at the end of those contracts. Both sending and receiving governments benefit from workers' remittances (Rodriguez 2010). With increasing integration into the global capitalist system since the early 2000s, labor migration has been a significant source of income to the Vietnamese economy. The government has organized migrant labor recruitment via the "labor export" policy—the 12-year Prime Minister Decision 71/CP (2009–2020) aimed at sending people from 62 poor rural districts —most are poor Kinh and other ethnic minorities in the North and Central provinces—to work overseas on 3-year contracts.[8] While this policy mostly affects the Kinh in poor provinces, it also affects the lives of the Cham Muslims in An Giang.[9]

The Vietnamese state has been playing the role of a sending labor broker. In 2002, Vietnam and Malaysia signed an agreement to provide a legal framework for the terms of contracts (including wages, taxes/levies, and working conditions) to send Vietnamese workers to Malaysia to meet the need for cheap labor (Mr. Vu X., personal communication, July 2014). Chin (1998) highlighted the Malaysian state modernization strategies that allow "guest-workers" into the country to support the entry of Malaysian women into the paid workforce. The Department of Overseas Labor (DOLAB), belonging to Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA), stationed in the Vietnamese Embassy in Kuala Lumpur, is charged with overseeing and resolving problems faced by Vietnamese migrant workers. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Consular Department is also charged with protecting Vietnamese abroad.

Between 2002 and 2007, an estimated 20,000–30,000 Vietnamese went to work in Malaysia. The global financial crisis in 2008 had sent many workers back to Vietnam due to lack of work (Duy Quốc, personal communication, 2010).[10] As of 2015, about 560,000 Vietnamese are working in 60 countries and territories in 30 types of professions (especially manufacturing, construction, domestic work) (International Labor Organization 2015). An average of 80,000 new documented migrant workers has been sent to work overseas each year, of which female workers accounted for about 30 % (Review of Vietnamese Migration Abroad 2012; International Labor Organization 2014).

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[8]This is a part of the Resolution 30a/2008/NQ-CP (ratified on 27 December 2008). While these poor rural districts are primarily in the North (Yen Bai, Phu Tho, Thanh Hoa), Central (Quảng Ngãi, Quang Binh, Quang Tri), and central highland provinces (Kon Tum, Lam Dong), there are some poor rural districts in the South of Vietnam.

[9]Exporting labor in Vietnam is not a new phenomenon: exchange workers were sent to the former Soviet Union and its satellites to repay foreign debts in the 1980s. In Tran 2015 book manuscript, I focus on the impacts of this major "labor export" policy on the Kinh and two other ethnic minorities: the H-Re and the Khmer.

[10]About 9000 Vietnamese export workers, of which about 5000 went to Malaysia, lost their jobs and had to return home before the end of their contracts (Vietnamese ambassador to Malaysia, Mr. Hoàng Trọng Lập's interview with Vietnamese journalists in Kuala Lumpur (Duy 2009, August 18).

The Vietnamese state has made an investment, earmarking an initial 4800 billion VND (about US $267 million) for the 12-year policy on labour export. Through the first half of 2014, remittances of up to US $11.4 billion were remitted to Vietnam (World Bank, 2014:6).

Moreover, the state banks have also benefited from this migration policy. The two important sources of credit for these migrant workers are the Social Policy Bank and the Agriculture and Rural Development Bank (Agribank), both under the Vietnamese State Bank. Since 2000, the State Bank has directed these two banks to lend money to potential migrant workers (not restricted to the Prime Minister Decision 71/CP on recipients) at normal commercial interest rates. Moreover, private banks have entered this "business" and have been lending money to these poor residents (Duy Quốc, personal communication, August 2009). However, most migrant workers actually received only 25 to 50 percent of the total loan amount. The rest goes directly to pay migration expenses and processing fees from both Vietnam and Malaysia (Le 2010, Tran and Crinis 2015).

Recruitment Mechanisms and Middlemen

Most Vietnamese recruitment companies were state or quasi-state owned, under MOLISA management. They were represented and supported by a quasi-state agency, the Vietnamese Association of Manpower Supply (VAMAS). In November 2012, MOLISA appointed retired and semiretired state officials to oversee 171 recruitment companies.[11] Many of these companies developed from the "export labor" departments of state-owned corporations in steel, coal, oil, and natural gas. Local people's committees and the labor unions (the Vietnamese General Confederation of Labor, VGCL) also formed their own labor recruitment companies, such as Latuco Company.

The recruitment process involves three levels of middlemen, who have been charging fees to send poor residents to work overseas (Interview with Duy Quốc, August 2012). They operate at various governmental levels and between government and private companies. The *first* middleman is the city-level recruitment office (Phòng tuyển dụng/giới thiệu việc làm) controlled by the city office of MOLISA (or Department of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs, or DOLISA). The *second* is the private recruitment companies (or semiprivate when the owners are retired government officials) who obtained job orders from Malaysian outsourcing companies. The *third* is the (lower) district-level labor department (or Phòng lao động thương binh and xã hội) (belonging to a local people's committee). In the past, the city recruitment offices (from DOLISA) had exclusive relationships with private recruitment companies to advertise and allocate jobs to potential workers. However, over time, private recruitment companies have come down to work directly with the

[11]Many of them came from various ministries including industry, mining and commerce.

district-level labor departments, thus cutting out the city-level recruitment middlemen (Mr. Nguyễn V.T., personal communication, August 2012).

Since 2004, the state-owned media, such as the labor newspapers, have been playing a pro-labor role by informing the public about the wrongdoings and violations of many fraudulent Vietnamese recruitment companies. These shady companies worked with unauthorized individual recruiters—many were connected to state-owned enterprises and agencies—who went to villages to search for potential migrant workers (Duy Quốc 2004; Nguyễn 2004, 2005). These news reports had raised awareness and effectively stopped dubious practices which cost migrant workers not only in financial terms (up to US $2000 per person), but also in terms of contract violations (not enough work as guaranteed by the contracts they signed). The media also created an open forum to expose the migrant workers' plights and protests, by exposing the lack of accountability by recruitment companies towards the workers they sent to Malaysia, using headlines like "Leaving a baby in a market place" (Duy Quốc 2004, http://tintuc.timnhanh/com/xa_hoi/phong_su/20071111/35A69D1E, retrieved July 2012). This is a common refrain I heard in my interviews with various ethnic returnees from Malaysia.

Interestingly, the Cham themselves also participated in informal recruitment. At times, the network started with the local neighbors in An Giang. Saphi, a 19-year-old Cham female only finished grade 7, but was very eager to learn more. She went to work as a babysitter and a maid for a Cham neighbor who resided in Malaysia. She borrowed from relatives about 2–3 million VND, but she paid all her debts. Moreover, throughout her stay in Malaysia, she was able to repeat this pattern several times: saving some money (about 3 million VND for herself) while also helping her mother (giving her mother 3 million VND). However, the instability of these informal recruitment networks gives rise to the lack of sustainable employment for these Cham migrants.

2.4 Sustaining Life in Motion and Gendered Division of Labor

The Cham's way of life has always been on the move, for centuries, way before the "labor export" policy (the Prime Minister Decision 71/CP (2009–2020). My interviews from 2008 to 2014 extended Taylor's study (which ended in 2005) and found that while Taylor's basic premise remains true, the Cham's "extra-local trading" has extended way beyond their home village, crossing many borders. Moreover, the gendered mode of exchange has changed and the Cham women have also crossed borders from Vietnam to Malaysia and returned. State-sponsored Cham migration is very small, compared to the Kinh and other ethnic groups. By December 2014, a total of 146,903 were sent to work overseas (http://dolab.gov.vn/New/Default.aspx). In 2014, the target had been to send between 85,000 and 90,000 workers abroad, of which, according to Mr. Đào Công Hải (Deputy Head of the

Overseas Labor Management Department), included up to 20,000 workers to Malaysia, mostly of Kinh descent.

Patterns of Migration

The Cham Muslims have maintained their mobile tradition, and their settlements are actually habitats in motion. Over 80 % of the Cham in An Phú District engage in small-scale trading, not farming (Taylor 2006, p. 241). In all 23 interviews, we found that the Cham's mobile livelihood involves selling gas cookers, clothes, fabrics, and sundries, consistent with Taylor's findings. They specialize in buying used clothes and reselling them to the general public, both inside and outside of An Phú District (Interview with an official in the Labor Department of An Phú District, August 2012). Based on interviews up through June 2014, the patterns include couples travelling together to sell these wares several months during the year, or each taking turn travelling while one staying at home to take care of the infant children. The grandparents, if healthy and able, would often contribute to taking care of the grandchildren and/or their disabled children.

One pattern of their peripatetic lifestyle is the popular circular migration pattern among the Cham who engage in their own-account retail activities in Malaysia. First they bought a one-way ticket from Vietnam to Malaysia and, with a 1-month tourist visa, they started working in Malaysia. The circular motion sets in when these workers would leave Malaysia at the end of their 1-month visa for Thailand for several days, then return to Malaysia to apply for another 1-month visa, then to Thailand when that visa expired, then back to Malaysia, and then back to Vietnam to visit their families for up to half a year. Then they would return to Malaysia and repeat this cycle. The Malaysian employers who hire them have tacitly approved these practices by turning a blind eye and accepting them back.

In 2013, I interviewed a couple: Ms. Masa, the 40-year-old wife, and her husband, Mr. Rohsa, the 40-year-old husband; they have four children. At the time of the interview, they had been using this method, with both the husband and wife going to Malaysia (legally) every 6 months. Their circular migration pattern predated the 2009 labor export policy, and it has helped them make ends meet. Back in 2001, this couple started going to Malaysia with their sons. Ms. Masa said: "For the first time in 2001, we went to Malaysia to work underground for 3 years. [In 2001 only] I stayed at home [in Malaysia] to take care of our sons, while my husband sold ice cream and learned to speak Malay after 2–3 months there. There are some similarities between Malay and Cham languages so we can guess each other's message/meaning when we speak." When the children grew up they stayed with an aunt who looked after them and made sure that they went to school.

While being in Malaysia, Ms. Masa sold fabrics and clothes in the market, and her husband sold ice cream in the streets. Mr. Rohsa said: "We bought one-way ticket from Vietnam to Malaysia with a tourist visa, not a working one. So, when caught by the police, we pleaded with them about our hard lives and (many times) they

sympathized with us and let us go." This "one-way ticket to Malaysia" implies that he would go to Thailand and stay there for several days, and then return to Malaysia for another short "tourist" visa stay, then back to Thailand, then Malaysia in this circular pattern. When asked whether they made enough to survive, Mr. Rohsa offered this insight: "Actually, costs of living over there were not expensive; they were even cheaper [than in Vietnam], when we converted from Ringgit into Vietnamese Dong." After 3 years, they saved US $2000, a huge lump sum for them, and upon returning home, they bought a piece of land and built the house in which they now lived.

Another pattern is a *combination* of going to Malaysia by car, and then circular migration as described above. Mr. Yshah, a 34-year-old man who has 3 children, followed the footsteps of his parents selling used clothes and fabrics. Starting at the end of 1999, he went to Malaysia via Thailand by car by himself, using an expression: "*đi đường dưới, đi chui*" or travelling on surface street (as opposed to flying) and traveling underground. He arrived in Malaysia in 2000; once there, he relied on his relatives to help him find a place to stay and then lend him money to buy an ice cream cart for him to use on the street. During the interview in 2012, he had been engaged in the circular migration pattern between An Giang and Malaysia.[12] He has been working in Malaysia for periods varying from 2 to 7 months, having applied for 1 month visas many times by going to Thailand as a tourist, then reentering Malaysia for another month.

Gendered Division of Labor and Traditions on Trial

Work is gendered in all forms of labor migration to Malaysia. In the formal labor export scheme, women tend to be in labor-intensive work such as textile/garment, food processing, electronic/electrical areas, while men tend to be in more capital-intensive work, such as plastics, consumer/industrial materials, mechanics, and furniture.[13] In informal labor migration there is also a clear gendered division of labor. On the one hand, most Cham men work outside of the house as peddlers or itinerant vendors, selling ice cream; at times, some Cham men also work for small family shops (owned by both Malays and ethnic Chinese) for several months packaging chicken and duck eggs. On the other hand, Cham women tend to work inside the house as maids,[14] cleaning the house, washing dishes, babysitting, or working in restaurants, and, if going out, they would specialize in selling fabrics, clothes, and sundries. This gendered division of labor occurred in the case of the

[12]It was unclear where he was in Malaysia: we heard he said: "Karup city" in Malaysia but could not verify the exact spelling of that city.

[13]But there are some *ethnic* differences in gendered division of labor which I analyze in my 2015 book manuscript.

[14]Increasing level of inequalities in Asia led to this division of labor where the nouveaux rich class in developing countries needs domestic care (from another developing country) for their families which open the door for certain types of foreign workers (Oishi 2005).

Masa/Rohsa couple where the husband sold ice cream, while his spouse sold fabrics and clothes in the market in Malaysia, and in many of the interviewees.

An interview with (Mr. To, 35 years old) in a mosque in Đa Phước commune in 2012 shows how Islamic religious restrictions would lead to this gendered division of labor in Malaysia: *men sell ice cream and women sell fabrics*. He stayed at home in An Giang to fish and to take care of their four children (taking them to school) while his wife was in Malaysia to sell fabrics following a circular pattern of migration; 1 month in Malaysia with tourist visa and 1 month back in Đa Phước commune. He recounted his life history before getting married: "First I was fishing, then I followed my fellow male friends to Malaysia (by car) to sell fabrics for 3–4 years. But as a Muslim man, I cannot enter people's houses [in Malaysia] because the homeowners do not allow men to enter their houses or talk to females. So, I had to change to selling ice cream." During the interview in 2012, he said: "we take turn going away to sell clothes: when my wife returns home from Malaysia (normally a month), I would go to other provinces in the Mekong Delta (such as Hậu Giang, Cần Thơ, Tiền Giang) to sell clothes." It was all right for him to sell clothes in Vietnam where there is no religious restriction to enter people's houses to sell sundries.

Their traditions are put on trial in various ways. First, selling fabrics and clothes (both in Malaysia and in the Delta region) reflects the loss of the Cham's weaving and embroidery tradition (Taylor 2006, p. 241). Many responded that they follow their parents' trade and that "we lost the root in weaving and doing embroidery" (Interview with Sary). Second, fishing as a tradition is no longer an easy way to make a living (Taylor 2006, p. 240). Interviews with a gentle Cham fisherman, Mr. Set in Vĩnh Trường ward sheds light on unsustainable ways of fishing in Vietnam and the connection to Cambodia. Mr. Set said in a sad tone of voice:

> There is more fish to catch in Cambodia because not much fish left in Vietnam (in the Hậu River near where he lives). Vietnamese fishermen often used electricity to catch fish so they would mop up all the fish [including baby fish] so not much left. In Cambodia, we can only catch fish using the nets [in 10 months only]. I had to dive in deep water many hours every day to dislodge the fish nets which get stuck in the underwater tree roots in order to get my catch. As a result, I suffer from asthma with water in my lungs.

Other Cham men in Quốc Thái ward agreed:

> Most Cham men here go to Cambodia ten months a year to fish at the Tonle Sap River. When they come to Cambodia in October, they had to pay a fee (200,000 VND, or about US $10) to fish there for ten months. At the end of this fishing season, most would make over 20 million VND (or about US $1000), or about US $100 per month.

Twenty five years after consistent market practices in the 1990s, the Cham do have "geographical agency" by reproducing their way of life using different migration strategies. But they also face many risks when they start out on the global labor migration journey.

2.5 Risks in the Twenty-first Century Migration

Following the footsteps of these peripatetic Cham migrants, one can crisscross many national borders, as did their ancestors centuries ago, through Cambodia, to present-day Thailand and Malaysia. The risks in the twenty-first century appear in both formal and informal settings. First, let us hear the story of a returnee who went to work in Malaysia under the labor export policy: a cross-border escape. Ms. Wali is a worker returnee, 27 years old, who finished 12th grade but did not pass the college entrance exam. So she applied and went to Malaysia as an export laborer in 2005, but low wages in a Chinese Malaysian factory manufacturing clothes led her to end the contract early. She escaped to a small Malay garment factory where she was accepted by a sympathetic employer. When asked whether he asked for her passport and visa upon arrival, she said:

> Yes, I showed him my visa, and a copy of my passport, because the original was held by the Chinese owner. I told him about my whole situation. Then he took pity on me because of our shared Muslim faith, and hired me to work there, also stitching and earning by piece rates. But I earned 4 times more than what I earned in that Chinese (Malaysian) factory.

Through friends, she learned about how to return to Vietnam through Thailand and Cambodia. She risked her life to escape by foot and by car, which cost her 2000 Ringgit (about over US $600). She had to borrow 1000 Ringgit from friends.

When asked how this escape happened, she told me:

> Yes, on both sides of the road. We had 6 to 7 people in the car. The road was completely empty with forests on both sides. We heard about vicious robbers who killed to rob people. That's why we were so worried. [From Malaysia] We traveled 2 days and 2 nights and arrived at Cambodia-Vietnam border. Then, I was really scared… knee dip wading in the mud, using a cane to find our way, very arduous… After crossing the border (from Cambodia to Vietnam), everyone was completely exhausted, then I called my father to come and pick me up, using the phone that my father gave me before I left for Malaysia… Then when I returned, everyone in my village [possibly Đa Phước commune/village], knowing that I had escaped through Thailand route, had prayed for me to overcome dangers on the road. When I got home, everyone was there to greet me… a full house!

While she survived this harrowing escape, she still was in debt for 20 million VND. This debt was cosigned by her mother, who complained about being harassed by a local official who demanded debt repayment, while Wali only received 4 million VND to take with her to Malaysia for necessities.

Another risk is about the house raids in Malaysia. House raids by police tend to be more prevalent in areas suspected of having illegal migrants. Mr. Rohsa, the husband of Masa shared:

> Of course we stayed there [Malaysia] illegally. From 7am to 5 pm, I sold ice cream at school gates [it was OK to sell ice cream there] and walked to each household in deep alley ways. The government only did house raids in areas where they know that illegal workers

stayed. My goodness, we crawled; we evaded; we hid. When the police came, we left all our belongings there and only took our children with us to hide in nearby places and only returned home when the police left.

2.6 Forms of Agency and Empowerment

While both forms of agency—internal/subjective and structural empowerment—exist in the Cham's patterns of movement and their daily practices, internal/subjective forms of empowerment are the most prevalent. The Cham's individual forms of migration are vibrant in terms of network and trust, keeping up their traditions with creativity, refusing to pay their loans, and demanding to practice their religion. There is plenty of evidence that the Cham have dreams and aspirations, such as wanting to learn more and to be teachers (Ms. Saphi), and to be creative in order to make a living for their extended families. However, much fewer expressions of structural empowerment have been found. Occasionally, the Cham participate in short-term collective actions to demand basic living and working conditions (in solidarity with other ethnic groups such as in the daily wage strike below). At other times, they engage in individual acts of courage by standing up to the bosses (in Malaysia and Vietnam) to have two prayer times (with pay) at work.

Network, Trust, Childcare

Like other ethnic groups, many Cham workers are expected to send money home to help feed their parents and siblings at home. Many workers, men and women, practice "*hụi*"—a way to pool money among fellow workers to send lump-sum amounts of money/remittances home to help pay the debts. Each month, a group of workers pool part of their earnings and send the total to one of the workers' families; the next month, another worker gets the opportunity to do so. This practice depends on trust. Consistent with Oishi's findings, I found a pattern of networks that had been created by the relatives of Cham migrants who were successful in Malaysia. They had settled in Malaysia, established some enterprises, and needed assistance with their businesses and childcare at their homes. While these networks provided short-term employment, migrant workers had no future guarantee of stable employment nor did they learn marketable skills to escape poverty upon returning home to Vietnam. Ms. Sary, 20 years old was recruited by her aunt, who was already in Malaysia, because she needed childcare and assistance with selling fabrics.

Several Cham couples talked about how to deal with childcare while they are constantly on the move, either crisscrossing Vietnam or crossing the borders. When their children are small, the whole family (husbands, wives, and their infant

children) would travel together.[15] Then, when their children grow older, the parents would leave their children back home to be taken care of by grandparents, aunts or uncles. The couple, Ms. Masa and Mr. Rohsa, mentioned above, did exactly that with their four children.

Keeping up with Traditions with Creativity

There is evidence of a return to one of their traditions—sewing—as well as positive gender bonding which promotes creativity. Our fieldwork in Lama village (ấp) connected us with leaders of the local women's union. I interviewed Ms. Sara, a leader of the women's union in La Ma). She is a Kinh who married into a Cham family and converted to the Muslim religion, voluntarily adopting Cham traditional practices, including having a Cham name. As the women's leader, she oversees 507 members in this large women's branch at La Ma.

Concerned with keeping the Cham women's tradition, she has been organizing three sewing classes since 2012 (from 1 to 2 classes per year). She said:

> Most Cham women love to learn how to sew because, after graduating from the class, each will have a certificate. Young women can migrate to work in the cities (such as Hồ Chí Minh, Đồng Nai, Bình Dương) and earn higher wages. Other women [read older women] can sew/tailor clothes for their family members, thus saving money. The reason is that Cham clothing is very complex with many designs; one formal dress would cost at least 80,000 VND [about 4 USD]; the praying dress would cost even more: about 100,000 VND. Therefore, learning how to sew is not only gaining a marketable skill, but also convenient and useful for most Cham women. And the local labor department funds these classes: not only that they learn for free, but each would receive a meal coupon of 15,000 VND per day for three months, and a certificate upon graduation.

This resourceful women's union leader also escorted us to the house of Ms. Salay and introduced us so that we could interview her (see her success story below). She also drew our attention to a mosque specially built for women, which we visited at the end of our interviews.[16]

In short, this Kinh-turned Cham Muslim woman has successfully sustained one important Cham tradition for women: sewing and tailoring their elaborate costumes. As such, she does not only empower them with a skill that can earn them an income (in addition to small-scale trade which does not bring them much money), but also to prosper relatively, as seen in the success story of one of the informants.

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[15]Taylor made a same point: families travel together (Taylor 2007, p. 172).

[16]While not at all as elaborate as the main mosque, this is the first all-female worshiping place that I've seen in the several years that I frequented these Muslim villages in An Giang province.

A Success Story of Hard Work and Creativity

The successful and uplifting story of Ms. Salay, an entrepreneurial 25-year-old Cham woman, demonstrates a clear case of self-empowerment. While her parents continue the traditional Cham way of life—with her father fishing and her mother selling the catch—she connects to the Cham's sewing tradition in a very creative way; her products were sold in both Vietnam and Malaysia, Ms. Salay shows how hard work, resilience, and creativity pay off not only for her own wellbeing but also for her extended family. Being the eldest of seven offspring, she has been the main "breadwinner" (or rather "rice-winner") and has been training her siblings to help out with various sewing tasks. Then with some seed money, she bought more machines and employed her siblings to help her sew to meet orders from both Vietnam and Malaysia. Her mother announced proudly: "Now, she works and puts food on the table for the whole family."

She started her peripatetic lifestyle with a cross-border trip to Malaysia (passing through Cambodia and Thailand) by car with her relatives, where she worked for 6 years. This experience has empowered her with social capital such as language skills, networks, and trust with Malaysians. She gets along well with the Malaysian Muslims and said: "Malaysians love the Cham."

When asked why she selected the sewing job, she said: "When the government opened up sewing classes, I joined because I have always loved to sew, even when I was a little girl. I had worked in Malaysia for 6 years but can never afford to save much."

Upon returning to An Giang, she went to work for a garment factory in Hồ Chí Minh City, assembling clothes for 3 months. But with low wages (about 2.5 million VND per month), she cannot make ends meet and thus returned home and took sewing lessons. This has proven to be a smart move:

> When I returned to An Giang, I had a chance to take a sewing class with Cô Phương (a Kinh female teacher) who was a very dedicated teacher. Then I practiced to cut and sew for myself first, then I sew for all my family members as well as our neighbors. Gradually, I saved up some money and then bought my first sewing machine, then an over-lock machine and other stitching machines to help me with various sewing tasks."

The stitching machines line the wall of the one-and-only room in her small house. When asked where and how she gets her fabrics, she said: "I get domestic/Vietnamese fabrics. At the beginning, I have no seed money, so I had to work for other people. But then I've been saving the money that I earned to buy fabrics so I can sew at home. Then I took orders from other people to sew at home (tailoring), earning about 40–50,000 VND per suit."

When asked about her customers, her response shows a familiar subcontracting process and the significance of linkages: "Right here in Đa Phước, people give me their already cut fabrics (based on their patterns and different sizes) so I only need to assemble them. But I also receive (tailoring) orders from our neighbors. Then I save my money in the "piggy bank" to buy fabrics to sew clothes." This young

entrepreneur does not just tailor for her fellow villagers but also ships her tailored products across borders and makes profits from that:

> I send them to Malaysia and save up money to buy more stitching machines. I sew according to existing standardized sizes from the clothes that my aunt sells in Malaysia. Each set of clothes [which includes a blouse and a pair of pants] would cost me about 150,000 VND (about US $7), and I can sell it for 300,000 VND (a 100 % profit). But there are always clothes left unsold.

Her aunt in Malaysia also benefits from this enterprising niece: "My aunt would charge a small fee to stockpile these [unsold] clothes." Overall, this young entrepreneur does not rest on her laurels but aims high and has been designing her own clothing label. But she emphasizes the need for more capital to expand and open her own tailoring shop.

Indebtedness of the Labor Export Policy

For the Cham who participated in the labor export policy, most of them suffer a cycle of virtual indebtedness. All the parents we interviewed had taken out loans so that their off-springs could participate in the labor export policy, but they have refused to pay back the loans because they claimed that they have only received 15–20 % of the loan amount. However, even when they refused to pay, citing "no money to even survive," they still suffer a cycle of virtual indebtedness. First, let us review the loan policy and its consequences.

In my January 2014 interview with Mr. G (an official of the Social Policy Bank branch in An Giang), he intimated that most of these loans probably will be written off by the local social policy bank. He said that as of 2013, An Giang incurred about US $1,800,000 debt, most of which were lent out to workers going to Malaysia. They have three policies to provide relief for these families: (1) "to spread out the payment" (*dãn nợ*) in which returnees are given three extra years to repay their debts; (2) "to lock in the amount" so no more interest can be accrued (*khoanh nợ*); in this case, returnees can still borrow money to go to work in "higher-pay" markets such as Korea and Japan; (3) "to completely forgive the debt" (*xoá nợ*). The general policy is that they would adopt the last option only when the returnees' parents are dead or the offspring (the worker returnees) can no longer work. When I asked about the problematic aspects of this "labor export policy," he said that An Giang officials have recognized that this policy is "not good" and have been reassessing this policy.[17] As the banks have not been demanding repayments from the interviewees, it may be assumed that they have tacitly adopted the first option.

[17]He further said that to discipline violating recruitment companies, in 2011–2012, An Giang officials had withdrawn business licenses of 50 violating recruitment companies.

During my June 2014 follow-up interviews, the local bank officials had stopped going around demanding repayment from these poor Cham families. But Mr. G had refused to see me after numerous attempts to ask for a follow-up meeting.[18]

However, I was able to interview another social policy bank official from the Hồ Chí Minh branch in June 2014 who suggested that "loan forgiveness" is exercised on a case-by-case basis. This official said:

> In many cases, when workers send money home to their parents, intended to repay the debts, their parents used it for another purpose (i.e., their own needs) and did not repay the debts. Thus, the policies to spread out the amount, to lock in the amount and to forgive the whole loan should depend on the specific conditions and situations of each worker, because, for instance, if a worker escaped and worked underground for another employer, earning an income while still owing a loan amount, we should not "forgive" the debt for this worker.

But a wise Cham parent (a Kinh man who married a Cham woman) provides a counterpoint. He offered an excellent insight into this lingering question about debts:

> The bank official does not want to 'forgive' the debts outright, but rather "postponing the debt" [by not demanding payment now and unclear about the interests] because if they decided to build the road [in the name of economic development] that cuts through my house, then they will deduct the loan amount from the compensation money that they are supposed to pay the homeowners with outstanding debts due to the social policy bank.

This couple owns their house and makes a living by being the distributor of blankets and nets, stored in their sizable living room. As homeowners (albeit just residential land), their fear of the government's deduction (on the land compensation) is credible.

Refusing to Pay the Loans to Work in Malaysia

Most of the migrant returnees had had their parents sign their loan documents and claimed that they did not pay attention to the terms of these loans. Interestingly, all seven cases of the Cham returnees who participated in the labor export policy have refused to repay any of the loans. We interviewed six parents and one worker herself who had signed the loan documents. Those who owned land used it as collateral and the really poor families used trust-based (tín chấp) to get the loans. Most had borrowed 20 million VND. But all the parents have refused to pay the 20 million VND debt. Most of the Cham returnees and their parents complained to me that they only actually received a small fraction of the loan amount of around 3–5 million VND (US $200), or 15–25 % of the total loan amount from the state banks and recruitment companies to buy their necessities to take with them to

[18]This may be due to the sensitivity of this issue and the lack of clear-cut policy at that time.

Malaysia. So, up to 75 % of their debts were used to pay fees to Vietnamese state agencies and recruitment companies, transportation costs, and Malaysian outsourcing companies. However, the workers and their families are responsible for the whole loan amount.

Evidence of a vicious cycle of poverty abounds. We found desperate cases in which both the parents and their offsprings continue to be in deep poverty and have no way to repay the loans. A 50-year-old illiterate mother of five children (two daughters and three sons), took the loan out under her name on her son's behalf. Her only prized property is a small house without any land. We talked in 2012 and then again in 2014 (in An Phú District office where she was transferring the house deed to her son for him to get married). When I asked whether the government had come to her house to ask for debt repayment, she looked sad and worried: "Not yet, because not only my son went to Malaysia. There were many people also left (for Malaysia) like my son. Mostly poor people, not having enough money to eat, never mind repaying the debt." She confirmed in 2014 that she still owed the state bank 20 million VND. But she complained that they only actually received 2–3 million VND (about 10 % of the debt). Her son (Mr. Pha) remains deep in poverty: having to return home as a result of the 2008 global crisis (which led to the bankruptcy of the company that employed him). Since his return to Vietnam, he has been working in one low-paid job after another; as a daily construction worker (75,000 VND/day) in 2012, then a wood factory worker in Hồ Chí Minh City, then when that company got into trouble, he turned to selling shoes on Hồ Chí Minh City streets in 2014, but he barely makes ends meet.

Some other cases demonstrate that while the offsprings have gone on to work in the big cities, the parents still refused to pay back the loans. We talked to the father of Ms. Cara who went to work in Malaysia under the labor export policy. His daughter finished the contract (and even stayed 2 more years to work underground in a restaurant, without a visa) and now works in an embroidery factory in Hồ Chí Minh City. As a wholesaler/distributor of blankets and mosquito nets, the father does make some income from the differences between wholesale and retail prices. But he refused to pay the loan: "I still owe 20 million, have not paid any money. Before (the local) officials came to our house often to demand payment, but now they no longer do that." Mr. Pa is the father of five children (three sons and two daughters); he took out a loan for his son to work in Malaysia; the son did finish the 3-year-contract in an iron factory in Malaysia and came home to do manual work in Bình Dương province, but is not making a living. He too still owes 20 million VND and commented that local officials had ceased to come and demand payment.

Even when workers borrowed under their own names, they still did not pay their loans. Ms. Saly is a worker returnee who went to Malaysia under the export labor policy via Latuco Company and completed her 3-year contract in an electronics factory in Johor with many other fellow Cham. She had taken out the loan under her own name and said matter of factly: "I took the loan under my own name, but I don't plan to repay (the loan) because I have no money to pay back." Most other interviewed returnees did not pay attention to the terms of these loans and deferred them to the parents who often deal directly with the local governments.

Structural Empowerment: Daily Wage Strike

When opportunity arose, the Cham migrant workers joined forces with other Vietnamese workers to fight against systemic exploitation while working in Malaysia. We interviewed Saly twice, the first time in 2012 and the follow-up interview in 2014. She is a 33-year-old Cham Muslim worker returnee who went to work as export labor in Malaysia in 2005. She finished her contract after 3 years and returned to a broken home: her husband—following their mobile livelihoods—had already left to work elsewhere and found another wife. She lamented about the hard life in Malaysia with a constant fear of robberies, which resonate with other female workers: "Getting there is a done deal. I had to close my eyes and just worked for 3 years. I have no money to return home early [needed 10 million VND then]. Life there was very difficult, lots of robberies. We were very afraid. I cried day and night."

But she also recounted a strike which raised their wage to the level promised by Latuco (the Vietnamese recruitment company that sent her to Malaysia): "In the contract we signed stated 18 ringgit per day [assembling electronic parts in a Chinese Malaysian factory] but when we got there, we only received 15 Ringgit. Then we women workers got together to discuss how to deal with this. We decided that if it's only 15 Ringgit per day then we would stop work. We sent a representative to talk to the boss and said that if it is 18 Ringgit per day then we will work, but if only 15 Ringgit, then we won't. After that he [the boss] raised our daily wage to 18 Ringgit [the original amount stated on the contract]."

When asked about her relationship with other Kinh workers, "social capital" emerges as the key factor that she gained while working there. She said: "We women workers really cared for each other. Because over there, we were so far away from our families, we considered each other as sisters. We also pooled our money (in the form of "hụi") and took turn sending a lump sum home for our parents. There was no profit, strictly based on trust."

One cannot ignore the role of religion from experiences of the Cham Muslims traveling to and working in a Muslim country and returning to their Cham communities in An Giang province to visit their families during Ramadan.

2.7 Role of Religion

Religious practices play very important roles in the relations among these Cham Muslims who have been reaching out to the wider Islamic community in their migration history. I analyze ways in which these religious practices are conducted in various ways: local Cham residents, local religious leaders, potential religious teachers in their local mosques, and external forces which influence their thinking and activities.

The local religious leaders' influence and care for their local Cham residents was prominent during my interviews. According to Taylor (2007), *hakem* (ông Cả) is the one who is most knowledgeable in Islamic law and the leader in the Cham community who has the authority in local activities (religious and language instructions, marriage, disputes). In Vietnam, the *imam* (leader of congregational prayer) is under the *hakem*, and a *bilal* (someone who issues the call to prayer) (pp. 87–88, 205). In 2012, we interviewed a gentle elderly man, who is the Đồng Ky ward village chief (ấp trưởng). He is not a *hakem*, but it is clear that he is the keeper of the mosque in Quốc Thái commune. During my fieldwork in 2014, I saw him fixing things and taking care of the mosque.

As a village chief, he represented his Cham residents' interests very well, playing the role of a bridge between the local Kinh government officials and his Cham people. He was the interpreter for our 2012 interview, and many times during the interview, he asserted his concerns and dedication to fight for his people: "Why can't the [Vietnamese] government forgive the debts of this poor man who had to return home because the Malaysian company went bankrupt (during the height of the global financial crisis)? *It was not his fault* [My emphasis]." During this interview, I found that he accompanied Pha's mother to the Social Policy bank to check the status of "her" loan. "I went to work with the local official [in Quốc Thái commune] and found out that they still owed the Social Policy Bank 20 million VND, with accruing interest of 6–7 million VND."

Religious/Islamic Studies: A Global Experience

According to Nakamura (2000, p. 65), as Sunni Muslims, many Cham in An Giang are entitled to receive support and aid in various forms from different Muslim communities and institutions in Southeast Asia and in the Middle East. The influence of the UAE and Saudi Arabia are evident in all the mosques I visited in Vĩnh Trường, Quốc Thái, and Tân Châu: the prominent amount of funding used to build a mosque, the name of the sponsoring organization, or the clocks that indicate the time in Mecca and the equivalent Vietnamese time, hung prominently in the main chamber of the mosque. This is consistent with findings from Taylor and Yoshimoto: Cham (Sunni) Muslims (in Cambodia and Vietnam) have received funds from Arab donors from the early 1990s (Taylor 2007, pp. 18, 78, 121) to go to Mecca or to engage in religious studies in Malaysia, Indonesia and Saudi Arabia (Yoshimoto 2012, p. 488).

Moreover, I also found evidence of an intensification of Islamic identity, reflecting the influence from Malaysia on Islamic education (Taylor 2006, p. 241). In 2014, interviews with two informants suggest that learning the Quran can be

interpreted as a form of migration and potential upward mobility. Interviews with two young Muslim Cham men (see below) show the important roles of Ban Đại Diện Cộng Đồng Hồi Giáo in Hồ Chí Minh City (the Ho Chi Minh City Muslim Representative Committee) and the appropriate teachers who facilitate their religious practices.

The Cham people respect and comply with the hierarchy of religious leaders and the clear gendered division of labor. In 2012, I interviewed Mr. To on the verandah of his mosque in Đa Phước village.[19] He was there with his children for their language instructions. He explained to me the hierarchy of religious leaders in most Vietnamese mosques: one lead *hakem* (trưởng), one vice *hakem* (phó), and two *imams*. The division of labor in his household is such that he stayed home to fish and take care of their four children (such as taking them to language instructions at the mosque) while his wife continued to stay in Malaysia to sell fabrics.

One case shows that Islamic study can be used as a way to give service to their Muslim community in An Giang province. One informant, Mr. Dam, a 28-year-old man in Lama Ward, is an example. His Kinh father (who was converted to Muslim after marrying a Cham woman) constantly interjected during the interview. (His father appears to be an imam). Mr. Dam had studied 9 years in various places: 7 years in Hồ Chí Minh City and Cambodia (self-financed phase) and 2 years in Malaysia (financed by Malaysian donors and supporters). After 2 years of studying in Malaysia, he was forced to return home due to illness. So, now, he wants to complete his Islam study in Malaysia. His father sells clothes/blankets/nets in Rạch Giá (the capital city of Kiên Giang province): away 1 month, home 1 month.

The other case shows a more ambivalent motivation. Mr. Sam is a 24 years old, also in Lama Ward, and is an ambitious (and religiously conservative) young man. He wants to become a "hakem" or to work for Petronas (a Malaysian gas/oil corporation), in their management team. He was sponsored by Petronas to engage in Islamic study in Malaysia.

Religious Practices in Home and Host Countries

Global labor migration can be a positive *internal* empowerment experience. As these Cham periodically cross the national borders to make a living, they learn new skills, new languages, and effective ways to interact with management to fight for their religious practices.[20] There is evidence of a clear affiliation between the Malay

[19]As a woman, I was not allowed to step inside the mosque, but all the Cham there were very nice and friendly to me.

[20]Nakamura also talked about how the Cham needed support from their fellow Muslims as refugees on foreign soil (65).

employers and the Cham workers.[21] While the sample is small, there exists clear evidence of religious understanding between the Malay bosses and the Cham workers, much less so between the Chinese management and the Cham workers. The Malay bosses often allow the Cham to pray twice during a working day, thanks to their shared religious affiliation and practices. On the other hand, the Cham workers themselves have been proactive in asking for this right, as well as being flexible with their religious practices in order to survive. They told me that they prayed more times at home to make up for lost praying time at work. They also learned to tolerate the Kinh workers' dietary style. They were also relaxed about the dress code; covering their heads when possible, and learned new (Malaysian) ways to wear their headscarves.

On religious practices such as the five daily praying times, the Cham workers have to fight to be able to practice their religion in many non-Malay (or Chinese Malaysian) factories. In the case of Ms. Saphi, after returning to Vietnam, she worked for a small Kinh enterprise as an inventory clerk. But at first, her employer did not understand why she needs time to pray during work hours every day. Saphi was very religious and had stood up to her Kinh employer back in An Giang in defense of her religious practices, succeeding in having two prayer times (with pay) at work: 10 min in the morning and 10 min in the afternoon. She shared her feeling as being the only Cham in this Kinh shop:

> I do feel lonely because I am the only ethnic minority (người dân tộc) there but I have a place to pray. At first, they thought what I do is strange. I sympathize with them because they had not seen this before and did not know about this. But now that they knew [about my religious practices] and if they "forgot" about [or not respect] this, I will remind them about my need to have space and time to pray [with pay].

2.8 Conclusion

The Cham Muslims continue to survive, as they have for centuries, and have been creative in finding their own routes to make a living and to practice their religion. I found that there are more expressions of subjective than structural empowerment. Almost two decades after Vietnam joined the market economy there are examples of a return to their tradition—sewing and tailoring—but with creativity and global connections, such as the case of the young entrepreneur in La Ma village.

Overall, for the small number of Cham who went through the official channels of labor export policy, they faced a vicious cycle of indebtedness, starting off with the "government-subsidized loans" from which they actually received less than 25 % of

[21] In another study (Tran and Crinis, manuscript 2014), we found that the Kinh women workers in Malaysia have been participating in religious groups in Malaysia for faith, friendship and support. However, more study is needed on the intent and implications of these religious groups for migrant workers there and when they return home.

the loan amounts. But in their own ways, the Cham returnees and their parents have fought back, refusing to repay these loans. The low skilled jobs in Malaysia did not prepare them to escape grinding poverty upon returning to their villages. Most have returned to assembly work in Vietnamese factories or shops, or to small-scale trading and fishing.

Religious practices provide example of internal empowerment and personal growth, in the cases of informants who fought for prayer privileges at work and religious studies abroad. The more accommodating relations between the Malay employers and the Cham Muslims—both in the factories and inside Malay households—suggest how religion can transcend ethnic differences. More research is needed on this fascinating aspect of global labor migration.

Returning to the issue of *geographical agency* as a response to the labor export policy effective since 2002, I found that while the Cham have managed to sustain and reproduce their ways of life—as traders, migrant workers and religious scholars—they face risks as both men and women engage in their *extra-local*—across national borders and within Vietnam—journeys. There are cases of harrowing escapes, fragmented family lives, and spousal separation. While these mobile Cham have gained some short-term successes as they weave their way through internal and external migration—mostly individually—their traditions have been put on trial during and after the labor export policy introduced by the Vietnamese government.

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Chapter 3
Middle Class Filipinos and the Formation of Diasporic National Communities in the United Arab Emirates

Naomi Hosoda

Abstract This paper discusses how middle class Filipino migrants develop a sense of place and identity in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) through involvement in voluntary associations. After a period of adjustment, they begin to realise the benefits of extending their contracts and stay in a receiving society that treats foreign professional workers as semi-permanent but socially differentiated and excluded from the host society. One way to cope with such impermanence and develop a sense of belonging is to join voluntary associations and get involved in volunteer activities to support their less fortunate compatriots, such as domestic workers, who are more vulnerable to unfair treatment and abuses. In this way, they create meaningful involvement in their diasporic lives and maintain their Filipino identity in a transnational setting.

Keywords Filipino diaspora · Middle-class identity · Migrants' association · United Arab Emirates · Arab Gulf states

3.1 Introduction

On Friday mornings, fifteen Filipino nurses stand in front of approximately 100 'runaway' domestic workers (who have escaped from their employers' houses) at the Philippine Embassy shelter in Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and lead physical exercises and games followed by group discussions and lunch service programs. The nurses, whose working hours are long and irregular, bring homemade Filipino dishes for those in the shelter who are waiting for their repatriation to the Philippines. After this psycho-socialisation program, the nurses hold meetings to discuss new fundraising initiatives and ways to coordinate their volunteer activities with the embassy staff and other Filipino voluntary associations.

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Over 100 Filipino associations are registered at the Philippine Embassy and the Philippine Consulate in Abu Dhabi and Dubai, respectively, and countless more unregistered ones exist. The majority of the members of these associations are Filipino professionals. Although these associations exist for various purposes, a surprising number of them are active in helping compatriots in distress, in both the Philippines and the UAE, causing embassy officials to acknowledge them as 'our private wing' to reach out to Filipinos dispersed to every corner of the Emirates.[1] This paper focuses on the professionals who dedicate themselves to volunteer work in the Filipino community in relation to issues regarding their diasporic identity.

A number of recent studies on Filipino global migration have closely investigated the structural constraints imposed upon migrants. Other studies have investigated the aspects of human agency that migrants demonstrate when carving out their own space, and still others have examined their sense of belonging in their host country, the Philippines, or both (e.g. Constable 1997; Parreñas 2001a; Lan 2006). For instance, Parreñas argued that the diasporic identity of Filipina domestic workers overseas has been 'transgressing…the nation-state' on a global scale (Parreñas 2001a, 1). She stressed that Filipina domestic workers around the world are denied full citizenship in their countries of residence. Irrespective of where they reside, they share almost the same experiences of extended separation from their families in the Philippines, a lack of protection in domestic work, and the insecurity of 'guest worker' status in most destinations of the diaspora. From this prolonged period of constraints, a community that transgresses the nation-state has emerged, forging the groundwork for the construction of the Philippines as 'home' in addition to an 'imagined (global) community' through which Filipinos can simultaneously express nationalist and diasporic identities.

However, the bulk literature on the Filipino diaspora has overlooked the situation of Filipino workers' in the Arab Gulf states, the region where the greatest number of Filipino workers are deployed annually.[2] Only in recent years have the ethnographic works on Filipino migrants in this region been published (Nagy 2008; Pingol 2011; Johnson 2011). Among them, the one most relevant to this study is Johnson's work, which analysed how middle class Muslim Filipinos in Saudi Arabia interact with domestic workers, specifically in their practice of hiring runaway domestic workers. According to Johnson, the practice of employing unprotected women as house help is considered a moralistic and symbolic act signifying a benevolent middle class, yet getting help for one's home can also contradict the gendered moral expectation in Saudi Arabia that women should take care of their husbands and children. This case illustrates the importance of 'others' (in this case, the *kawawang* (pitiful) working class Filipina) in reinforcing middle class identity,

[1]Interview with Mr. Noel Servigon, Minister and Consul General, Philippine Embassy, Abu Dhabi, 2 February 2009.

[2]The Arab Gulf countries, also known as the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, consist of six countries located around the Arab (or Persian) Gulf, namely: Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE.

due to the proximity of the two classes in the Saudi Arabian context and the gendered norms of the host nation.

The Arab Gulf states employ a massive number of foreign workers from around the world. If we take a look at general studies on Gulf migration that are not limited to Filipinos in the region, we find that only recently has the identity issue of middle class migrants working in various economic sectors been given scholarly attention; recent work by Vora on middle class Indians in Dubai is a case in the point (Vora 2008). She elucidated that middle class Indians in Dubai conceptualise different domains of belongingness, as they consider the economic sphere to be distinct from those of nation and culture. She demonstrated that despite discrimination based on race and nationality and without political rights, formal citizenship and cultural assimilation, they can still stake a claim to their middle class identity based on their belief in a middle class 'consumer citizenship', which they can best enjoy in Dubai (Vora 2008, 397). While her analysis on the differentiated domains of middle class Indians' sense of belonging in Dubai is useful, we need to go beyond the economy in order to make sense of the transformation of middle class Filipinos in the UAE who dedicate themselves to community service for their compatriots.

While recent ethnographic studies on Filipino migrants have looked into the creation of Filipino communities in places such as the United States (Okamura 1998; Parreñas 2001b), Canada (Del Rio-Laquian and Laquian 2008), Taiwan (Lan 2006), Hong Kong (Constable 1997), Japan (Mateo 2000), Italy (Parreñas 2001b) and Israel (Liebelt 2011), their focus was on unskilled or semi-skilled workers. Nagy's work (2008) on 'Filipinos in Bahrain' may be an exceptional case in that it examined the 'Filipino Club' in Bahrain, which is largely made up of Filipino professionals. Nevertheless, her interest was on the self-expression of their ethnic identity during the Philippine Independence Day's beauty pageant in comparison to the stereotyped image of Filipino women (or Asian in general) as 'sexually promiscuous', but their volunteer activities involving compatriots remained unexplored.

Therefore, in this paper, I address two questions in particular and analyse the practices and narratives of Filipino professionals engaged in volunteer activities. First, how do these people come to reside semi-permanently in the UAE, a country normally considered among Filipinos as a mere 'temporary' overseas destination, unlike Western immigrant countries where they think of settling permanently? Second, how do they make sense of their enthusiasm for helping *kawawa* in the UAE? I regard those who are referred to by Filipinos in the UAE as 'professionals'—a sub-category which often includes upper-end technical and clerical workers—as middle class, as will be explained below. The field data presented in this paper was collected through interviews, questionnaire surveys and participatory observation over six months between 2009 and 2013. In keeping with the professional practices of my discipline, I used pseudonyms to protect the identity of the participants.

3.2 The Filipino Middle Class in the UAE

The UAE is a major destination for Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) in the world today. In 2010, the UAE attracted the second-largest number of Filipino workers (200,000) after Saudi Arabia (290,000) (Philippine Overseas Employment Administration 2011). Since 2000, when the UAE ranked fifth—after Saudi Arabia, Hong Kong, Japan and Taiwan—in the number of Filipinos received (43,000), the number of workers deployed to the UAE has increased fourfold, surpassing rates in the three East Asian destinations. This leap coincides with the transformation of Dubai into a world class tourist destination and the world's financial trading hub. As a result of this accelerated influx of Filipinos, the estimated number of Filipinos temporarily residing in the UAE (including OFWs and their families) rose from 104,000 in 2000 to 606,000 in 2010 (Commission on Filipinos Overseas 2011).

OFWs in the UAE are employed in various sectors of the economy. In 2010, the service and sales sector employed 35 % of the total number of new OFWs in the country, followed by domestic household service (30 %), production and transportation (20 %) and professional, technical and clerical services (15 %). However, the number of Filipinos in administrative and managerial positions has remained minimal (less than 1 %) (Philippine Overseas Employment Administration 2011). More females (approximately 60–70 % of the total OFWs) than males have been deployed in the last decade (Philippine Overseas Employment Administration 2011).

Together with Qatar, the UAE is known for having an extremely large foreign population that exceeds 80 % of the total population, and foreigners in most occupations from the top to the bottom of private corporations. At present, Filipinos constitute the fourth largest foreign population in the UAE, after Indians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis (Horinuki 2010). The absence of a so-called Filipino 'elite' class distinguishes the Filipino population in the UAE from South Asian populations. In contrast to South Asians in the Emirates who began immigrating even before the oil boom to seek employment, ranging from merchants to labourers (Gardner 2010, Chap. 4; Vora 2011, 306–318), the majority of Filipinos only arrived in the UAE in the 1970s, after the UAE actively recruited contract workers from Asian countries through commercial recruitment agencies (Owen 1985, 8). Until recently, Filipinos in commerce and executive positions have remained few despite the growing Filipino population in the country, which leaves room for middle class Filipinos to take leading roles within the UAE's Filipino community.

In fact, according to a study based on discourse analysis by the author on the sub-categories of Filipino residents in the UAE, they are broadly divided into: (1) professionals, (2) semi-skilled workers and (3) domestic workers (Hosoda 2013, 22–23). Professionals who include high-end technical and clerical workers occupy the highest socioeconomic strata of these three groups; they are university graduates, and some have professional licences in fields such as engineering, nursing and teaching. Not only do they receive salaries that range between AED 5000 and 20,000 (the majority receive AED 8000–12,000), but they can also stay in the UAE

for three years with a residence permit, which is renewable. Once their employment seems stable, many of these workers bring their families to the UAE and stay for longer durations because UAE law permits foreign workers with a monthly salary over AED 4000 to sponsor their family members.

Semi-skilled workers, who include restaurant employees, hotel room staff, retail clerks, travel agents, office workers, security guards, welders and mechanics, mostly live in dormitory-style sleeping quarters known as 'bedspace'. Their monthly salaries range from AED 1000 to 4000. In principle, these workers have a day off each week, but many work on their days off, or else take on part-time contract work elsewhere as a means of supplementing their income.

Domestic workers are distinguished from the other two groups primarily by their social and legal status as 'servants', not formal workers. Their educational backgrounds vary, but the average domestic worker is a high school graduate. Their working and living conditions vary depending on the attitude of their employers. Their monthly salary varies from AED 500 to 1500, and their working hours are unspecified. While some have one day off per week, others have no days off. No matter what their actual working conditions are, they cannot take their employers to the labour court because labour codes do not apply to domestic workers. Moreover, working in a private house makes them highly vulnerable to various forms of violence. According to the Philippine Embassy, there are two government-run shelters located in Abu Dhabi and Dubai each of which housed approximately 100 Filipino citizens in 2010, almost all of whom were domestic workers who had escaped from their employers' homes.

Based on the above description, Filipino professionals in the UAE seem to lead comfortable lives with a high salary compared to those in the Philippines. However, from their viewpoint, these gains are offset by legal and social restrictions.

In the UAE, foreign workers are not considered to be 'immigrant workers', but rather are considered as 'temporary contractual workers' (Janardhan 2011, 105). This means that they have an extremely limited likelihood of acquiring citizenship, regardless of the length of time they have worked in the country. They are typically permitted to stay for the period specified in a work contract (usually 2 years, irrespective of the occupational description). A sponsorship system (called *kafala* in Arabic) controls all entries and sojourns of expatriates. Employers usually sponsor their respective expatriate workers, and their decisions regarding employment duration are authoritative. Therefore, workers are restricted by the limits set by their employers. The recruitment and wage system of the country also affects the migrants' work environment. It defines foreigners' salaries as well as benefits according to the salary level of their country of origin and not by their work performance. Therefore, wage differences exist according to nationality, even for workers performing the same work in the same office. In addition, migrants working in organisations are likely to experience the so-called racial hierarchy:

local citizens are at the top, followed by Westerners and Arabs, with Asians generally situated in lower positions.[3]

At the same time, the UAE restricts associational activities for its own citizens and foreigners (Kapiszewski 2001, 209). Labour unions, NGOs and other large social gatherings are not officially permitted, and religious activities other than those of Islam are restricted (Hosoda and Watanabe 2013, 33–34). As the UAE constitution proscribes non-Islamic proselytising of Muslim citizens, the practice of religious observances among non-Muslim foreigners is restricted to private spaces such as one's home. As an exception, non-Muslim believers can perform religious observances in several selected Christian churches (Roman Catholic and Protestant) and Hindu temples, built on lands leased free of charge by the emirs in the UAE. Even so, the congregations that built these temples and churches made clever use of devices such as architectural designs that are unrecognisable to outsiders as religious facilities so that their gatherings do not offend the emirs and local citizens. Such legal and social constraints ensure that expatriates' organised activities are restricted in the public sphere and compartmentalised according to nationality class, and religion.

3.3 Filipino Associations in the UAE

Migration studies commonly view immigrant minorities' voluntary organisations as a transitional space for arrivals to a foreign country to acclimate to the new environment and way of life (Werbner 2002; Brettell 2008). These organisations also provide a place for immigrants to seek some form of sociality and informal or ad hoc social security with co-ethnics.

The most popular and visible type of Filipino immigrant associations prior to the 1970s (when the Philippine government began sending its workers through official channels) were those based on similar locales or languages of origin, often called as hometown associations (Okamura 1998). Filipino communities attached to local Catholic churches in destination countries have also played a pivotal role in organising Filipino immigrants in many parts of the world (e.g. Mateo 2000; Bonifacio and Angeles 2010; Fresnoza-Flot 2011). These two types of Filipino immigrant organisations tend to include Filipinos of all classes.

If we look at Filipino associations in the UAE, we can find these two well-known traditional types in addition to some others. As of September 2014,

[3]A number of studies (e.g. Mednicoff 2012; Gardner 2010; Longva 1997; Owen 1985) have pointed out these legal and social practices in the Arab Gulf states which are described in this paragraph as discriminatory and problematic. While the practices among the countries in this region vary and some Arab Gulf states have been reviewing part of such practices and changes have been made in some areas, we may still say that the overall structural constraints faced by migrants throughout the region remain quite similar.

there were 51 Filipino associations registered at the Philippine Embassy and 65 registered at the Philippine Consulate in Dubai and the Northern Emirates.[4] The associations include the two traditional types and those which reflect professionals' lifestyles and social relationships: (1) those formed for common recreational activities such as basketball, chess, music, driving and dance; (2) groups employed in a common profession or trade such as engineers, nurses, computer programmers, architects and safety professionals; (3) fraternity/sorority groups and university alumni; and (4) groups for social support or concerns. Some of these associations were formed in the UAE, whereas others are chapters of larger organisations based primarily in the Philippines. In order for voluntary organisations to be registered at the Philippine Embassy or Consulate, they are required to submit a number of documents including constitutions or by-laws, a list of duly elected officers, a list of members with addresses and contact numbers, financial reports and a list of planned or undertaken projects.

In addition to the registered associations, there are also umbrella organisations: one in Abu Dhabi and the other in Dubai. The Philippine government fostered the formation of these umbrella organisations under its auspices with the cooperation of Filipino community leaders. Umbrella organisations are composed of representatives from all registered associations and hold, among other things, regular meetings and large-scale annual celebrations of Philippine Independence Day.

According to association leaders, the linkage between the Philippine government and voluntary groups is regarded as beneficial for both parties. The Philippine government's authorisation can provide associations credibility when recruiting new members. Moreover, registered associations are allowed to hold their meetings and activities within the embassy or consulate compounds, where one can best avoid the many forms of surveillance of the host country. In turn, the Philippine government invites representatives of associations to monthly meetings where government officials not only disseminate information, but also seek assistance from concerned associations regarding distressed Filipinos in the country.

If we compare Filipino associations in the UAE with those in the other major destination areas of Filipino migrants, we can highlight a few characteristic traits of Filipino associations in the UAE. First, while Filipino associations flourish as much in the UAE as in major immigrant countries like the United States and Canada (e.g. Parreñas 2001b; Del Rio-Laquian and Laquian 2008), the UAE has no political associations that lead to social integration because they are prohibited in this monarchical state. Furthermore, in contrast to other countries, there are neither business-oriented associations in the UAE nor associations specific to a certain generation such as youths or senior citizens, reflecting the fact that foreign residents are transient and family members are dependents of these temporary workers. Second, in contrast to other destination countries where Filipino domestic workers are dominant, like Hong Kong, Italy and Israel (e.g. Constable 1997; Parreñas

[4]These numbers are based on the list of associations prepared by the Philippine Embassy in Abu Dhabi and the Philippine Consulate in Dubai, respectively.

2001b; Liebelt 2011), the UAE is like a home to few domestic workers' associations. This is not only because there are no political collective activities allowed in the Emirates, but also because a large number of domestic workers have no day off to congregate with fellow workers. Interestingly, the two domestic workers' associations that I visited in Dubai were organised with the support of Filipino community leaders, who were also professionals, as part of a communal effort to empower this most vulnerable group of fellow expatriates.

Members of these associations include both males and females who are mostly long-time residents—albeit contract workers—with families. Questionnaire surveys on association members' career paths and lifestyles revealed that the average association member who has lived in the UAE for about five years with his or her family; has joined one or two associations; and aside from time spent at home spends most of their two-day weekends, and perhaps even evenings on weekdays, with these associations.[5] Not many semi-skilled and domestic workers participate in associations because of their limited time and budgets.

Joining associations can also lead to unpleasant experiences, such as envy (*inggit*), gossip (*tsismis*), internal fighting (*away*) and the so-called 'commercial friendship' or friendship for the economic benefit of some enterprising members (Parreñas 2001b: 225). Some of my interlocutors told me that they stopped attending the activities of an association of certified engineers because they were tired of the 'crab mentality': a Filipino expression meaning internal rivalry in which members keep pulling others down as crabs do when climbing.

Regardless of the stated aims of each group, most associations engage in several activities that range from holiday celebrations and sports leagues to dances or simply 'hanging out' after gatherings. Sometimes they provide educational services such as job training, language classes and investment workshops. Many Filipinos join more than one association depending on accessibility to information and connections. Cognizant of the UAE government's power to limit or censor club activities, most associations are careful not to offend local cultural or political sensibilities, and they normally meet in private places such as a member's house, or inside the Philippine Embassy or Consulate compound.

While the aims of the associations differ from offering recreational activities to forming career organisations, a striking feature of Filipino associations in the UAE is that many are actively involved with charity and volunteer work, which includes both direct and indirect assistance to distressed Filipinos. Direct assistance consists of providing voluntary services to fellow Filipinos in the UAE in need of help, including visiting Filipino nationals in prisons and shelters with homemade food and other basic necessities; and rescuing domestic workers being abused and confined in their employers' houses. Indirect assistance refers to fundraising money

[5]My research project colleagues (Dr. Masako Ishii and Dr. Akiko Watanabe) and I conducted a questionnaire survey of twelve members of the Filipino Nurse Association in the Emirates (see Sect. 3.4) in Abu Dhabi in March 2011, which was followed by another survey of fifteen members of a Filipino choir group in Abu Dhabi in February 2012. Characteristics mentioned here represent our findings from these two surveys.

and in kind donations for Filipinos in crisis in the UAE (e.g. buying return airplane tickets for those who cannot afford them) as well as in their home country (e.g. natural disaster victims). Some associations perform both types of assistance whereas others only do one of them, and some make such volunteer work as their chief aim whereas others only do so when there is a call for it by members or from government offices in charge of assisting troubled compatriots.

Some association members engage in volunteer work with a high degree of commitment; there are Filipino professionals who are regularly contacted by compatriots seeking their advice or assistance. They spend practically every minute of their free time on weekends with Filipinos in need, and pay for their own transportation costs. In some associations, members organise themselves to be involved in search and rescue missions of domestic workers abused by their employers (Ishii 2014). These activities are highly risky; if discovered by the authorities, they may be jailed and deported. Below, I explore the lives of professionals who regularly engage in volunteer work.

3.4 Racial Discrimination and the 'Diverting Attention' Strategy

Nursing is one of the most popular occupations among OFWs around the world.[6] Among OFWs residing in the UAE also, nursing represents a major occupation; it is indeed the most common occupation in the professional and technical field (Philippine Overseas Employment Administration 2011).

The Filipino Nurse Association in the Emirates (FNAE) is the major association of Filipino nurses in the UAE, with membership exceeding 500. It was founded in Abu Dhabi and registered at the Philippine Embassy in 2010. In the following years it has expanded to include Filipino nurses in other emirates. Its main activities include monthly meetings, review classes for the board exam, sporting events and psycho-socialisation. The latter activity is conducted at the shelters run by the embassy for domestic workers who have run away from their employers' houses. On the first Friday of every month, 15–20 FNAE members gather and lead exercises, group counselling and music and other performances in order to heal the psychological wounds of women at the shelter. The members also provide

[6]In 2010, nursing was the third most popular occupation among registered OFWs, next only to domestic workers and cleaners, and was the most popular occupation among professional and technical jobs (Philippine Overseas Employment Administration 2011). A study estimated that 85 % of Filipino nurses are now hired abroad (Lorenzo et al. 2007, 1409). Among the countries that nurses immigrate to, Saudi Arabia is the most popular country among new hires, followed by the UAE and other Arab Gulf states (Philippine Overseas Employment Administration 2011). Other major destinations include East and Southeast Asia (i.e. Singapore, Taiwan) and Europe (i.e. Ireland, UK). The United States follows, but it is said that government statistics fail to record the majority of nurses who immigrate there.

homemade Filipino food at the end of sessions and sometimes visit Filipinos in UAE prisons as well.

The FNAE members that I interviewed stressed that psycho-socialisation for domestic workers is especially meaningful to them. The case of Diana, a nurse in a large private hospital in Abu Dhabi, illustrates this point. Like most Filipino nursing graduates who aspire to work abroad, Diana began working in Malaysia and then moved to Abu Dhabi in 2000. When her husband also found a job opportunity there, they decided to bring their daughter and rented a one-room apartment. After several years in Abu Dhabi, Diana had the opportunity to migrate with her family to the United States, the country she had long wanted to go. However, her husband was reluctant to move as he thought they could better enjoy family life in Abu Dhabi with other fellow Filipinos than in an American city, where people from different cultures are more likely to mingle, which may make it difficult to maintain Filipino values even within the home.

Diana was feeling a little 'burned out', as appreciation for her hard and innovative work at the hospital was not shown through promotion or other means, and she acknowledged that: 'it seems here your passport decides your position and salary'. After giving up her plan to migrate to the United States and finding no satisfactory jobs in the Philippines, she tried to divert her attention by devoting herself to community activities. On top of her volunteer activities at the church, she formed the FNAE. She explained her feelings regarding this group as follows:

> When I am doing psycho-socialisation for them (other Filipinos) in shelters or in jail, I feel I am far more fortunate than them. You know, I am deadlocked here, but look, they are even worse! *Kawawa naman* (so pitiful) have lost everything. … (and) they really appreciate our help. These feelings not only apply to me, but to all others participating in the program, and they feel good about what they are doing. These activities also lead to stronger family unity.[7]

Her comment elucidates her ambivalence about staying in the UAE: she is caught between a nationality/race-based stratified structure and a desire to keep her present comparative economic well-being and the integrity of her family intact. With limited possibilities available to change this situation she has, in her own words, 'diverted (her) attention' by serving less fortunate compatriots in the UAE rather than become increasingly frustrated.[8]

My questionnaire survey of FNAE members showed that the group consists primarily of two types of nurses that may be distinguished by their life prospects and commitment to the association's activities.[9] The first group, which consists primarily of single female and male members, regards their stay in the UAE as short-term and hopes to migrate to the United States or Canada. Their primary motivations for joining the FNAE include friendship, professional camaraderie and

[7]Interview with Ms. Diana in Abu Dhabi on 25 February 2011.

[8]Same as above.

[9]The questionnaire survey was conducted with twelve members of the Filipino Nurse Association in the Emirates in Abu Dhabi in March 2011.

the exchange of information. The second group consists of those who are married and are currently in their mid-30s and over. They have resided in the UAE or Saudi Arabia for more than ten years and wish to stay there until retirement. In addition to the above reasons, they are active in this group because they regard it as an 'adopted home' for them.

Moreover, their responses revealed the difficulties of working in the UAE. The three most common difficulties that these nurses face are loneliness or homesickness, coping with cultural diversity at the workplace (with patients and colleagues) and racial discrimination. Another problem that they mentioned was an alarming number of fellow Filipino nurses caught in credit card loan traps.[10]

3.5 In-Between Temporariness and Settling

Diana and other long-term FNAE members indicated that Filipino nurses in the UAE face a dilemma because their sense of belonging tends to be ambiguous as long as they continue to pursue their careers, as they feel that they are neither a part of the UAE nor the Philippines. Both the UAE and Philippine governments agree that the employment of Filipino nurses in the Emirates is contractual, that is to say, only temporary. Nevertheless, the labour market situation for nurses in the Philippines presents difficulties for them if they wish to return to their homeland.

Nursing in the Philippine context has historically been a profession chosen for the purpose of seeking employment abroad, especially in the United States,[11] and in the recent years enrolment in nursing courses has boomed (Hosoda 2011). The salaries for overseas nurses range from approximately US $800 to $3000 monthly depending on the country of employment, which is much higher than the average rate in the Philippines of about US $120 to $200. Due to this high salary standard and opportunities to emigrate to the United States or other countries, as many as 632,000 students were enrolled in the department of nursing, which is the most popular department in the Philippines (Sato and Carlos 2008, 75). The course was taught at 450 universities and colleges in 2005, doubled from 169 in 1998 despite

[10]Although the prevalence of unpaid credit card debt is not limited to nurses, a Philippine official told me that the incidence is particularly high among nurses and domestic workers. The Philippine Embassy and Consulate carry out financial literary seminars to OFWs on a regular basis in order to reduce this incidence. See also news reports: 'Loans, Credit Card Debts Among Top Concerns of Filipinos in UAE', *Gulf Today*, 12 July 2011 (http://www.pinoy-ofw.com/news/13780-loans-credit-card-debts-top-concerns-filipinos-uae.html); 'Filipinos in UAE caught in credit card trap', *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 22 August 2011 (http://globalnation.inquirer.net/9791/filipinos-in-uae-caught-in-credit-card-trap).

[11]The reason why nursing stands as the popular 'professional' career among overseas Filipinos today has historical roots. Due to the Philippines' colonial connection with the United States since the beginning of the 20th century, becoming a nurse has long been seen as a means of possibly immigrating to the United States (Choy 2003). In other words, culturally speaking, becoming a nurse implies 'landing in the United States', the dream of many Filipino families.

its high tuition fees in comparison with other courses. This increase was driven by the strong demand for Filipino nurses overseas since the late 1990s, although this demand weakened somewhat in the late 2000s. The education of nurses 'for export' (which was already a big industry in the Philippines) is so over-grown that despite the continuous outflow of nurses, a shortage of nurses in the domestic market has not occured, which makes return migration difficult (Asis and Baggio 2008, 11).

Another option for Filipino professionals (including nurses) to earn income upon returning to the Philippines from overseas is to start their own business. However, there are extremely few cases of OFWs becoming successful entrepreneurs in their homeland (Asis and Baggio 2008, 11–13). While the Philippine government has been promoting financial literacy programs for OFWS, some of my interlocutors stated that it would still be difficult for most OFWs to become enterpreneurs in reality, partly in that corruption and inefficiency in the government could make it hard for new entrepreneurs without 'connections' to succeed. Thus, most of the remittance sent home by OFWs as well as their savings are generally used to buy commercial products, improve their houses, pay the tuition costs for their children or nieces/nephews and start small businesses such as taxi or passenger motorbike operations or *sari-sari* (variety) corner stores (Hosoda 2011, 180).

Some—but not many—Filipinos in the UAE have opportunities to migrate to immigrant nations such as the United States. If given this chance, many do migrate and obtain citizenship with the hope of integrating their families there or inviting family members to come in the future, sometimes despite the fact that their professional status or job category is downgraded (e.g. nurses become assistant nurses or caregivers). However, others refrain from these opportunities and remain in the UAE, as was the case with Diana.

Below is a summary of the responses I received from my interviews with members of the FNAE on their perceptions of the three main destination countries for nurses currently working in the UAE. The UAE has advantages over the other countries, such as a good salary and lifestyle (compared with the Philippines), less crime and vices (e.g. alcohol, teenage sex, illegal drugs, etc.) and no pressure to culturally assimilate. It is regarded as an 'open city': a Filipino expression referring to overseas destinations where host societies acknowledge cultural diversity so that Filipinos can participate in their customs and culture, unlike Saudi Arabia where they need to refrain from cultural and religious freedoms completely (Hosoda 2015, 281) (Table 3.1).

Nurses mentioned that they initially came to the UAE as a 'stepping stone'. However, after staying in the country for several years, they realised the comparative advantages of the UAE over other nations to which they had planned to migrate, as shown above, and decided to remain in the UAE for as long as they were employed.

It is noteworthy to comment on the value that these nurses place on the lack of assimilation or social integration policy in the UAE. As shown in the view of Diana's husband, some Filipinos consider the UAE's social environment, where each nation is expected to hold onto their own culture preferable, because they can more easily maintain Filipino family and social values even during their sojourn.

Table 3.1 Perceptions of the three main destination countries among the FNAE nurses interviewed

	Philippines	UAE	USA
Advantages	Can be with family Cultural familiarity Political freedoms and rights Home country	Good salary and standard of living 'Open city' Less crime, peaceful No assimilation pressure	Immigrant status Good salary and standard of living Can be with family 'Dream country'
Disadvantages	No satisfactory jobs Corruption Many crimes and vices	Racial discrimination Temporary status Socio-cultural restrictions in public places	Possible assimilation pressure Many crimes and vices Professional downgrading

Source Interviews with 12 nurses in Abu Dhabi, 2 March 2012

Similar to Vora's findings on the identity of middle class Indians in Dubai (Vora 2008), some Filipino nurses opt to stay for longer periods in the Emirates by separating the cultural domain from the economic domain, and in the UAE where the majority of residents are simultaneously foreigners and temporary workers, it is possible to keep the two apart.

3.6 Seeking Identification in Diasporic National Communities

The above discussion of the importance which Filipino nurses attach to volunteer activities illustrates the significance of 'others' in fuelling their sense of 'better' economic and social conditions, despite racial discrimination in the workplace, precariousness of their status and lack of freedom. There are several factors which may influence the views of middle class Filipinos towards their working class counterparts. The UAE foreign labour employment policy equally influences the situations of both middle class Filipinos and Filipina domestic workers, regardless of their differences in class and occupation; they are all temporary workers under the *kafala* (sponsorship) system. The stereotyped image of the 'Filipina/o' in this multi-ethnic country also applies equally to both groups (Nagy 2008). These commonalities between middle class and domestic workers, coupled with the fact that they are a minority group in the UAE, may bring the psychological distance between these two groups closer in the UAE than in their home country.

The sense of moral obligation is another factor that induces professionals to engage in volunteer work for their less fortunate compatriots. Some of my interlocutors stated that they felt obliged to help poor Filipino citizens as part of their responsibilities as professionals abroad. They further mentioned that some poor compatriots even tried to take advantage of professionals by drawing on the

latter's sense of obligation and sympathy. Johnson's study of middle class Muslims in Saudi Arabia also revealed that they employ Filipina domestic workers who have run away from employers' houses out of 'pity and compassion', as the failure to do so might damage their social reputation and result in them being called 'irreligious and uneducated' (Johnson 2011, 13).

In addition, and perhaps more importantly, the sense of social recognition that emerges from helping 'the poor' seems to motivate professionals to actively participate in volunteer activities. Anne, a former government employee in Manila, and her husband are active in the Filipino community in Dubai. Below, they explain why Filipino professionals become so active in helping other compatriots:

> Here (in Dubai) there is nothing to do. Unlike when we were in Manila, we have plenty of time here. Besides, traffic (gridlock) was so awful in Manila that it was hard to reach meeting places and organise group meetings. But here, (life consists of the) office, home, office, home, that's all. … Here, there are no prominent leaders like in Manila so it is easy to initiate your own acts of goodwill and obtain social recognition. See, there are many occasions for you to help others here, and you can really do it. There are no formal agencies except embassies that can assist us. … We want our lives to be meaningful here, because we are temporary workers in this city, and sometimes you wonder why you are here, just for money? … Therefore, Filipino associations bind us. We need identification in this city, unlike Filipinos in the Philippines or Filipinos in America who have space in their host country.[12]

Anne's comment reveals important facets of Filipino professionals' lives regarding the UAE's social environment and its psychological effects. In some cases, by the time Filipinos settle down semi-permanently, the meaning behind sending remittances to their families and relatives back home shifts. When first being employed outside of one's native land, the very act of remitting one's income to immediate kin members holds social significance for the family's (as well as extended family's) success. Nevertheless, after some years, remittances may become part of a daily routine and lose their impact, especially for middle class families, which could lead migrants to search for a greater meaning behind their long sojourn as well as social recognition and worth from others.

Under these psychological conditions, associations provide opportunities for expatriates to feel self-worth while living in the Arab Gulf states. As stated earlier, mingling closely with other nationalities in the UAE is rather difficult. Thus, the majority of foreigners primarily mingle with others of their own nationality and look for associational groups where they can formally organise themselves and be recognised by the larger society. In addition, the highly cosmopolitan environment of workplaces and other public places might direct them to seek out people of closer cultural proximity for personal comfort.

Compared with other Arab Gulf states, the UAE is more liberal towards the foreigners' social and cultural activities, partly because they are under pressure to accommodate to Western legal concepts and practices as the country aspires to become a global hub and regional centre (Mednicoff 2012). One such example that

[12]Interview with Ms. Anne in Dubai on 2 March 2013.

demonstrates this is a recent Dubai government initiative to start a registration program of social and community associations of its foreign population at the Social Regulatory and Licencing Department of the Community Development Authority, which is their first move to officially acknowledge and permit the activities of these associations.[13]

In this highly compartmentalised society, some foreign residents become eager to create their own space where they can enjoy a sense of fulfilment that goes beyond economic benefits. Associations in this regard appear to be one possible venue for individuals to build up a sense of camaraderie, and the professionals' efforts to engage with their community can gain social recognition.

3.7 Conclusion

This paper has attempted to highlight issues other than the working conditions of labour migration to the Arab Gulf states. The region is a major destination for migrants seeking employment, but this has been under-researched except with regard to human rights violations and other forms of abuses. Without negating the restrictive and potentially abusive aspects of the labour migration systems in the region, I examined the nature of the migration process and lived experiences of migrants by focusing on Filipino professionals who are passionately engaged in volunteer activities organised through associations in UAE cities.

Many middle class Filipinos migrate to the UAE temporarily at first, but after an adjustment period some see the advantages of the UAE and change their views and attitudes about staying in this Gulf country, although discriminatory working conditions and loneliness in this compartmentalised society continue to affect them. The resulting prolonged stay of middle class Filipinos in the UAE is not only for economic reasons; at one point or another they lose satisfaction over mere economic benefits and are likely to search for a more meaningful engagement.

The presence of Filipino communities in these overly globalised Middle Eastern cities facilitates a feeling of belonging to a wider society and adds new meaning to their lives, often by finding and contacting *kawawa* (pitiful) fellow Filipinos. Unlike Saudi Arabia, where almost all social and cultural activities are banned, especially for women, some emirates in the UAE such as Dubai and Abu Dhabi are becoming increasingly tolerant of the social activities of foreign residents—provided they do not offend local sensitivities—and allow for social space for foreigners to organise

[13]See the Dubai Government website on licencing social clubs (http://www.cda.gov.ae/). However, the program has made registration difficult for most Filipino associations as it requires a registration fee of AED 2000, an office space, and the employment of regular staff, while the majority of Filipino associations are just small organisations. See also Lily Libo-on 'Filipino Organisations Told to Unite to Resolve Issues' *Khaleej Times*, 1 August 2013 (http://www.khaleejtimes.com/).

themselves to an extent. This has encouraged middle class professionals to reach out to fellow nationals in need of help.

Additionally, this case study poses an interesting question regarding the validity of earlier assumptions in transnationalism studies that claim that social integration and settlement are preferred and sought after solutions for migrants. Instead, this paper presents a case in which some Filipino professionals have calculated the positive and negative effects of their respective destination countries, and have at times chosen to stay in non-immigrant countries in order to maintain cultural values of the country of origin or for other reasons. Such professional migrants' choices need to be explored further in the future. Nevertheless, with this case study, we can note that these professionals may begin to form new communities or networks that are trans-local in nature.

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Chapter 4
'Balik Kampung': The Practice of Transborder Retirement Migration in Johor, Malaysia

Bin Khidzer Mohammad Khamsya

Abstract For a segment of elderly Singaporean Malays who find growing old in Singapore costly, shifting to kampungs in Johor, Malaysia to retire is a viable solution, considering the low cost of living, accessible modern facilities, relatively developed infrastructure as well as its geographical proximity which allows for occasional return to Singapore. Some questions then emerge out of this practice. First, what is the kind of lifestyle that elderly, retired Singaporean Malays have to contend with in choosing to live in such settings? What kind of support do they receive as elderly migrants living away from home? The author embarked on a year-long ethnographic research in a particular Kampung Makmur, Johor to capture the dynamics of retirement migration for this particular group of elderly. The research elucidates several aspects of retirement migration—the working of the migrant network within the kampung organization, the everyday lived realities and practice of migrants to secure elder care and the process of migrant integration. Drawing on social capital and network, this research proposes that 'social capital projects' are undertaken by the elderly retirees to secure emotional and physical care in the kampung.

Keywords Retirement · Migration · Johor · Malaysia · Transborder

4.1 Introduction

My interest in retirement migration started with an innocuous question posed to an elderly Malay Singaporean couple—why do you want to live here? This question would have seemed rather uninspiring if not for the location in which it was asked.

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You see, the couple was among eight other elderly couples, all Malay, who had left Singapore to retire in Kampung Makmur[1] across the border in Johor. Further inquiries on the subject matter coalesced to form a rich narrative detailing the process of retiring in Malaysia. The Singaporean retirees found the low cost of living, strength of the Singapore dollar relative to the Malaysian ringgit, idyllic setting with considerably more space and friendly neighbours are very attractive. Having spent some time in the kampung, I understood what they meant.

I had some concerns, however. A large house with a compound might seem like an excellent idea, while one was still physically capable. But what happens when their health deteriorates due to old age? How then would the elderly couples care for themselves? Do they get any form of help around here? Building on these questions, this research is a systematic inquiry into the phenomenon of retirement migration. Two sociological objectives undergird the subject matter at hand:

1. To document the motivations and processes involved in retiring in Johor. I expect that this will provide the contextual details of the phenomenon and reveal the intricate working of migrant networks.
2. To examine how a group of retired, elderly Singaporean Malays in a kampung secure *emotional* and *physical* transfers. I believe this is especially pertinent given how traditional modes of child to parent transfers usually operate on the basis of geographical proximity.

Approximately 1 year of ethnographic research in Johor yielded layers of data detailing the strategies undertaken by the elderly Malay retirees. The data were organized under the framework of social capital and ties.

The motivations of the retired migrants are revealing, both rational and non-rational, the latter encompassing ideals such as memory and nostalgia. However, the kampung life is not without risks. Due to legal restrictions, the retired migrants in my study are not able to own land in the kampung. They then depend on the kampung organization and people to help them with this situation. This shall be discussed later.

I posit that the modus operandi for achieving physical and emotional transfers in the kampung is mainly through the execution of *social capital projects*, a conscious effort to participate in the kampung activities to cultivate ties so as to be able to tap onto the established relationships as a resource during old age. The intricate workings of social capital and resource provision hinge on two groups of principles —rationality on one side and culture and religion on the other. However, these are not mutually exclusive. Rational action is often mediated by culture and religion as shall be illustrated. Building on the centrality of elderly migrants as active agents in securing resources for old age, this research found that there is a gender dimension to social capital projects. Social capital projects are largely the province of the women migrants. On the other hand, the participation of male migrants in masculine domains is limited by the unique configuration of kampung spaces and politics.

[1]The kampung commonly translates to ‘village’ in English

4.2 Literature Review: Retirement Migration

Broadly speaking, the literature covering the issue of international retirement migration includes the socioeconomic impact of migrants on the receiving and sending societies, the motivations behind retirees' decision to migrate and more recently, the transnational forms of being which encompass questions of integration, identity construction, policies, eldercare as well as transnational householding. However most of the literature on retirement migration focus on American and European, middle to upper class retired couples or individuals who seek lifestyle changes in exotic destinations; but they do provide useful insight relevant to the Asian context.

McHugh and Mings (1996) study for example, captures the diverse mobility patterns in retirement migration. The example of 'pendulum' movements was given by the authors (ibid, p. 544) to illustrate the implications of constant travelling between localities regarded as home; one's notion of home becomes *geographically elastic* and *ranged*, albeit still within the confines of the United States. While the retired migrants in this study are very much settled in the kampung, they continue to maintain ties with their friends and family in Singapore, even returning for short stays occasionally. In fact, these trips constitute a ritual for the retired migrants too as most of them need to have their visas renewed every 30 days. I posit that the retired migrants too have flexible constructions of home which intersects with a larger imagination of the Malay world. This will be discussed later.

The idea of continuous mobility is also shared by other researchers such as Toyota (2006), Benson and O'Reilly (2009, p. 610) as well as Howard (2006). The consensus among scholars of retirement migration is that it can be seen as adventurous *projects* and an expression of identity and autonomy in ageing. For some retirees, the constant circulatory movement signifies life and health; hence, the continuity of such practice remains indicative of an individual's well-being (Gustafson 2001; Benson and O'Reilly 2009). Such pendulum movement patterns are of course contingent on several factors. The elderly retirees may choose to abandon the pendulum lifestyle, particularly when faced with a decline in health, finances or the death of a spouse. Ultimately, such conditions lead to the individual settling with their children (McHugh and Mings 1996). What is significant about pendulum mobility is that it has led to the establishment of transnational institutions and organizations, which facilitate such peripatetic lifestyles.

Innes (2008) for instance, highlights the role of the British Resident's Association in Malta in setting up information channels and support for potential British retirees intending to move to Malta upon retirement (see also Iglicka 2001). The institutions do not have to be formal, as is often the case in the practices of illegal migration around the world which depends on extensive migrant networks to facilitate movement (Boyd 1989). In the case of Singapore and Johor for instance,

although there is the well-known Johor Singapore Comcare Association[2] (henceforth known as JSCA), the informants in my study are wholly reliant on informal migrant networks to help them with their migration.

The practice of retirement migration and cross-border mobility of the elderly is increasing. Bozic (2006) highlights the high degree of interspersion of family members around the world which calls for a fundamental reconsideration of family relations. Where family literature traditionally assumes proximity, processes of economic globalization, technology and migration have radically altered the family form and function (Lunt 2009). In studies of retirement migration, elder care and eldercare strategies based on the extended household units have been known to operate on transnational levels.

Toyota's (2006) study on Japanese retirees in Southeast Asia is a case in point. It was found that many Japanese elderly are quite reluctant to impose care-giving duties on their daughters-in-law,[3] preferring instead to move to other Asian countries such as Thailand where there are relatively advanced services and infrastructure for the elderly. In a similar vein, where direct physical transfers in the form of everyday care is impossible due to distance, Howard (2006) points out in the case of retired westerners in Thailand that healthcare support can be bought. The implication of such inflows of retired Japanese people in Thailand is quite clear; the Thai government welcomes the well-to-do retirees to spend time there and have in fact initiated certain policies to accommodate this inflow (Toyota 2006). In another study, Toyota and Xiang (2012) found that more creative strategies of securing eldercare are sometimes adopted. It was documented that single Japanese men migrate to Thailand with the intention of finding 'local younger women as wives or companions who could take care of them at a later stage' (ibid, p. 713). When the analysis of transnational family and householding is applied to the case of Singaporean Malays then, the traditional conception of what Li (1989) regards as child to-parent intergenerational transfers during old age is then reconstituted, as children remit monies to their parents in the migrant destination for them to finance healthcare. Johor has seen more world class medical centres develop (Khalik 2010). In fact the bridging of administrative processes between Singapore and Johor in the area of medical services have advanced considerably, with Singaporeans now granted the option to utilize their medisave funds to pay for medical expenses incurred in selected hospitals in Johor.[4] While this opens up avenues for care, it still

[2]I base my evaluation here on the membership numbers for the association and the coverage it has received in the Singapore media. The organization is supported by the governments of both countries. Essentially, it aspires to achieve what the British Resident's Association have done, but for Singaporeans in Johor.

[3]Generally, the Malay elderly too do not impose caregiving duties on their children or explicitly demand care and money. But they do hope that their children would take care of them (Blake 1992).

[4]Medisave could be used in 12 hospitals scattered across West Malaysia. These hospitals fall under the Parkway Holdings and Health Management International organizations which also operate in Singapore (Khalik 2010).

depends on the availability of funds for treatment. Furthermore, hospitals do not necessarily provide day-to-day transfers in the form of aid during activities of daily living and emotional support.

Izuhara and Shibata (2002) study of Japanese retirees in Britain highlights that although distance affects opportunities for family support, it does not necessarily weaken support. 'Intimacy at a distance' (ibid, p. 160) with family in Japan can be achieved due to shorter travelling times, discounted airfares, telephone calls, email and more recently, the use of free video call services such as Skype. While the distance between Singapore and Johor is not as far as that between Japan and Britain, elderly individuals may not be familiar with internet communication. The broadband infrastructure in my research site is virtually non-existent although mobile phone networks work fine.

Retirees who have migrated to the other side of a national border would, therefore, find it convenient to maintain relations with their relatives and friends through the phone for instance. Lunt (2009, p. 249) also pointed out that the children who live just across the border 'reappear' regularly for visits or during strategic times for instance when their parents require medical attention. Such an option is less plausible in cases where retirees stay far away from their children. Distance, however, can be subjective. Traffic at the border crossing (for Singapore and Johor at least) can be quite heavy during peak hours, making even short journeys long. Working adults intending to visit their parents may be discouraged.

The elderly would therefore have to depend on the existing structures within the retirement destination for assistance should they need any. Retired migrants may turn to the government of the migrant destination, formal associations, organizations and institutions that both attend to the elderly and migrant population. In the case of Malaysia, transnational or cross-border institutions and organizations like the JSCA are unfortunately rather underdeveloped. There might be other reasons to avoid contact with formal institutions. The retiree migrants in my research avoid interacting with the local government institutions country because they are essentially engaged in an illegal practice by migrating into housing neighbourhoods meant for poor locals. In such cases, the retired migrants would prefer to turn to neighbours or informal institutions centred on the village organization. I imagine that this would depend on the extent of integration for the immigrant. Cultural similarities and language facilitate access to community level resources and in building close friendships for the retired migrants (O'Reilly 2005; Innes 2008).

4.3 Integration for Retired Migrants

The need to integrate within new communities is less of an issue where there is a well-established support network as in the case of Scandinavian associations for the retired migrants in Spain:

> Although handbooks for Swedish migrants to Spain encourage retirees to learn Spanish and get acquainted with Spanish society, they also point out that migrants can in fact live their everyday lives largely within the Scandinavian communities (Gustafson 2001, p. 374).

The presence of formal organizations like the above in migrant enclaves provide a sense of familiarity but also limits interaction with the local people as explained by O'Reilly's (2005) government report on the integration of British retirees in Costa Del Sol in Spain. Where such retirement infrastructure is inaccessible though, integration and the cultivation of an informal support network can be seen as an important step to ensuring a comfortable retirement. Unfortunately, informal support networks in the form of neighbours and friends do not come easily. Teo et al. (2006, p. 101) in describing institutional and community caregiving practices and policies in Singapore, highlighted that an informant mentioned the need for a more spontaneous form of community support in Singapore through networks as he had experienced while living in Canada. The model of community there was mutual and reciprocal, where people helped each other in different capacities. Such a resource is especially welcome for a retired migrant couple who require help in day-to-day activities when kin/family networks are not available due to distance.

While the available literature has conveniently framed issues of migrant elder-care within formal institutional settings and transnational householding (with the exception of Toyota and Xiang (2012) single Japanese men mentioned earlier), little has been researched on the alternative strategies to secure retirement migration.[5] Retirement migration should not be limited to visible practices. I feel that it is important to focus on the strategies of retirement migrants in accruing care and support networks through informal practices. It reorients the lens on retirement migration, painting the elderly as social actors actively involved in old age projects not just through the act of migration alone but also in the form of migrant integration.

4.4 The Main Cast

This research employs a non-random, purposive sampling to procure informants—Singaporean Malay migrants who have bought property in a particular kampung in the southern state of Johor in Peninsular Malaysia to spend most of their retired years. Despite being retired, I do acknowledge that the retirees may still be drawing some form of monthly income from their children, through pension money from the rental of properties they own in Singapore or Malaysia. Being 'retired' is a significant change in status and signals the beginning of a new project.

[5]This is also one of the reasons why I have avoided a more extensive discussion of transnationalism. While I do acknowledge that it is a useful concept, I feel that it often distracts from the practices of migrant integration within the new migrant locality, an important feature of this paper.

As explained earlier, while most retired migrants in Johor are protected by the JSCA and the Johor government, there are those who are not. These are Singaporeans who have bought property by proxy. What this means is that the retired migrants purchased property under a local's name instead of theirs. This is because being foreigners they are not allowed to own cheap property such as that in my field site, Kampung Makmur. While not uncommon, such a practice effectively makes them illegal settlers. My queries in three low-cost housing kampungs similar to Kampung Makmur reveal that at least a tenth of their total number of households consist of Singaporean retirees, all of them Malay. The reason why these retired Singaporeans have taken risks to buy and live in these illegal houses instead of buying those which are deemed legal by the Malaysian government is simply because they cannot afford to own the latter. This group is especially vulnerable because they do not have access to any form of recourse except through the kampung administration, should any problems arise. The other issue concerns their capability to lead their lives in the kampung as their physical health (according to the Activities of Daily Living scale) deteriorates. While the distance for some forms of intergenerational transfer can be mitigated with the aid of technology, physical transfers in the form of care and help on a daily basis still require close proximity. This is where the strategies of integration for the retired migrants are relevant to understanding their activities.

The main questions directed to the retired migrants pertain to issues such as mobility patterns, integration in the kampung as well as intergenerational transfers. I will also enquire about the possible presence and usage of elder care institutions (in the form of specialist clinics or hospital facilities) located in the vicinity. I also felt that it was important to establish the medical history of my elderly informants. Those who are in need of regular medication and treatment would obviously have different patterns of expenditure and mobility. With the exception of Salmah and Ramlah, both of whom have had mild episodes of heart attack in the past 10 years, the rest of my informants do not have a history of serious illnesses. Additionally, only Siti and Omar have not sold their flat back in Singapore. A detailed profile of my informants is represented in Fig. 4.1.

Other than the Singaporean informants, I also interviewed and talked to as many kampung inhabitants as I could. This was important because while the elderly Singaporeans were well integrated, they were only able to provide sketchy details describing the structure and organization of the kampung. Speaking to the various local kampung people also allowed me to triangulate the data, particularly with regard to integration practices and participation in community activities in the kampung.

Household	Name	Age (age retired)	Most Recent Occupation	Approximate Monthly Household Income in SGD (source)	Approximate Monthly Household Expenditure in SGD	Total approximate retirement savings in SGD	Investments and Returns in SGD
1	Salmah	78 (59)	Cook	150 (children)	<150	<1000	NA
	Hashim	87 (55)	Floor Manager				
2	Siti	65 (NA)	Housewife	300 (children and flat rental)	<100	<3000	3 room flat Singapore approximately 350,000
	Omar	67 (54)	Office Administrator				
3	Hajar	64 (NA)	Housewife	100 (children)	<100	<5000	NA
	Kasim	70 (60)	Taxi Driver				
4	Wahidah	80 (NA)	Housewife	150 (children)	<100	<1500	NA
	Norman	82 (60)	Security Officer				
5	Khadijah	62 (NA)	Housewife	400 (children and pension fund)	<100	<6000	NA
	Ramli	66 (56)	Postman				
6	Halimah	64 (42)	Security Officer	100 (children)	<50	<5000	NA
	Yusuf	70 (55)	Security Officer				
7	Saodah	63 (NA)	Housewife	150 (children)	<100	<3000	NA
	Ismail	72 (52)	Taxi Driver				
8	Ramlah	75 (NA)	Housewife	200 (children)	<100	<1000	NA
	Kamal	77 (55)	Security Officer				
9	Idah	65 (NA)	Housewife	100 (children)	<100	<5000	NA
	Rosli	76 (60)	Technician				
10	Timah	68 (NA)	Housewife	100 (children)	<50	<4000	NA
	NA	-					

Fig. 4.1 Profile of informants

4.5 How We Do It

I began fieldwork in the form of participant observations in May 2012 and started my interviews around the end of July 2012. Participant observation sessions occurred in many situations and contexts in the kampung. I was encouraged by my key informants to attend kampung events and mingle with the people. These events were usually formal in the sense that they were organized and structured. They were religious classes, religious commemorations kampung meetings, celebratory gatherings during festive occasions and weddings. I was also told to hang out at the

informal spaces such as the kampung cafe, also known as the warung and the gossip or bersembang sessions that were usually held in different houses.

My entry to all of these spaces was facilitated by some of my key informants. This facilitated a more seamless initiation to the research contexts and I managed to avoid awkward introductions. But it was also potentially limiting because the contacts established mostly centred around the key informants' social networks and spaces. In order to compensate for this, I took the initiative to talk to other people in the kampung during my morning and afternoon walks and managed to source out quite a number of local and Singaporean kampung residents to talk to. I tried to talk to as many people as possible, trying to understand and make sense of events and activities in the kampung. Naturally, some of the locals were quite reserved initially, having never encountered a researcher before. Most opened up considerably later on.

Initially, the conversations were usually unstructured, unhurried and sometimes free-flowing. They cover a wide range of topics too, prompting 'intimate familiarity' with the informants as well as the research site (Lofland 1978, p. 8). I believe this is important in order for me to be able to appreciate the kampung context through the constructed life world of the local and Singaporeans alike. Through conversations with these individuals, I was given a rich background of the history of the kampung covering significant events and people as well as its organizational structure. I have also participated in the different activities, both formal and informal, held in the kampung. I recorded details of the processes and conversations discreetly, usually in shorthand on a piece of paper, trying as much as possible to be inconspicuous. I would then convert the short notes into longer versions upon reaching a safe space.

As mentioned earlier, the in depth interview was also utilized. The interviews conducted were semi-structured in nature, leaning towards a 'conversation with a purpose' (Webb and Webb 1932, p. 130). The interview questions centred around motivations for migration, retirement planning, transborder movement, intergenerational relations, kampung relations and kampung activities. The number of interviewees varied. Most of the time, it was a one-on-one interview. But there were a few couple and group interview sessions. The latter was sometimes unavoidable due to the practice of visiting, which meant that the interviewee might be joined by guests.

Sometimes, the female informants were hesitant to be interviewed alone. So they were joined by their husband or other women. I had a set of questions ready, but was ready to explore the topics deemed interesting or possibly relevant to the research. The interviews lasted an average of 1 hour, all of them recorded and duly transcribed. The transcribed notes were then put through a preliminary or grounded coding where the interview data are firstly arranged under themes I identified to be relevant and later regrouped into larger themes. The resultant themes—motivations, networks and practice—are carefully analyzed and checked against a theoretical framework I felt to be relevant to the study—social capital.

4.6 Motivations for Retirement Migration

For a retired couple without a steady source of income, one of the most important considerations other than health would be financial sustainability. With whatever savings the retired couple has saved plus other forms of expected income, the couple would have to consider how far their savings will last. Singaporean retirees would be able to withdraw a portion of their Central Provident Funds (hereafter known as CPF) when they reach the age of 55, provided they fulfil certain requirements.[6]

None of the retirees in this study received monthly CPF hand-outs and only one of the households received pension. On average, the households have combined CPF balance of less than $10,000, way below the minimum sum of $139,000 recommended by the government. Because it is too low, they do not qualify for the new CPF LIFE scheme.[7]

While alarming, this situation is not at all surprising since Blake (1992) and Li (1989) had portended in their respective studies that a large proportion of the present cohort of elderly Malays, especially those above 65 like the retirees in Kampung Makmur, will not receive any form of monthly benefits upon retirement. When asked if they received some form of monthly allowance from their children though, all of my informants expressed that they did. The amounts do not seem to be much but the retirees explained that they were contented with whatever amount of money they got since they did not need much anyway.

When asked if their children should provide them consistent economic transfer, the informants generally replied that children should only help if they can. As one informant had expressed, the elderly retirees did not expect monetary allowances from their children because they knew that their children had their own families to take care of. Such a response is similar to those elicited by Blake (1992) in her study of the elderly in the Malay community.

I explained earlier that with the exception of one couple, the rest of my informants had sold their flats in Singapore. Having gained from their only form of investment in Singapore, most of my informants decided that it would be better to move to Malaysia to stretch their retirement dollar. Singapore's currency has always been strong compared to Malaysia. Furthermore, the cost of living in Malaysia too continues to be low compared to Singapore. On average, the couples spend less than RM100 a month. Even the homes in Kampung Makmur were very cheap.

[6]The CPF is basically a compulsory savings system for Singaporeans, where a fixed percentage of one's monthly salary is channelled into an account that can be used to purchase Housing Development Board Flats, pay for any medical expenses incurred or fund their children's university education. As of June 2013, a person who has reached the age of 55 will be able to withdraw whatever amount that is excess of the required minimum which is $139,000 in the ordinary account and $38,500 in the medisave account.

[7]To qualify for the CPF LIFE scheme, you have to have at least $40,000 in your retirement account when you are 55 or at least $60,000 when you are in your draw down age. CPF LIFE is essentially an extension of the minimum sum scheme guaranteeing monthly hand-outs.

For as little as RM5000, one could get an empty lot of property. For an additional RM30,000, one would be able to get a relatively large house built. For many of my informants, this was an extremely attractive proposition. The costs of the house, low cost of living and monthly arrears were not the only factors which pushed them to Johor in the search for a home.

The informants also expressed that they would prefer to own their homes instead of staying with their children. In a group interview session, Siti, Omar, Hajar and Kasim explained that it can be a little awkward living with their children because it seemed like they were 'interrupting' their families and their activities. In their own homes, the retirees expressed that they would have the freedom to do anything they want. My informants also revealed that grandchildren can be encumbrance:

> Sometimes I would want to go to the mosque with my wife or maybe spend time outside you know, while we are still able to. With grandchildren, it is difficult. Furthermore, in our own house, we can invite friends and conduct gatherings without our children being uncomfortable (Ismail).

While scholars such as Blake (1992), Li (1989) and more recently Quah (2008) sketched a portrait of a three generation family with the elderly playing an important role in socializing the young, my informants do not seem to think so. A possible explanation for this is that the current crop of elderly might have been influenced by the idea of active ageing promoted by the Singapore government. This is however a broad generalization and I am inclined to believe that one's trajectory in ageing is shaped by a myriad of factors (such as children's dependency on their elderly parents to care for their children). Some of the informants do take care of their grandchildren, especially when they return to Singapore and stay with their children. However, they emphasized that such arrangements were mostly temporary and it was important that they have their own spaces and activities to return to.

Additionally, as some of the informants explained, they did not like having to rotate between their children's homes and preferred to settle comfortably in one place. Timah, gg in particular, explained that while her children may perceive such a practice to be fair, it made her feel unsettled. She would very much prefer to settle in one place and have her children visit her.

The elderly retirees also mentioned that having a space such as a garden compound with plants provides activity which the retired migrants find very fulfilling:

> In the kampung, you can do gardening. In Singapore, you can't because well you have limited space in HDB flats. Here I have rambutan and jackfruit trees. When the time comes, I pluck the trees and enjoy the fruits with neighbours and friends. Furthermore, it keeps us active and makes us sweat (Hashim).

I observed that almost all of the retirees had some kind of garden in their compound. The involvement with gardening is not restricted to a particular gender, although it is usually the men who are involved with more physical work. Some who are not physically fit do not work as much on their gardens, calling instead for help from more able neighbours to clear the weeds and harvest the produce.

In return, they would pay a small fee or give some of the fruits and vegetables from the garden to the helper.

I was curious to know whether my informants had frequented the spaces dedicated to the elderly retirees in Singapore such as the old folk's corner and the activity centres in their estates. As it turned out, none of them went to any of the aforementioned places. They explained that they were not able to relate to activities such as board games, line dancing and karaoke that were organized. The elderly men explained that they preferred to sit at the coffee shop and interact with the neighbours in personal estate-based peer or religious groups. This information corroborates Peggy Teo's study (1997b, p. 430) on elderly recreational spaces in Singapore, where it was found that there was little participation in state-sponsored public spaces and even less coming from the minorities.

There are no state demarcated spaces for the elderly in Kampung Makmur. But the centre for activity for the elderly and the rest of the kampung for that matter is clearly the *surau*, a small mosque which hosts religious as well as non-religious community activities like meetings and banquets. With the exception of a few of the older retirees who are less mobile, my Singaporean informants were very involved in the kampung activities. They explained that living in a kampung is much better because of this kampung spirit, based on close social interaction and *gotong royong*[8] which is missing in Singapore.

Such a statement is not unwarranted. Respondents from other studies such as that of Teo et al. (2006, p. 101) and notable Singaporean politicians such as former PM Goh Chok Tong have called for a revival of the kampung spirit in the context of modern Singapore (Teo 2011).[9] Yet, it is still crucial to recognize the importance of space in relation to the conception of independence and activity as well as how the kampung environment seems to provide what my informants feel to be absent in the Singapore context. In engaging with the community, the informants are also building support networks which act as a resource for mutual help between people (Teo et al. 2006).

4.7 Networks in Retirement Migration

Massey et al. (1999) explains that the economic and psychological cost for the immigrant is usually cushioned by the presence of a migrant settlement in the receiving society. Having people whom potential migrants can relate to culturally helps in the adjustment process and may even influence the decision of the would-be migrant (Harbison 1981). Researchers of migration in the Asia Pacific

[8]*Gotong Royong* is the act of mutual assistance and is an important concept in the lives of kampung people. An example of *gotong royong* would be the collective effort of the kampung people in constructing a house.

[9]We may criticize the latter for instrumentalizing kampung to support the state's anti-welfare agenda.

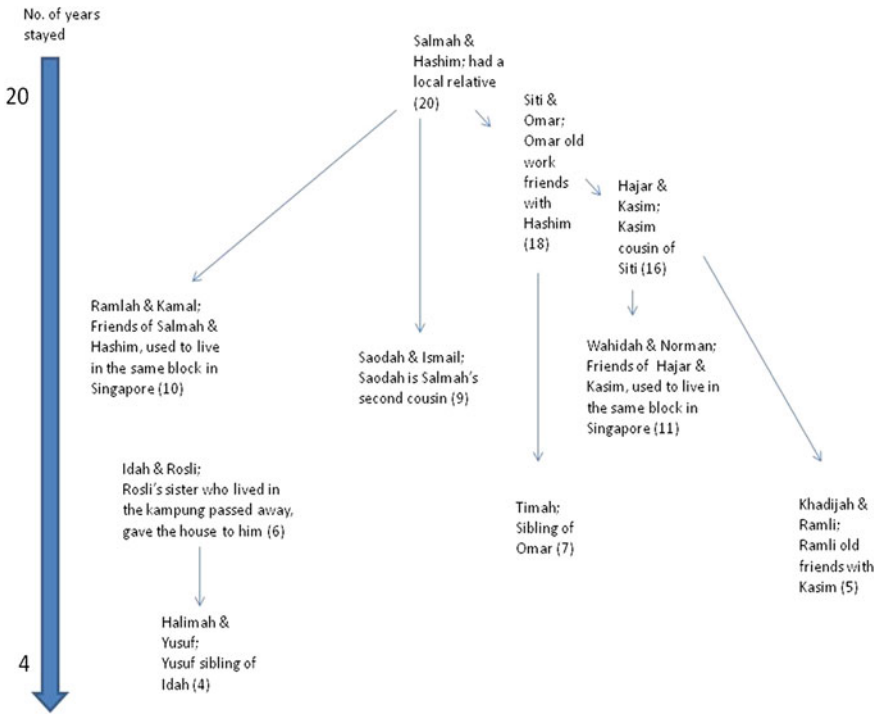

Fig. 4.2 The migrant network in Kampung Makmur

have observed migrant networks to be ubiquitous in the region, to the extent that 'many movers in Asia operate in an environment of near total certainty' (Massey et al. 1999, p. 186). Even if it does not develop in what Pieke (1997) calls a chain migration, a small population of migrants still acts as conduits of information and nodes for family and friends, through which a retirement project can begin. A migrant network which is composed of family and friends provide some kind of assurance to the potential migrants. The following illustration (Fig. 4.2) shows the extent of connectedness amongst the Singaporeans in Kampung Makmur.

These networks do not just facilitate migration. Because the networks evolved out of family and friends, they also transmit certain cultural values and norms which influence migration (Boyd 1989). What I mean by this is essentially the development of a set of rationalizations, principles and ideas for migration. For example, a significant group of poor Bangladeshi men see migration as *rites de passage* in the transition to adulthood (Kuan 2010, p. 6). In some parts of Indonesia too, to migrate or *merantau* in search of wealth is expected of men upon reaching a certain age (Lindquist 2009).

In this study, the development of migration norms is initiated through interaction between retired migrants and their friends as well as family members back home. One good example to illustrate this process would be through the perception of

distance between Johor and Singapore. Kassim explained that initially, he had thought that the idea of having to travel between Singapore and Johor to be ridiculous because of the distance. But having encountered close friends who travelled between Singapore and Johor quite regularly, he eventually accepted that the distance is not as far as it seems.

4.8 The Locals in Migration

Retirement migration also benefits the local kampung inhabitants. The presence of elderly, Singaporean migrants in Kampung Makmur has led to the demand for certain services which some locals have capitalized. Transport for the elderly population is the main platform servicing their pendulum lifestyles. In Kampung Makmur, there are two people who provide transport services between Singapore and Johor to the migrants. The two men, Jamil and Ariffin have their own multi-purpose vehicles and are often employed by the Singaporean elderly. Ferrying the migrants across the border has become their main source of income. Business is pretty brisk and they get at least one call per week. The charges are standard—RM50 per person per trip. So, one trip to Singapore would usually yield RM100 from an elderly couple.

Jamil and Ariffin explained that sometimes the Singaporean retirees make trips to other parts of Malaysia. Then the charges would vary depending on the distance and time. On short 2 day 1 night trip to Negeri Sembilan from Kampung Makmur, Salmah said that they (with her husband) spent close to RM250. They also paid for the petrol and Ariffin's meals. I had followed some of the retirees on short trips to Batu Pahat and Kota Tinggi in the northern part of Johor. I observed that apart from driving the elderly around, Ariffin also entertained the elderly Singaporeans and supported them when they required help.

Some of the other services that the elderly often require are tending to the gardens as well as the general cleaning of the compound. Most of the elderly retirees have large houses but they do not have the strength to clean all of it themselves. I noticed that the elderly retirees would often call Mawar, an unemployed local lady whose husband Jo, worked at one of the timber mills in the industrial area.

For this particular couple, the elderly retirees provide an alternative source of income. The elderly retirees expressed that they are sympathetic to the plight of kampung people like Mawar and Jo. The couple has a long-standing relationship with two of the longest staying Singaporean households in the kampung, Salmah-Hashim and Siti-Omar. In separate interviews, Salmah and Siti explained that because they have known Mawar and Jo for so long, it was only appropriate that they helped Mawar and Jo, however, they can. Mawar and Jo are not the only poor couple who receive assistance from the Singaporean migrants. There are three other couples who I observed have received consistent financial assistance by other Singaporean migrants too.

The relationship between the retired migrants and the poor people in the kampung is not lost on other members of the kampung. Tok Din, the village head explains that a significant portion of the kampung people here is merely scraping by with what little they earn. That is why they cannot possibly provide any form of financial help to people like Mawar and Jo. But the retired migrants have been kind enough to provide financial assistance to the poorer couples and he found this to be exemplary. The process of helping and aiding each other in times of need is especially interesting in the context of the kampung with retired migrants because it unearths the kampung dynamics, the migrant experience and the life of the elderly.

4.9 To *Kenal*[10] Everyone

The working of the property sector in Kampung Makmur is organized. The village head and his team of kampung administrators keep track of all the property transactions in the kampung. Permission to build a house is granted fairly easily. Interested buyers meet the village head and express their intention to buy the house located on a lot (all of which are approximately the same size), after which they would be given a quotation.

However, the process of buying a house for Singaporeans is slightly different. Because foreigners are not allowed to own property in Kampung Makmur, much has to be done to get around these legal restrictions. For instance, a Singaporean buyer has to use the name of a Malaysian relative if they do have anyone willing to help. Only four of the retired Singaporean households I interviewed followed this route. Otherwise, the village head would arrange for the house to be bought using the name of a fellow kampung resident who does not have his or her name on a land title (usually someone's wife).

Technically then, the Singaporean retirees do not own the houses even if they have paid tens of thousands of ringgit for it. I found this to be unsettling; particularly because of the legal conundrum that could arise when such an arrangement unravels. For one, if the person whose name was on the land title decides to claim the property for whatever reason,[11] the Singaporean retirees living there would not be able to turn to any form of legal recourse.[12]

[10]The term kenal which translates to 'know' implies familiarity and ties (strong or weak) with the other party.

[11]I had checked with the locals and Singaporeans in Kampung Makmur and this has never happened before.

[12]Another forseeable problem was that if the Singaporean owners passed away, their children would not be able to claim the property as inheritance. The secretary general of the JSCA expressed concern at such risky dealings. He explained that in such scenarios, even sanctioned institutions like the JSCA would not be able to render any form of aid to the affected simply because the prior arrangements are illegal.

Quite remarkably though, while I struggled to comprehend the precarious nature of such an agreement, my Singaporean informants were not at all concerned:

> What do we have to worry about here? Don't worry. We *kenal* the person whose name my house is registered to. In fact, we drink coffee together! (Hashim).

This sense of assuredness is not derived from 'knowing' the person or the village head's endorsement of that particular individual. Rather, such an astounding sense of trust is borne out of a particular social organization I shall expound in the coming section.

4.10 Social Capital in the Kampung

James Coleman's (1988) brief description of the New York wholesale diamond scene in his treatise of 'social capital' comes to mind when analyzing such a situation in the kampung:

> In a process of negotiating a sale, a merchant will hand over to another merchant a bag of stones for the latter to examine in private at his leisure, with no formal insurance that the latter will not substitute one or more inferior stones or a paste replica. The merchandise maybe worth thousands or hundreds of thousands of dollars … If any member of this community defected through substituting other stones or through stealing stones in his temporary possession, he would lose family, religious and community ties (Coleman 1988, pp. S98–S99).

A key feature which contributes to such trust is familiarity within a closed community. In the case of the wholesale diamond market for instance, Coleman (1988) reveals that they were formed by Jewish people with a high degree of intermarriage, who live in the same area in Brooklyn, and go to the same synagogue. Transgression is often met with informal social sanctions; one may stand to lose ties and trust. Hence, with the disincentives laid clearly, deviation from the rules and norms are rare. The kampung life shares these characteristics too. This was revealed to me in one of the interview sessions at Hashim's house:

> Here in the kampung, everyone *kenal* each other (a motorcycle passes by and the rider waves at us). Ah you see the person who just passed by? That's Maaruf. He lives near the end of the kampung. I don't quite remember the number but I can show you which one it is (Salmah).

In the context of the kampung, to *kenal* someone does not necessarily equate to strong ties. The strength of relations depends on a combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding) and the reciprocal services which characterize the tie (Granovetter 1973, p. 1361). The more intense one's commitment to the other based on these factors, the greater the strength of the tie. Even in the context of a small kampung with only one hundred households, generally people do not maintain strong ties with everyone; only a small group of

people, usually their cliques.[13] This applies to the Singaporean retirees too. It is here that I shall bring in the concept of social capital as a useful concept to organize the data.

There has been inexhaustible discussions on the concept of social capital since it was thrust into political discourse by Robert Putnam's seminal works—*Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (1993) and *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (2000). For Putnam (1993, p. 167), social capital refers to 'features of social organization such as trust, norms and networks' that instils and facilitates trust and cooperation between individuals, providing a platform for positive collective action. This conception of social capital is not dissimilar to Coleman's (1988) treatment of social capital, in which he elaborates on the 'obligations, information channels and social norms, all of which relate to some aspect of the structure and facilitates certain actions of actors within a structure' (ibid, p. S98). Coleman (1988) too explains social capital to inhere in the *structure of relations* (horizontal) between and among actors, creating norms of trust and reciprocity.[14] Putnam (1993) however emphasizes the importance of *civic participation* in formal organizations. This form of participation, Putnam (1993, 2000) believes, develops the metaphorical glue holding society together while providing readily accessible 'public goods' in many forms[15] (Cannuscio et al. 2003, p. 395). The expectation based on his studies of civic participation in Italy is that this very model of society inculcates receptivity towards diversity, habits of cooperation, social solidarity, public spiritedness and mutual trust, hence contributing to highly desirable policy goals such as lower crime rates and better health in general (Coalter 2008).

In the context of the kampung, the intangible 'public good' for the retired migrants raised earlier is the assuredness and trust based on the nexus of relations. This provides assurance for those who do not own the houses under the proxy home ownership mechanism. Hence, while this practice might seem a precarious deal for the retired migrants to the uninitiated observer, as long as the retired migrants remain embedded within the extensive kampung networks and work to maintain relationships in the kampung, they are well cared for by the kampung people and effectively, organization.[16]

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[13]There are other cliques such as the coffee shop clique and the administrative functionaries clique formed around the *village head*. The latter also form the backbone of the kampung organization or *jawatankuasa*.

[14]Failure to adhere to these norms would invite sanctions (as I had alluded to in the vignette detailing the relations of Jewish diamond traders), usually in the form of exclusion from group relations, cutting off any form of resource the relations may have potentially provided.

[15]Shamsul's (1991) study also reports the significance of civic participation in the kampung context, although he was just as intent to illustrate how involvement in formal associations in the kampung usually had to do with obtaining political patronage within the larger framework of the highly politicized administrative kampung.

[16]My Singaporean informants explained that in all their years of staying and owning a house in the kampung, they have never had a problem where they had to relinquish their houses, neither have they ever heard of such a problem affecting other Singaporeans in the kampung.

Scholars such as Baum (1999) have raised criticisms of Putnam's (1993) earlier work, arguing that it over-romanticizes the *gemeinschaft* and assumes that close knit communities are necessarily healthy. On the contrary, 'it is possible that they can be exclusionary and distrustful of outsiders, and may not be healthy for those who are not part of them or those within them who disagree with the majority' (Baum 1999, p. 2). This inadvertent feature of social capital, while beneficial in the sense that it provides of community and solidarity in the kampung, also imposes constraints on individuals.

In his later study, Putnam (2000) addressed such criticisms by refining his analysis with a distinction between bridging and bonding social capital. He explains how bridging social capital is preferred to bonding social capital because the former which is based on relationships between diverse individuals has the potential to generate widespread benefits for the larger community. Bonding social capital derived from closed relationship circles such as the family has limited impact on the larger community although it can be useful to the individual. This idea of accruing varied forms of benefits from different forms of relationships though is not exactly new as it has been covered by Granovetter (1973) with his instructive coverage of strong and weak ties. These two types of relationships are not mutually exclusive and can work simultaneously as I shall illustrate in the case of the retired migrants in Kampung Makmur.

Compared to Putnam's (1993, 2000) works, Bourdieu's (2001) ideas of social capital do not focus so much on interrelations within the community and its benefits. Bourdieu (2001) utilizes the theoretical constructs of habitus, field and capital to offer a nuanced understanding of how social, economic and cultural capital converge to shape relations between the structure and the individual. For Bourdieu (2001), a type of capital only assumes value in a specific field. The idea of a field is especially crucial in the context of migration studies; what qualifies as capital, be it money, skills or knowledge in Singapore might have been rendered invalid in a new context such as Kampung Makmur.

In this new field, however, the retired migrants have to cultivate and continue to maintain relationships. This is done in various ways but all of which with one end in mind: to be accepted as fully fledged kampung residents who would then be able to tap onto the resources in the kampung. Some of the more essential resources that can be gotten in the context of the kampung are emotional and physical transfers. This is why elderly retired migrants still have to engage in *social capital projects* to actualize the support and transfers in the community.[17] The 'mere presence of a tie between two people does not equate with the provision of support' (Walker et al. 1993, p. 72). In order to secure social capital in the kampung, economic and cultural

[17]It is important to note here that social capital does not equate to resource (1998). Rather, social capital has the possibility of granting resource. A person may have very extensive networks compared to another but he might not get access of say a study loan compared to the student who has lesser networks but more avenues in the networks to get a study loan. Of course what constitutes as resource or the value of a particular resource is very subjective. This is linked to my discussion on the concept of the field by Bourdieu (2001).

capital come into play and that is where we may observe differences between the retired migrants.

Living in the kampung, therefore, entails the acceptance of a binding contract of social capital—one invests in relationships in the kampung in exchange for goods and services both tangible and intangible. However, these exchanges should not be reduced to mere economic transactions. As much as it is based on rational norms of reciprocity, there are unique traits which distinguish the system of social capital from a purely economic exchange system. Portes (1998) explains that unlike the market exchange system

> …the currency with which obligations are repaid may be different from that with which they were incurred in the first place and may be as intangible as the granting of approval or allegiance. Second, the timing of the repayment is unspecified. Indeed, if a schedule of repayments exists, the transaction is more appropriately defined as market exchange than as one mediated by social capital (ibid, p. 7).

When a person in the kampung invests in a relationship through providing a service or material goods for example, they do not expect an immediate return of any sort, nor do they expect the return to be of the same currency. However, the return made has to fit the frame of the field. There may be a wide spectrum of what constitutes acceptable currency but what constitutes as desirable currency is narrower. For example, the giving of food is perceived as acceptable because it forms part of the kampung tradition. What is desired is however quite different. For some of the kampung folk, the desired currency is money. For the elderly migrants, physical and emotional transfers rank highest in the hierarchy of currencies. This is not expected immediately but in time when they need help. The temporal flexibility is best expressed in the Malay saying I have translated:

> I will help you today. Who knows, in the future, it might be you who would be helping me.

Here is another Malay term which is usually evoked in characterizing transactions and exchanges in the kampung. *Berkira* means being very calculative and for the kampung folk at least, one should not be very calculative in their everyday dealings with others. There have been instances where resources are provided without any expectation of return. In such cases, religion and culture plays an important role in informing individuals of their duties to help those who need help, especially one's elders as explained by many of the kampung people. In the Malay culture, the elderly are regarded as *barakah* or blessings in the household (Blake 1992). In fact, helping people in general lends well to one's reputation in the kampung, not to mention one's spiritual well-being. In such transactions, culture and religion is often evoked as principles guiding exchange and transfer. The rational principle in social capital is therefore complemented by other norms such as culture and religion which mediate the system of exchange, especially when it involves the elderly in the kampung.

4.11 Turning Relations into Actions

Based on the exposition above, I posit that one of the ways in which the retired migrants negotiate their everyday lives and secure emotional and physical transfers is through social capital projects—investments in relations and ties, mostly strong ties, with the expectation of reciprocal action. For elderly couples, physical and emotional transfers are especially important, some of the examples of emotional and physical transfers in the kampung can be seen in Table 4.1.

Social capital projects undertaken by the Singaporeans activate the network of relations and trust in the kampung, providing them with a wide range of resources. This is especially important in the absence of their children. Bersembang, visits and other activities in the kampung offer the retired migrants a sense of emotional fulfilment through companionship for instance. In most cases, physical transfers are provided on an everyday basis (such as the activities shown above), usually by individuals the elderly are very close to. If the elderly are not able to travel to the kampung mosque for instance, the other kampung people would pick them up from their houses on cars or motorbikes and send them over. What is unique about this is the spontaneity of such processes. Quite a few times, while I was walking past the houses of Saodah and Salmah, I observed that anyone who passed by offered to send them to the mosque even if they were not going to the mosque themselves.

In cases of emergency too, the neighbours would volunteer to send the elderly migrants to the hospital or the nearest clinic. There was one instance when Hashim was seriously ill. And his wife Salmah, aged 78, was not able to attend to him. It was Mawar, Jo and Tipah, a group of locals who came over to help Hashim. Salmah told me that Hashim fell in the toilet and he was very weak. Mawar and Jo helped carry him and cleaned him up. Tipah then drove him to the nearest clinic to obtain medical treatment. The other kampung people also came over to visit the couple, providing advice and some traditional remedies. Another time, Omar had a small accident while on his motorcycle and fell into a ditch near the entrance of the kampung. Some concerned locals who happened to be passing by immediately drove him to the nearest clinic and even paid for his medical expenses because he had lost his wallet in the accident. While I visited him, Tok Din the kampung head and some other kampung men had dropped by to visit Omar before they went to the surau.

Campbell and Lee's (1992) quantitative study of personal neighbour networks for the American elderly showed that it is the 'neighbours who become a source of emotional and instrumental support …' where children are not in close proximity

Table 4.1 Examples of transfers

Physical transfers (kampung people to retired migrants)	Shopping, laundry, compound cleaning, repair jobs (kampung houses are not very resilient or durable), transport, care during times of illness (bathing, massaging, sending to hospital)
Emotional transfers (kampung people to retired migrants)	Regular interaction, close friends visiting daily, activities at the *surau* or outside of it, phone calls

(ibid, p. 1081). Further to this, the Campbell and Lee (1992) also showed that the reliance on neighbours increase in the absence of extra-neighbourhood support (for example formal welfare organizations). This is very much the case for the Singaporean retired migrants in the kampung who are not supported by the Malaysian state or the JSCA transborder organization. Hence, the kampung neighbours, especially those from the cliques with whom the retired migrants have strong ties with, assume a central role in the everyday life of the elderly.

However, trust and ties require careful cultivation and this is achieved through constant socializing in the kampung context. Most of the socializing activities undertaken by the women in my research strongly correlate to their multiple roles. There seems to be a convergence between leisure activity, reproductive roles and social capital projects undertaken as migrants. This can be corroborated with Teo's (1997a) study of elderly women in Singapore in which she explained that many of the leisure activities engaged are '… extensions of the reproductive roles that they play' (ibid, p. 660). Teo (1997a) also goes on to elaborate that because of this, the elderly woman is often spatially bound, with her options for leisure having to correspond to her primary identity as a caregiver and/or household manager. Indeed, since grocery shopping, gossiping and cooking are some of the main leisure activities for the women in the kampung, their spaces are confined to the kampung too with the exception of occasional trips to the town centres outside of the kampung. The retired Singaporean men, especially those with motorcycles, venture out of the kampung more frequently.

Gossiping or *bersembang* occurs in selected houses. These are the houses belonging to those most senior members in their cliques. The bersembang sessions are usually exclusively attended by women, both local and Singaporean. The local men (at least those who do not work anyway) do not usually bersembang, preferring to sit at the coffee shops from early morning to noon instead. But the Singaporean men do *bersembang*. They claim that they do not frequent the coffee shops because the men who usually sit there discuss work and politics, which are of no interest to the Singaporean retirees. During *bersembang*, individuals usually exchange stories and news about the kampung. But more often than not, the conversations sometimes spiral into gossips. Gluckman (1963, p. 313) points out that 'gossipship', the rules and norms in gossip, work in such a way that it defines a group

> The right to gossip about certain people is a privilege which is only extended to a person when he or she is accepted as a member of a group or set (Ibid).

Most of the time, the groups would gossip about the people considered to be on the periphery of kampung life. This ranged from those who do not attend the kampung events or mingle around with the neighbours, suspicious characters and newcomers. Gossiping about the social pariahs in the kampung constitutes an everyday practice for boundary maintenance, through which the identity of the kampung folk becomes reinforced. This is especially important for the Singaporean retirees who alternate between homes in approximately 2 week duration.

Cooking is usually done en masse and corresponds with kampung events like the potluck sessions during weekly religious classes and Thursday night prayer

recitation sessions. The Singaporean informants cook for the events quite regularly because they are quite free and still able. Saodah for instance, makes kuih for the *surau*[18] almost every week. She explains that she enjoys doing it although she requires more help now since she is not as mobile as she used to be. Others like Salmah and Hajar who do not cook for the events (because they are too old) contribute in other ways such as helping to buy tea or sponsoring the events financially.

As a result of such generous contributions, kampung people who visit the mosque weekly are never short of food. The Singaporean men are also involved in the preparations, helping to put up the tents, arranging the chairs and tables as well as cleaning the *surau* compound where the events are usually held. The Singaporean retirees, despite being old, do help out slightly in the preparatory work although as one of them said, it was only to *tunjuk muka*[19] in showing support and participation.

To be seen as participating is very important in the kampung. Participating raises the profile of the retired migrants in the kampung by making them more visible in the communal sphere. Those who do not participate in kampung events are marginalized. The story of the barber is often brought up when individuals wish to highlight the consequences of non-participation. In the month of July while I was conducting research in the kampung, I learnt that a local man in the kampung had passed away in the morning. He had never ever attended a single kampung event despite having lived there for 7 years. He seldom spoke to his neighbours too.[20] His wife was equally reserved. When he passed away, nobody except the village head and three of his relatives went to visit him.[21]

At this juncture, there are two observations that I wish to discuss. First, it is evident that participation and contribution on the part of the migrants signal an ongoing commitment to maintain the social relations and hence networks in the kampung. In doing so, the retired migrants are able to continue tapping into social capital as a resource. This relationship is beneficial but also constraining in the way that it imposes a certain lifestyle on those living in the kampung.

Social networks, as Berkman and Seeman's (1988) study claim, can also be a source of strain especially for old retired migrants who may no longer have the physical ability to participate regularly or do not wish to adopt the dominant kampung lifestyle. Pohjola (1991, p. 437) extends this notion of dependency trap

[18]A smaller version of the Muslim mosque, usually in villages.

[19]Literally translates to show face, meaning to show up and be present at an event.

[20]To put things into perspective, even the supposed kampung youth delinquents attended the events at the surau, although they did make their way off with the surau donation box.

[21]Salmah and Tipah explained that usually, when someone passes away in the kampung, at least half of the kampung would make an effort to attend the funeral. This was seen as a very important gesture to my informants because first, it is believed that the more people attending one's funeral, the more people who would pray for the departed. Second, having many people at your funeral is also indicative of the amount of respect the deceased is accorded in the village, a form of symbolic capital for a particular family or household.

for migrants, explaining it to be an unintended effect of the migrant network, which while providing support and security, also determines the life trajectory of the individuals in the migrant destination. While participating in the kampung events allows for the gradual accumulation of social capital which aids ageing, it is at the expense of their autonomy.[22] Yet it is a trade off that the retired migrants readily live with.

Another observation concerns the activities and the people who participate in these activities. Building on Teo's (1997a) thesis which posits that leisure activities for elderly women are very much attached to their gender roles, I posit that for the female migrants in Kampung Makmur, there is a convergence between leisure activity, reproductive roles as well as social capital projects. For one, I have explained how participation in activities like shopping, cooking and *bersembang*, all of which constitute social capital projects are very much gender based both in form and the spaces in which they are executed. Hence, women are more active in their undertaking of social capital projects compared to the men. The reason for this is that the kampung spaces in which the retired men are expected to interact such as the *surau* and the coffee shops are also 'political spaces' in the sense that most of what is discussed concern kampung and national politics, topics which are strictly off limits to non-locals. Hence where social capital projects are concerned, it is the womenfolk who are instrumental in the cultivating of resources in the kampung.

4.12 Conclusion

I had intended to examine how a group of Singaporean Malay elderly who have migrated to Johor source for elder care and transfers at the everyday level where their children are not around. To recap, while material transfers such as financial contributions can be mitigated through remittance, emotional transfers in the form of regular visits as well as physical transfers in the form of physical assistance require the constant presence of children. This is a difficult ask considering the distance between Singapore and Kampung Makmur as well as other barriers such as the daily traffic congestion, which may take hours to get through.

One of the reasons for wanting to retire in Kampung Makmur was the attraction of a kampung life based on strong ties and interpersonal involvement in the community. Such a lifestyle, in the view of the elderly Singaporeans, is absent in the housing estates back in Singapore. But the main reasons were undoubtedly economic in nature; the relatively low cost of housing and low cost of living in Johor allowed my informants to maximize their retirement savings. For this group of retired migrants then moving to Kampung Makmur was a rational choice given how they did not expect to maintain an acceptable retirement lifestyle with the little that they had in terms of savings living in Singapore. I can understand why retiring

[22]This extends to other areas of life such as political participation for instance.

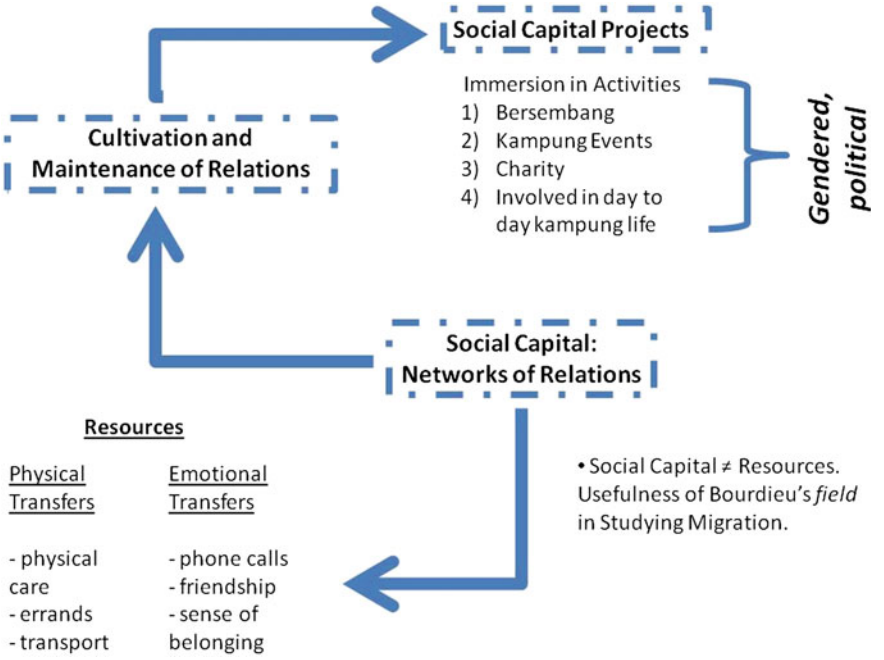

Fig. 4.3 The mechanism of social capital

in a Johor kampung is so attractive. However, one would need the right kind of networks to be able to access the kampungs in Johor and lead the lives that the retirees want. Additionally, the research also revealed the intricate workings of social capital in the kampung; most notably the importance of social capital projects in a particular setting where migrants and locals are culturally compatible. The mechanism of social capital is represented in the Fig. 4.3.

My research hopefully fills a research gap by examining a different income group as opposed to middle to upper income group migrants, who are usually the focus of the literature on retirement migration (Gustafson 2001; McHugh and Mings 1996; Walters 2000). It is also quite unique in a sense that it unveils the process of retirement migration outside of the conventional narrative (the legitimate retirement practices based in the more developed areas of Iskandar Malaysia) of formal institutions typically found in studies on retirement migration (Benson and O'Reilly 2009; Innes 2008) and focus on informal practices undertaken by the retired migrants within the kampung organization to secure eldercare.

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Chapter 5
Contextualising Geographies of Education-Induced Skilled Migration: How Mobile Malaysians End up in Singapore, London, and Kuala Lumpur

Sin Yee Koh

Abstract Migration literature has not considered international students as migrants proper until arguably the 2000s. Using the cases of mobile Malaysians (i.e. tertiary-educated Malaysian-born professionals who are transnationally mobile) in Singapore, London, and Kuala Lumpur, this chapter shows how their skilled migration geographies are inherently education-induced. This chapter further argues that Malaysia's ethnic- and language-stratified education systems–a colonial legacy–play a significant role in initiating and circumscribing mobile Malaysians' education-induced skilled migration geographies. This approach contributes towards a holistic and historically grounded conceptualisation of how international student migration (ISM) and skilled migration are intertwined. In addition to advocating for an expanded and integrated understanding of ISM and skilled migration, this chapter also highlights the need for migration scholarship to pay attention to the historical legacies of ethnic stratification and the domestic education system of sending societies.

Keywords Education-induced migration · Ethnic stratification · Geographies of migration · Malaysia · Transnational skilled migration

5.1 Introduction

Migration literature has not considered international students as migrants proper until arguably the 2000s, when academic debates embraced international policy discussions on student mobility and the internationalisation of higher education.

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Before this, international students were 'under-researched' and 'almost a blind spot' in migration and mobility studies (King et al. 2010, p. 46). In reviewing the extent of the literature in the early 2000s, Findlay et al. (2006) argue that student mobility has been conceptually framed in three ways: first, as a specific type of skilled migration (especial academic mobility); second, as an outcome of globalisation; and third, as a form of youth mobility in the context of late modernity. Notably, existing literature has framed such mobilities as *temporary* migration undertaken during a specific *temporality*. Such mobilities are either associated with one's (youthful) life stage, or a particular socio-political milieu (Li et al. 1996). With the internationalisation of higher education and lower barriers to transnational mobility, international student migration (ISM) is now recognised as a step towards skilled and transnational migration. Recent studies, for example, document how ISM has been pursued as a means to secure postgraduate employment, permanent settlement and citizenship in destination and third countries (Baas 2010; Fong 2011; Liu-Farrer 2011).

However, ISM literature (and the related field of internationalisation of higher education) appears to co-exist in parallel to that of skilled and transnational migration. Generally, the former focuses on international student migrants, while the latter focuses on transnational skilled migrants. As Eskelä (2013, p. 145) notes, it appears that international students are 'conceptually separated from "real" skilled migrants' in academic literature. Furthermore, existing literature has tended to over-emphasise recent developments that have facilitated ISM (e.g. academic mobility programmes, Erasmus exchange, etc.), without giving equal attention to pre-existing contextual factors such as ethnic-stratification in the education and labour markets in sending and receiving states. Indeed, recent research has only started noticing the importance of as yet examined factors such as colonial linkage (Perkins and Neumayer 2014) and the presence of educated migrant networks in the destination countries (Beine et al. 2014). This emergent trend suggests that there are more permanent and historical factors underwriting the seemingly 'temporary' and 'immediate present' character of ISM and transnational skilled migration.

This chapter advances a historically grounded and integrative understanding of ISM and transnational skilled migration through the Malaysian case. I use the concept of 'education-induced migration' to explain and analyse the cases of mobile Malaysians, defined as Malaysian-born student migrants who have pursued ISM, who can now be considered transnational skilled migrants. Drawing upon in-depth interviews with 67 mobile Malaysians conducted during September 2012 to June 2013, I describe and analyse their migration geographies to their place of residence in Singapore, London, and Kuala Lumpur,[1] paying close attention to their education trajectories prior to them becoming skilled migrants. In doing so, I show

[1]Respondents in Kuala Lumpur would typically be analysed as 'returnees' who 'return' to Malaysia after their earlier transnational migration. However, I chose not to refer to them as returnees, as their 'return' may be temporary, and part of a circular transnational migration trajectory.

how their skilled migration geographies are inherently education-induced, thus contributing towards the holistic conceptualisation of student migrants and transnational skilled migrants. More specifically, I argue that Malaysia's ethnic- and language-stratified education system–a colonial legacy–plays a significant role in initiating and circumscribing mobile Malaysians' migration geographies.

5.2 Contextualising Geographies of Education-Induced Migration

Skilled and Transnational Migration

The literature on skilled and transnational migration has previously focused on the highly skilled (Koser and Salt 1997) and transnational expatriate elites (Beaverstock 2002). Debates taking the nation-state and policy perspectives have used terms such as 'brain drain', 'brain gain', and 'brain circulation'. While 'brain drain' was originally used in reference to the post-World War II exodus of British doctors to Canada and the US, it has since been used more generally to describe the loss of skilled professionals and the circumstances of their exit. 'Brain gain' refers to the inflow of skilled professionals and the accompanying compounding effects in immigration states, while 'brain circulation' refers to the transnational circulation of human capital with benefits to both immigration and emigration states. Debates have seen a transition from a pessimistic view to more positive discussions of brain circulation (Saxenian 2005) and talent flow (Carr et al. 2005). Of note is a focus on migrants' professions, skills, knowledge, and capital that are valued by immigration and emigration countries (Iredale 2001; Williams and Baláž 2008).

On the other hand, the literature on migrants' perspectives has developed a more nuanced understanding encapsulating migrants' varied subjectivities and migration considerations. These range from economic (Papademetriou et al. 2008), strategic (Ong 1999), gender (Yeoh and Willis 2005), familial, and emotional (Ho 2008) considerations. Favell et al. (2006, pp. 8–9) suggest that skilled migrants are 'not all from elite backgrounds', and may instead be 'career-frustrated "spiralists"' who move internationally to improve their social mobility opportunities. While these works contribute towards a more nuanced view that transnational skilled migrants 'do not live in a "frictionless world"' (Willis et al. 2002, p. 505), existing discussions tend to take the transnational skilled migrant as a point of departure a priori. As a result, their pre-skilled migration lives–for example, as student migrants–may not be conceptually included in the analysis of their migration geographies.

International Student Migration (ISM) and the Internationalisation of Higher Education

As King et al. (2010) note, academic debates on ISM have only emerged in migration and mobilities literature in the 2000s. This development follows increasing policy attention to student mobilities and the internationalisation of higher education from international organisations such as the Organisation for Economic Development (OECD) and the International Organisation of Migration (IOM), as well as supra-national organisations such as the European Union through the Bologna Process and Socrates-Erasmus academic mobility programmes. A parallel development is increasing national policy attention to popular destination countries such as Australia, Canada, the UK, and the US, as a response to the growth in scale and diversity of incoming international student migrants. The resultant academic literature reflects these broader developments, evident in discussions of intra- and inter-Europe student mobilities (King and Ruiz-Gelices 2003), student immigration trends (de Wit et al. 2012; Findlay 2011), as well as postgraduate settlement or return migration decisions (Gardiner and Hirst 1990; Lee and Kim 2010).

Recent developments in the internationalisation of higher education literature focus on the shifting terrains of international student mobilities. Discussions have moved towards international higher education as an industry (Brooks and Waters 2011), noting in particular its distinct geographies (Waters 2009). International higher education is regarded as a means for capital accumulation on the part of student migrants (Findlay et al. 2012; Waters 2006) and non-migrating students enrolled in transnational higher education in situ (Sin 2013; Waters and Leung 2013), as well as a means of talent acquisition on the part of destination countries (Hawthorne 2014; Ziguras and Law 2006). Here, Robertson (2013) goes one step further by referring to the 'education-migration nexus', which is the 'connection of the experience of overseas study with longer term migration' (p. 3), a policy orientation pursued by student migrant receiving countries such as Australia at the end of the 1990s.[2]

More recently, King and Raghuram (2013) suggest that scholars need to critically interrogate the terms 'student' and 'international'. As they point out, student migrants, like any migrant, experience dynamic subjectivities. They further make four suggestions in terms of a research agenda for ISM. Of particular note are their suggestions to pay attention to how gender and race come into play in ISM–a point I will return to later in the chapter–as well as more in-depth ethnographic work recognising the multiple roles of international students. The recent works briefly reviewed in this section highlight the need for more nuanced and critical understandings of the processes, experiences, and consequences of ISM.

[2]See She and Wotherspoon (2013) for a comparison of such policies in Canada, the USA and the UK.

An Integrated Reading

There is no doubt that student migrants are moving internationally. These mobilities come with important consequences affecting individual student lives and the society at large. However, attention has thus far been focused on *those who move* (i.e. student migrants) or *place(s) that receive* (i.e. destination contexts). In comparison, there has been a lack of attention on *place(s) that send* (i.e. sending contexts) (with the exception of Gribble 2008, from a policy perspective). As a result, there are important and as yet unanswered questions which may shed further insights on international student mobility. First, notwithstanding globalisation as an explanatory framework (Gürüz 2008; Rizvi 2011), what is the role of the education system at the sending context in this regard? Second, drawing upon existing work on cultures of migration (Ali 2007; Cohen and Sirkeci 2011), what is the relationship (s) between educational institutions and migrant communities in both the sending and destination contexts?

The fundamental principles underlying these two questions are suggested by Perkins' and Neumayer's (2014) study on explanatory factors to international student mobility. Through their quantitative analysis of UNESCO data on tertiary-level international students over the period of 2004–2009, the authors highlight the significance of previously unrecognised factors such as colonial linkage, common language, and pre-existing migrant stocks in the destination countries. For example, students from former colonies may enjoy preferential access to scholarships offered by the metropolitan governments. In addition to familiarity with the education system, language, and culture, students may also perceive that universities located in such countries are more prestigious and desirable. Established migrant communities in former coloniser countries could also offer relevant migration-related information, support, and security to ease migration costs. Beine et al. (2014) also found evidence that an existing community of educated co-nationals increases ISM flows to the destination countries. These recent works suggest that the relationships between sending and receiving contexts, particularly in terms of the education system and culture of migration, require further attention.

This chapter contributes to this observation through the cases of mobile Malaysians and is organised into three sections. The first section provides a background of Malaysia's colonial-institutionalised education system and the related education-induced migration. This contextualises the empirical discussion in the second section, which covers three geographies of education-induced migration my respondents embarked upon. The third section concludes by raising the theoretical implications for the literature on migration generally and student migration specifically, and policy implications for Malaysia and other student migrant sending countries.

5.3 Empirical Background: Malaysia

British Colonial Influence

Malaysia is a post-colonial,[3] multi-ethnic[4] country that gained independence in 1957 from British colonial rule. As a country under the colonial government, Malaya was made up of a multi-ethnic immigrant population, largely a result of large-scale labour immigration encouraged by the British in the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries. To curb labour strikes and to ensure business continuity, the British practised the strategy of 'divide-and-rule' by creating social and political distance between different ethnic groups. This strategy confined and stereotyped ethnic groups to specific economic and political activities (Hefner 2001). In general, the Europeans were managers; the Chinese initially as labour in the tin-mining industry; the Indians as labour in the rubber estates; and the Malays in subsistence agriculture.

A parallel development to the British-led systemised labour migration and the 'divide-and-rule' strategy was a broader advancement of colonial and anthropological knowledge (see Manickam 2009, 2012). The advent of social Darwinism saw the preoccupation with 'scientific' and 'objective' explanations of social behaviour through racial categories. Following the belief in 'the white man's burden', the British perceived themselves and the Europeans to be superior over the local Malayan peoples. The Malays were conceived and portrayed as lazy and contented; the Chinese viewed with grudging admiration for their entrepreneurialism; and the Indians a 'source of cheap and docile labour' (Hirschman 1986, p. 347). These attitudes in turn influenced how each group viewed each other. Over time, they came to 'have a life of their own' (Hirschman 1986, p. 357) and became legitimised by Malay and non-Malay leaders in the post-colonial period.

This racialization was extended to the population census, which arbitrarily conflated diverse ethnicities and sub-ethnicities into broader ethnic categories (Hirschman 1987). By 1957, the population was categorised into four major ethnic groups: Malaysians (Malays, Indonesians, and all Aborigines), Chinese, Indians, and Others. Thus, race became a convenient way of identifying people–originally for census purposes, but subsequently affecting all other formal and informal dimensions of social life in colonial Malaya. As I will next explain, one area of significance is the development of an ethnic-stratified education system, which laid the foundation of Malaysia's education system in the post-colonial period.

[3]I use 'post-colonial' to indicate the temporal period after colonial rule.

[4]The three major ethnic groups are Malay, Chinese, and Indian.

Ethnic-Stratified Education System

Prior to the British colonial period, education in Malaya mainly took the form of informal passing down of traditional life skills from parents or through apprenticeships. The British colonial government introduced secular Malay schools in the Straits Settlements (SS)[5] in the 1860s, followed by the Federated Malay States (FMS)[6] in the 1970s. English-medium schools were sparingly introduced into the Malay States during the 1880s. Increasing commercial activities in Malaya resulted in a demand for English education for employment in business and government. This saw the expansion of English schools, first in the SS, followed by the FMS.

In the early stages of colonial rule and following the 'divide-and-rule' strategy, the British adopted a dual approach towards education in Malaya. On one hand, the British were obliged to fulfil their responsibility to the Malay natives. On the other hand, the British adopted a *laissez-faire* and non-interventionist approach towards non-Malay vernacular education, at least until the 1920s. In pre-war Malaya, there were four separate education systems: first, English schools preparing 'commoner' students for jobs as English-educated clerks, and 'elite' students for further education in England; second, Malay schools providing basic education; third, Chinese vernacular schools; and fourth, Indian vernacular schools (see Loh 1975).

By the early 1900s, English education became 'a new criterion of, and passport to, social distinction' (Johan 1984, p. 5). The Malay Residential School at Kuala Kangsar (MCKK), known as 'Eton of the East', was established in 1905 to provide an Anglo-Malay education for the Malay aristocracy class. In contrast, Chinese vernacular schools were brought under government surveillance under the Registration of Schools Enactment as the schools were seen as key sites instilling overseas Chinese nationalism following the 1911 Kuomintang Revolution in China. During the Malayan Emergency (1948-1960), government-aided Chinese primary schools were established in gated new villages as a result of the colonial government's concern of 'maintain[ing] some degree of subsequent control until social cohesion had been attained' (Colonial Office 1952).

In sum, the colonial administration adopted a dual approach to Malaya's stratified education system, broadly divided along ethnic lines. Generally, Anglo-Malay education was prioritised for the Malay aristocracy class,[7] while Chinese vernacular schools were viewed with suspicion, in part due to growing Chinese communism which was regarded as contributing towards inciting racial tensions (Kua 2008; Lee 2006). With reference to the dual approach towards Malay and Chinese education, Tilman (1964, p. 27) notes that British education policies were 'paternalistic and protective' towards the former but 'pragmatic, devised on an ad hoc basis … with little apparent recognition of the long-term problems engendered' towards the latter.

[5]Includes Penang, Dindings, Malacca, and Singapore.

[6]Includes the states of Perak, Pahang, Negeri Sembilan, and Pahang.

[7]See Sua (2013) for an analysis of a dual approach towards the Malay aristocracy and the Malay peasantry.

This ethnic-stratified education system continues to exist in post-colonial, contemporary Malaysian today, even after efforts were made to consolidate and standardise the education system. After Malaysia's independence, the Razak Report 1956 and Rahman Talib Report 1960 established the principles for a united national education system, captured in the Education Act of 1961. Consequently, Malay-medium primary schools were renamed *Sekolah Rendah Kebangsaan* (national primary schools), while English, Chinese, and Tamil primary schools were identified as *Sekolah Rendah Jenis Kebangsaan* (national-type primary schools). Malay was the medium of instruction in national schools, while English and the respective vernacular languages were the medium of instruction in national-type schools. Malay, as the national language, was made a compulsory subject.

In 1968, English national-type schools were converted to national schools in phases. These efforts resulted in a streamlining of the education streams, especially towards integrating the separate vernacular primary school graduates into a unified secondary school system. In 1983, a common national curriculum known as *Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Rendah* (KBSR) was introduced across all national and national-type primary schools. The common curriculum was extended to secondary schools in 1988 with the introduction of *Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah* (KBSM). Students take the *Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia* (SPM) ('Malaysian Certificate of Education'), equivalent to the 'O' Levels, after completing secondary education. This is followed by the *Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia* (STPM) ('Malaysian Higher Certification of Schooling'), equivalent to the 'A' Levels, after completing pre-university in the Malaysian public school system.[8] Both the SPM and STPM are examined in the Malay language, except for English, Mandarin, and Tamil language papers.

Despite these consolidation and standardisation efforts, the current education system continues to be one that is ethnic-stratified. Indeed, it is recently noted that national and national-type primary schools have become increasingly racially homogenous: the student enrolment numbers in 2011 were 96 % Chinese in national-type Chinese schools, 94 % *bumiputeras* in national schools, and 56 % Indians in national-type Tamil schools (Malaysia 2012, pp. 3–24). Efforts to consolidate and standardise the education system at the secondary level onwards appear to have taken effect, at least at the lower secondary school stage. For example, students from the various primary school streams go on to three years of schooling with a common curriculum and Malay as the medium of teaching. However, as I will next explain, my argument is that the colonial-institutionalised, ethnic-stratified nature of Malaysia's education system has more long-lasting effects on education-induced migration.

[8]Students may choose alternative pre-university studies such as matriculation, foundation year, or 'A' Levels outside of the public education system.

5.4 Bumiputera *Differentiation*

Following the introduction of pro-*Bumiputera* ('sons of soil') affirmative action policies in the 1970s, the post-colonial Malaysian government implemented a series of educational interventions. First, *Bumiputera* quotas for public university places were introduced. This was initially set at 75:25 *Bumiputera*: non-*Bumiputera* students, and was theoretically adjusted to 55:45 by the early 1980s, although the actual proportions by 1985 were 80:20 (Tzannatos 1991, pp. 183–184). As a result, non-*Bumiputera* students had to resort to alternative higher education strategies, including accessing private tertiary education and/or overseas education. Second, government scholarships for overseas higher education, most notably the *Jabatan Perkhidmatan Awam* (JPA) ('Public Service Department') scholarships linked to postgraduate civil service jobs, were subjected to *Bumiputera* quotas (Wan 2011).

Third, residential schools and technical institutes for *Bumiputeras* were set up. These include residential colleges, an institute of technology (which subsequently attained university status), and vocational and technical colleges (Lee 2005). Fourth, in contrast, higher education opportunities for non-*Bumiputera* students were comparatively limited or suppressed. Of particular note is the non-recognition of the United Examination Certificate (UEC) qualification for graduates from Malaysian Independent Chinese Secondary Schools (MICSS) for entry into public universities. Taken altogether, these four education-related interventions have reinforced the ethnic-stratified education system institutionalised during the British colonial period.

Education-Induced Migration

As a result of affirmative action policies prioritising university placements and scholarships for *Bumiputeras*, some non-*Bumiputera* Malaysians have pursued international student migration or private college education to access higher education. From 1996 onwards, the Education Act of 1961 enabled the establishment of private higher education institutes, which saw the growth of private colleges, private sector-funded universities, and branch campuses of foreign universities. A popular route is for students to enrol in 'twinning' programmes. Under such programmes, students typically start their course in the Malaysian partner private colleges and complete their final year in the degree-conferring overseas university.

Notwithstanding the above, Malaysian students' preference for overseas education can be understood as a legacy of British colonial influence. Colonial ties with Britain and the British education tradition had instilled a preference for elitist education, where overseas degrees from top universities were highly sought after. Indeed, Denny (1999, pp. 76–77) suggests that an 'unmeasured and unquantifiable

desire' for overseas education could be a sign of Malaysians seeking an international perspective as a result of colonial rule and immigration.

While there is a general preference for British education, this has been expanded to include Western education more generally (Sin 2009). In addition to overseas education being seen as 'a passport to lifelong security, comfort, and status' (Selvaratnam 1988, p. 183), it is also perceived to be of a higher quality (i.e., more competitive, better learning process, opportunity to acquire English language competency) and more marketable for postgraduate employment. For parents contemplating emigration, sending their children for overseas education is often a first step towards preparing for their eventual relocation (Ghani 1990). Of course, all the possible 'Malaysia-centric' factors outlined above related to the internationalisation of higher education globally.

5.5 Mobile Malaysians' Migration Geographies

The dual approach to Anglo-Malay versus vernacular education systems in colonial Malaya, as well as the privileged *Bumiputera* education system in post-colonial Malaysia, has institutionalised a culture of education-induced migration. On the one hand, state-sponsored student migration, predominantly for *Bumiputeras*, institutionalised temporary migration with the likelihood of postgraduate return to Malaysia to take up civil service positions. On the other hand, familial-sponsored student migration, predominantly undertaken by non-*Bumiputeras*, is pursued as a means to social mobility and often results in permanent settlement and is regarded as skilled migration.

The World Bank (2011) estimated that a third of the 1 million overseas Malaysians in 2010 are tertiary-educated. Furthermore, in 2010 one in ten tertiary-educated Malaysians migrated to an OECD country–twice the world average. In 2000, the five largest destination countries hosting 83 % of the total number of overseas Malaysians were Singapore (46 %), Australia (12 %), Brunei (9 %), US (8 %), and UK (8 %). These are also the major higher education destinations for Malaysian students. Singapore, in particular, is a popular destination due to its 'close geographical proximity, historical and economic ties, and relatively high wages' (Pillai 1992, p. 5). This has also been influenced by Singapore's active recruitment of students, skilled and semi-skilled labour from Malaysia, including funded university education with postgraduate employment obligations; preferential access to Singapore permanent residence and/or citizenship; opportunities to work in the public sector and universities; subsidised rental of older Housing Development Board (HDB) apartments in the 1980s (discontinued in the 1990s); and Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Scholarship schemes implemented since 1969 to the present (Ho and Tyson 2011, p. 136).

In what follows, I detail three distinct education-induced geographies which I found amongst my respondents. These include the following: first, respondents who

engage in daily commutes from their homes in Johor Bahru (JB)[9] to Singapore as early as their primary school years; second, respondents who went through the MICSS system; and third, respondents who accessed private colleges and twinning programmes. It is worthwhile to point out two caveats. First, the narratives portrayed here are of non-*Bumiputera* Malaysian-Chinese respondents in their 30s. Second, these narratives are not intended to be representative of all non-*Bumiputera* mobile Malaysians, but are instead chosen to illustrate my broader argument for a holistic approach towards education-induced migration.

JB-Singapore Commuters

Tim (male, Singapore permanent resident [SPR]), Helen (female, SPR), and William (male, SPR) were daily commuters throughout their schooling years in Singapore. School children who perform such daily commutes would typically leave their JB homes as early as 5 am on school buses, catch some sleep during the 2-hour journey to their schools in Singapore, and return to their JB homes after 8 or 9 pm at the end of the day. One might wonder why parents would subject their children to such harsh commuting. In addition to geographical proximity, the Singapore education system is favourably perceived as superior to the Malaysian education system. The use of English as a teaching medium in Singapore as opposed to Malay in Malaysia is preferred by middle-class parents. This is because English is seen as an important international language skill for their children's future careers. This could also be a cultural legacy amongst the Chinese ethnic groups. Takei et al. (1973, pp. 7–8) suggest that the Chinese are more willing 'to exploit opportunities to utilize English-language education as a means of obtaining positions in the modernising sectors of the society'.

However, I argue that this could also be understood as a colonial legacy. During the colonial period, English-medium schools had been prioritised by the British colonial administration, and an English education is a stepping stone to prestigious civil service jobs. Furthermore, following the implementation of affirmative action policies in 1970, parents were aware of the limited opportunities for their non-*Bumiputera* children to access public university places and scholarships. This meant that they had to plan early to ensure their children's higher education pathways in the future.

For JB parents, then, the daily commute to Singapore is a convenient and feasible solution. Earlier entry into the Singapore education system prepares children to excel academically for entry into overseas universities at a later stage. Furthermore, Malaysian upper secondary and pre-university qualifications, the SPM and STPM, were perceived to be less useful in gaining admissions into overseas universities than Singapore's 'O' and 'A' Levels.

[9]Malaysia's second largest city at the Malaysia–Singapore border.

Tim's narration captures the commonality of such practices amongst JB residents:

> My parents used to work in the educational field, so they know that in terms of quality, in terms of education, we will get a better grasp of English, which they think is important, in Singapore … From the age of seven we have been crossing the causeway to study in Singapore. So that starts my relationship and my sister's relationship [with] Singapore. We studied through primary school, secondary school, and through college, through university.

Similarly, Helen started commuting to Singapore at age seven for her primary education. She continued these daily commutes through her secondary and pre-university years. Her two siblings also did the same. With her 'A' Levels, Helen then went to an Australian university. William was born in Singapore but commuted daily to Singapore as his Malaysian family moved back to JB after his birth. He completed his pre-university education in Singapore, and also went to an Australian university. Both Helen and William eventually 'returned' to Singapore for employment.

MICSS Students

I have earlier explained how MICSS students are obliged to seek alternative means to access tertiary education as their UEC qualifications are not recognised for Malaysian public university admissions. Amongst my MICSS respondents, there were two typical education migration destinations: Singapore and Taiwan. As one of my respondents, Hong (male, SPR), remarked, 'Either we go to Singapore or we go to Taiwan, because local [universities] don't accept us (laughs)'. Leong (male, SPR), Ming (male, SPR), and Hong are typical of the former, while Wei (male, 'returned' from USA) and Leng (female, 'returned' from Taiwan) are typical of the latter.

Leong, Ming, and Hong finished high school at the time when the Singapore government was actively recruiting Malaysian students and professional workers. With attractive university scholarships and tuition grants, Singapore universities became a popular option especially for MICSS students. They were able to take entrance exams to gain admission into Singapore universities. During this period, only certain subjects, particularly science and engineering, were open to foreigners. According to Ming, the majority of his peers entered Singapore universities through the same means. In fact, 50 percent of his cohort is currently residing and working in Singapore.

Leong's response to my question on the reason why he did not consider entering Malaysian public universities reveals the typical considerations for MICSS students. First, being educated in a system that prioritised Chinese language and culture meant that his Malay language skills were not up to par for him to pursue a university education in Malay. Second, for families without sufficient financial resources to fund their children's overseas education in Western countries,

Singapore and Taiwan became alternative solutions as the costs were more affordable due to favourable exchange rates, university tuition fees, and living expenses. Such options were especially favourable if they were able to secure scholarships offered by these universities.

Hong further makes the observation that although Singapore may not be the university destination amongst his MICSS peers, it has turned out to be a popular destination for work after graduation. Amongst his batch of about 300 students, the majority went to private colleges in Malaysia, about 50 went to Taiwan universities, and about 10 to Singapore universities. Hong observes that many of his high school peers are currently working in Singapore: 'In the end, everybody comes to Singapore and stay (laughs)'.

Wei and Leng went to Taiwan to pursue their university degrees upon completing their UEC examinations. For Leng, this was a natural choice as her elder brother, also a MICSS student, had done the same before. She did not consider any other locations, and instead followed the education migration path her parents had laid out for her. Wei, on the other hand, made a conscious decision to study in Taiwan as part of his long-term migration strategy. As the eldest son with two younger siblings, he felt that it was his responsibility to pave the way for his siblings' future education and possible migration trajectory. After three years in a professional training programme in a Taiwan university, he was able to transfer credits to enrol in an American university. Upon graduation, he stayed on for work in the US and pursued his Masters on a part-time basis.

Wei's narration reveals his considerations:

> When I left Malaysia, that was in the early-1990s. With the high school qualification, what can you do? At that time, lot of people went to work in the factories. They paid you RM200. That was still ok, in the 1990s. But I told myself, I was only 19 or 20 years old, my life shouldn't be just like that. So I thought to myself: to get into a Taiwan university, my grades have to be good enough. But my grades were not great. But there were other possible paths. Then, I thought to myself: 'I'll apply for professional training programmes first.' So that's what I did.…
>
> I started planning for my future before I graduated in Taiwan. Malaysia will not recognise my Taiwanese qualification. So you can only work in some Taiwanese company, or a Chinese-run company in Malaysia. Also, when you graduate from Taiwan, your Malay and English will not be as strong as other people. You only know Mandarin. Will you be able to survive in Malaysia? No way. So, back then I was already searching for the next possible route. I looked at, how some of my seniors from high school were doing well in the US. So I contacted them to find out some information. After graduation, I just continued to migrate further. It's all just following the plans.

These narratives show the structural barriers created by the exclusion of MICSS students from Malaysia's mainstream education system. The exclusions are not only limited to recognition of qualifications. More significantly, the exclusions are based on two factors. First, language as a medium of instruction created a division between those with good command of Malay, Malaysia's national language required for public university entries and employment in certain sectors and industries, and those without. Second, the systemic division between national schools and MICSS fostered strong alumni networks amongst MICSS students.

In the absence of other available resources, these alumni networks serve as important resources for information and contacts about higher education, employment, and settlement in specific migration destinations.

Twinning Programmes

Amongst my respondents, it is interesting that none of those residing in Singapore took the twinning programme education migration route. This is instead undertaken by some of those who are residing in London. Here, I elaborate on Mei's (female, UK work visa) and Kiat's (male, UK work visa) experiences.

After completing her upper secondary schooling, Mei enrolled in a twinning programme in a private college in Kuala Lumpur (KL). She spent the first three years–a foundation year and the first two years of her degree course–in the KL college, and her final year in Australia. When I asked her if she ever considered going to a Malaysian public university, her answer demonstrate the taken-for-granted nature of going for the twinning option:

> I don't think it was an option [for] us … Well, it was an option, you [could] always have done that. I just think the way my parents geared us up was to go and do A-Levels or Foundation Year, or something of that sort, as opposed to going to [Malaysian] universities. It was very much the … upbringing. So we never really considered. It was like: 'Oh, if you don't have money then you would have to do that.'

Kiat completed a one-year South Australian Matriculation (SAM) programme at a private college in KL. Upon graduation, he enrolled in a twinning programme through a Malaysian private university. After the first two years of his degree in the Malaysian campus, he moved to the UK to complete his degree at a partner overseas university. Similarly, Kiat could not really explain why he had not considered studying at a Malaysian public university.

> Oh, public university? Um … I did (hesitantly). But my parents were not very keen. Because of the level of education, the level of standards. And because my mum is a [healthcare] professional, and my dad works in an international company. So they deal with all sorts of people like local graduates, overseas graduates. And they often tell me, in their opinion, … their impression is the standard [of local graduates] is not as high as those graduated from [overseas]. So I think because of that, they want me to go to overseas instead of studying in a local university.

In addition, Kiat could not articulate his reason for choosing the SAM over STPM.

> I did consider doing STPM … I was also considering doing 'A' Levels. … But my parents didn't recommend me doing STPM. I don't know why. But I think from my own opinion, I probably wouldn't have done it too. Because I probably won't get a lot out of that compared to doing matriculation or 'A' Levels. Because to go to universities overseas, or even any university, you need like pretty good English to improve your language. Because when I first graduated from high school, my English was not very good, to be honest. So I think going into STPM wouldn't improve that aspect of the problem. So I went to matriculation instead.

Evident in both Kiat's explanation is the unquestioned assumption that he *should* go for an overseas education rather than attending Malaysian public universities. The overseas education option, and hence the SAM and twinning programmes, is 'better' because it is perceived to offer opportunities to improve his English and accord a 'higher standard' in work performance once he successfully graduates with an overseas degree. No mention, however, was made of the difficulties of gaining admission to Malaysian public universities due to the *Bumiputera* quota. This suggests that strategies to overcome structural forces in accessing higher education (such as pro-*Bumiputera* policy) have been internalised into a way of life. In other words, going for overseas education became a default, at least amongst people who would eventually become mobile Malaysians.

5.6 Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter began with the observation that the existing literature on ISM and transnational skilled migration appear to be disconnected. While there have been recent attempts to draw the link between these two types of migration, clearly more work needs to be done. In particular, the conceptualisation of ISM as a long-term strategy to migration needs to go beyond the current limited focus which treats it as a stage in higher education and (implicitly) assumes that it is associated with the internationalisation of higher education.

This chapter contributes towards a historically grounded and holistic reading of student-turned-skilled migration in two ways. First, by focusing on a history of ethnic stratification and the development of an ethnic-stratified education system induced by British colonial rule, it highlights how Malaysia's education system influences and circumscribes mobile Malaysians' education-induced migration geographies. While O'Brien (1980, p. 60) notes that there is as yet no 'definitive study of present-day consequences' of Malaysia's education system institutionalised during the colonial period, I have attempted to do so by examining how ethnic stratification in the education system transpires into mobile Malaysians' migration geographies. Second, by examining the (dis)articulations for mobile Malaysians' pursuit of international higher education, I question the view that globalisation and the internationalisation of higher education per se are responsible for ISM. As my respondents' narratives suggest, underlying simplistic discourses of 'higher quality of education' are other factors (such as a socialised disposition towards ethnic stratification and the meanings of British/Western education) at work.

In closing, four points of discussion that are relevant to understanding ISM, the internationalisation of higher education, and transnational skilled migration can be identified from my respondents' education-induced migration geographies and narratives.

First, notwithstanding globalisation and the internationalisation of higher education as factors influencing ISM, attention needs to be paid to the education system at the sending context. A contributing factor to my mobile Malaysian respondents' education-induced migration geographies is the perceived and real limitations for Malaysian public university entries and scholarships as a result of pro-*Bumiputera* affirmative action policies. Wong and Ooi (2013) find that international students from the People's Republic of China chose Malaysia because either they could not enter universities in China, or they could not enter their desired university in China. Similarly, my respondents chose to move to Singapore, Australia, Taiwan, and other education migration destinations because they could not–and often *believed* that they could not–enter Malaysian universities. Significantly, some of them could not articulate the reasons for them not choosing Malaysian public universities, although they could explain their preference for overseas education, primarily for English education language skills and 'a better education'. My findings here point to the need for existing literature to recognise the influence of the education system at the sending context, in addition to that at the receiving context.

Second, and relatedly, there is a need to consider how race is embedded in the education system at the sending context and circumscribing education-induced migration geographies. My research has highlighted how, in the Malaysian case, pro-*Bumiputera* affirmative action policies and colonial legacies of racial categories have translated into an ethnic-stratified education system. Despite state-led efforts to remove ethnic stratifications in the education system incrementally, the colonial-institutionalised preference for British/Western education has seen Malaysian middle-class student migrants opting for overseas education where possible. While globalisation and the internationalisation of higher education provides a partial explanation to this social trend, I argue that in the Malaysian case, attention needs to be paid to the influence of colonialism, particularly in terms the education system and racial ideology, which continues to influence Malaysians' social, economic, and political life (see Koh 2015).

Third, there is a need to understand and address why students seek overseas education. This is because overseas education is often a first step towards them becoming mobile, transnational skilled migrations. Carlson (2013, p. 178) suggests analysing 'how students *become* geographically mobile'. Furthermore, Findlay et al. (2012, p. 129) suggest taking a whole-life approach in conceptualising the 'links between student mobilities and other mobilities'. These recent works highlight the need to adopt a long-term perspective of ISM. In addition to contributing to how ISM has become a means for permanent settlement, skilled migration, and further migration to third countries, this approach also offers opportunities to inform policies pertaining to ISM, the internationalisation of higher education, transnational skilled migration, and citizenship regimes.

Fourth, there is a need to look at the education system holistically, and not just at the tertiary or post-secondary stage. Such a perspective can add to the understanding ISM and the internationalisation of higher education. As my research shows, because overseas education has been seen as an important strategy for future employment, mobile Malaysians have embarked upon their education-induced

migration geographies as early as at the primary school stage. Thus, attention must also be paid to education options at the pre-university and earlier stages, as transnational skilled migrants may commence their ISM long *before* the higher education stage. Such an approach provides a longer timeframe to analysing how transnational skilled migrants come into being as they embark on their education trajectory.

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Chapter 6
Postcolonial Indian Labour Migration to Malaysia: Trajectories, Trends and Tensions

Mahalingam Marimuthu

Abstract Malaysia has always been the centre of attraction for Indian skilled and unskilled labourers from the colonial phase to present times, given its geographical proximity, viable economic opportunities and cultural similarities. The colonial phase was marked by liberal immigration policies coupled with the state acting as an agency for transporting, regulating and managing Indian labourers. The regular mobility of Indian labourers has gradually led to permanent settlement of an Indian community in Malaysia. After the independence of Malaysia in 1957, there has been a shift in foreign labour immigration policies to the diminishing role of state in regulating and controlling foreign labour force under a neoliberal economic regime. In the face of stringent foreign labour immigration laws of the country, Indian labourers embark upon myriad ways and means for their mobility given the perennial demand for foreign labourers in certain critical economic sectors of Malaysia. Successive structural economic changes have propelled the increasing inflow of skilled and unskilled Indian migrants; this has eventually resulted in dichotomization of Indian community into 'Old Indian migrants' and 'New Indian migrants'. This chapter sheds light on the emerging trajectories, trends and tensions of postcolonial Indian labour migration, especially with regard to unskilled Indian labourers. I also highlight the continuities between colonial and postcolonial Indian labour migration to Malaysia.

Keywords Postcolonial indian migration · Skilled and unskilled indian labourers · Labour trafficking · Labour exploitation

Malaysia has been a host country to Indians even before the British established their presence in the nineteenth century. There has been a symbiotic relationship between both the countries in terms of goods, ideas and inflow of people given their geographical proximity. Indian migration to Malaysia has historical precedents. A miniscule community of Indian traders made their settlements in pre-colonial Malaya. Later, an influx of Indians to Malaysia began during the colonial period

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when Malaysia was gradually integrated into the global capitalist system. The unskilled, cheap Indian labourers were outsourced through various recruitment mechanisms with the tacit approval of the British government and local administration to meet the demands of the colonial labour market. After its independence, Malaysia embarked upon aggressive industrialisation with the Export-Oriented Industrialisation (EOI) economic model since 1970, which necessitated unskilled and semi-skilled labourers in large numbers, especially in the service sectors and economic sectors like plantation, construction and manufacturing. The local work force was unable to meet the demands of labour market shortage and avoided low paying jobs that were considered dirty, dangerous and demeaning.

Under these circumstances, the import of foreign labour became inevitable albeit with stringent immigration laws. About two million foreign labourers work in Malaysia legally and an estimated one million work illegally (Star Online, 24 March 2010). These foreign workers hail from ASEAN countries as well as from South Asian countries. There are about 140,000 skilled and unskilled Indian labourers in Malaysia (Yahya and Kaur 2011: 116). There were about 39,000 illegal Indian migrants in Malaysia by the end of 2009 (Thaiindian, 13 January 2010).

The Indian migrants have various ways and means to reach Malaysia given its economic opportunities, incentives, wage differentials and the presence of a settled Indian population. As Malaysia was on the threshold of becoming a knowledge-based economy from one based on manufacturing in the late 2000s, Indian skilled IT professionals were welcomed to facilitate this economic transformation. Overall, the Indian unskilled and semi-skilled labourers are predominant over Indian skilled labourers. The growing number of Indian migrants in the recent decades has led to the dichotomization of the Indian community into 'Old Indian migrants' and 'New Indian migrants'.

Unlike the colonial era, despite the ever growing demand for unskilled labourers, there have been stricter control over labour immigration especially for unskilled labourers compared to skilled labourers. Since independence, Malaysia has had a migration policy strategy that 'needs foreign work force but does not want them'. Malaysia does not permit permanent citizenship either for skilled or unskilled labourers. Reference to 'temporary contract worker' or 'guest worker' or 'alien' are used so that their status can be defined clearly. However, because of strict control and the heavy demand for foreign labour, unskilled migrant workers are being trafficked by unscrupulous agents to meet the manpower shortage.

A large number of unskilled Indian labourers are victims of human trafficking for labour exploitation. Upon arrival, in general, both the legal unskilled and the trafficked unskilled Indian labourers face many hardships that are beyond their control. On one hand, the issue of Indian unskilled labour migration has received inadequate attention from scholars. In fact, there is hardly any literature about the dynamics of Indian unskilled labour migration. On the other hand, there have been recent studies of Indian skilled migration to Malaysia (Yahya and Kaur 2011; Leclerc 2011).

To fill this existing gap, this paper focuses on Indian unskilled labour migration to Malaysia in the postcolonial phase. It also discusses the continuities and

discontinuities between colonial and postcolonial Indian labour migration. This paper draws its data from a wide range of reports and material from nongovernmental organisations, interviews with key informants and activists from Malaysia as well as from India, and also from published materials such as newspaper clippings, books and academic papers.

6.1 Changing Contours of Malaysian Foreign Labour Policy

In contrast to the colonial era, there has been a shift in the immigration policy of Malaysia after becoming independent in 1957. The management of foreign labour is regulated through major legislative instruments such as the immigration acts, the Employment Act of 1955/1968 and the Penal Code (Kaur 2008: 13). The Immigration Act of 1959/1963 provides the basis for immigration regulations and procedures in the country. The Immigration Department looks after the emigration and immigration affairs of the country. The Immigration Act of 1959 replaced the 1953 Ordinance intended to regulate and restrict the quantity and quality of migrants. The subsequent Employment Restriction Act of 1968 admitted only skilled migrants who had work permits or labour contracts. Later, owing to rural–urban migration and feminisation of Malaysian local labour force, there was a labour shortage in agriculture and construction sectors. Thus, the Malaysian government had to import foreign workers to resolve the labour crisis. Since 1970 the government renewed measures to regulate the inflow of labour migrants.

Amarjit Kaur identifies four distinct phases of evolution of Malaysian migration policies. In the first phase (1970–1980) the government adopted a liberal policy towards foreign worker recruitment. In the second phase (1981–88) the government legalised foreign labour recruitment, established an official channel for labour recruitment and signed bilateral agreements with the governments of source countries. In the third phase (1989–96) the state introduced a regularisation programme to curb illegal immigration. The fourth phase since 1997 witnessed major policy developments for the regularisation of migration in the face of the financial crisis of 1997–1998. During this period new measures were taken to control unauthorised migration, and periodic amnesty programmes were put in place to allow undocumented migrants to leave the country without any penalty (Kaur 2008: 9).

Further, migrants have been distinguished on the basis of skills as Worker (less skilled) and Expatriate (highly skilled). The latter are categorised as *Pegawai Dagang* or expatriates (the professional, technical or related groups) and the former are classified as *Pekerja Asing* or foreign contract worker (Kaur 2008: 9). There are correspondingly two types of employment related work permits or work visas, namely an Employment or Work Pass (*Pas Penggajian*) for expatriates; and a Work Permit or Contract Worker Pass (*Pas Lawatan Kerja Sementara*) or Visit Pass for

the temporary (contract) employment of less skilled workers, including domestic workers (ibid).

In the case of expatriates, those who earn over RM 2500 a month can obtain an employment or work pass without any limitations. The job contract which was restricted to two years can now be renewed for a maximum of five years. They have to be sponsored by the employer. They are permitted to bring their dependents and are not allowed to marry Malaysian nationals. They are regarded as temporary workers and are not eligible for citizenship (Kaur 2008: 10).

The immigration policy is subject to change based on labour demand. For instance, the Malaysian government announced that highly skilled migrants would be allowed to stay in Malaysia for a maximum of 10 years (Kaur 2008). Further, the age requirement has been amended and the state currently allows entry to individuals who are 20 years old in 'IT and Related Positions', while in 'Other Management Positions' applicants are denied entry unless they are 27 years old. In the case of less skilled labour, those who earn below RM 2500 a month and are employed in the manufacturing, construction, plantation, services and domestic sectors are provided with a visit pass for temporary employment (Kanapathy 2006). Less skilled workers are given one year work permits which are renewable for up to 5 years. There are age restrictions associated with the nature of the job and workers are not allowed to bring their dependents and subsequently no resettlement is permitted (Kaur 2007).

The foreign work forces are allowed to work in economic sectors such as construction, manufacturing, plantation/agriculture and service (Sarker 2012: 126). Further, the migrant worker's country of origin is also taken into account and the government has placed restrictions on the origin and number of workers from any one sending country in specified occupational sectors (Kaur 2008: 10). For instance, only Indians are permitted in cargo and laying high tension cables. Other nationals are not given work permits for these sectors. Only nationals of Philippines (male), Indonesia, India, Cambodia, Kazakhstan, Laos, Myanmar, Nepal, Thailand, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Vietnam and Bangladesh are allowed to work in the plantation/agriculture sector. There is an occupational cap imposed on nationals from various source countries.

Although Malaysia is heavily dependent on foreign labour, it imposes a levy on hiring foreign workers. For example, an annual levy on a foreign worker in the manufacturing sector is RM 1200 for the construction sector, RM 540 for plantation, RM 360 for agriculture and RM 360 for domestic help (Sarker 2012: 127). If any sectors have a critical labour shortage a lower levy is imposed, while a higher levy is imposed on sectors 'where the problem of excess labour demand has been perceived to be less serious' (Kanapathy 2006: 8). Despite the existence of legal channels for migration, there have been growing numbers of illegal migrants especially unskilled migrants. The Immigration Act was amended in 1997 and 2002 which resulted in harsher penalties for immigration violations like caning of workers, detention and deportation. In order to deal with irregular immigrants, a number of steps were introduced such as registration of migrants working illegally without the threat of deportation, amnesty policies, enhanced surveillance of

unauthorised entry and employment through security operations Ops Nyah I and Ops Nyah II (Sarker 2012: 129). Hence, Malaysian foreign labour policy since independence responds to labour demands but is restrictive.

6.2 Indian Migration in Historical Perspective

Historically, there have been cultural and trade links between both the countries since the first millennium B.C. Ancient Indian literary texts speak of the Southeast Asian regions as Suvarnabhumi or land of gold. The two great Indian epics Mahabharata and Ramayana refer to the Malay Archipelago as Suvarna Dvipa and Yavana Dvipa (Krishanan 1936: 1). Further, the available archaeological and epigraphic evidences such as Hindu and Buddhist structures of Southeast Asia refer to the link between both the regions. One can discern the presence of Indian settlements in the region from Indian cultural and material artefacts.

At an early period, Indians arriving in Malaya were mostly merchants, traders and missionaries. The mercantile Indian community settled near the trade entrepots of Kedah, Penang and Malacca. Indian communities such as Malacca Chetties, Chulias and Jawi Peranakan are examples of early settled Indian communities of Malaya before the colonial era. Despite the historical links with Malaya, the presence of the Indian community was small in size. After the arrival of the British, Malaya was transformed from a subsistence economy to being a part of the international economy. It became the world's largest exporter of rubber and migrant Indian labour played a major role in the production of rubber.

The recruitment of Indian labour was done mainly for the expansion and development of the plantation sector and also for infrastructural developments. The labour force was mainly drawn from the Tamil and Telugu regions of Southern India, who arrived first under the indenture system and then under *kangany*-assisted recruitment (Sandhu 1969). This was followed by free passage of labourers after the establishment of the Tamil Immigration Fund which was later called the Indian Immigration Fund. Further, the Malayan government established a body called Indian Immigration Committee (IIC) in 1907 to facilitate and regulate the free passage of labourers.

The Indian government's concern about gender imbalance, particularly in the male-dominated Indian plantation labour force resulted in the Indian Emigration Act of 1922 and the Indian Emigration Rules of 1923, which supported the migration of females and subsequently family migration. From the start, both Malaya and Indian administrations controlled and regulated labour mobility to Malaya. In the beginning, Indian labour migration was 'circulatory', after completion of the contract many workers returned to India.

Later, there was an increasing trend in settlement particularly since the 1930s. Apart from manual labour, Indian migrants in different occupational categories and belonging to various classes, castes, religions and regions migrated to better themselves in Malaysia and eventually settled there. When Malaysia obtained

independence, the Indians were offered citizenship and many of them accepted it. Some of them could not obtain citizenship because of the enforcement of strict eligibility criteria. In 2001, the heterogeneous Indian community was about 7.6 % of the Malaysian population.

6.3 Contemporary Indian Migration

Postcolonial Malaysian Economy and Indian Labourers

Since independence, there have been continuous structural changes in the Malaysian economy to enable it to catch up with the developed nations. In 1958, Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI) economic model was adopted to increase and diversify the export of primary products (tin, palm oil, rubber and timber) and consumer goods (vegetable oil and soap). This economic model lasted until the 1970s drawing on the domestic labour market. In the1970s the government took up Export-Oriented Industrialization (EOI) as its economic strategy which led to rapid economic development.

In this connection, Free Exporting Zones, popularly known as Free Trade Zones (FTZs) were established following the models of Taiwan and South Korea, and led to setting up of textiles, electrical/electronic goods, transport equipment and optical instrument industries and the inflow of foreign and local capital. During this phase of economic development from the late 1980s, the manufacturing industry flourished and assumed prime position. It accounted for over fifty percent of export earnings and by 1993, this had grown to 71 % of Malaysia's exports and 30 % of its GDP (Kaur 2000: 5).

As these industries were labour intensive in nature, the demand for semi-skilled and unskilled labourers accelerated. However, the domestic labour market was unable to meet the demands of the labour market. At the same time, the government did not want to slow the economic growth due to lack of manpower, and took several initiatives to liberalise its strict foreign labour policies. It permitted unskilled and semi-skilled foreign labourers to work in Malaysia with many conditions and restrictions. Having carved a niche for itself in the manufacturing sector, Malaysia wanted to embrace a knowledge-based economic model from the late 1990s to become a leading player in the region.

In 1996 as part of its Vision 2020, the Malaysian government unveiled its National Information Technology Agenda (NITA) and developed the Multimedia Corridor (MSC), a 750 km^2 zone modelled after California's Silicon Valley (Yahya and Kaur 2008: 20). Owing to a shortage of local talent for the expansion and growth of information and technology sectors, the government turned towards India for its manpower.

Again, like the colonial period, Malaysia has become an importer of foreign labour in the wake of labour shortage in various critical sectors, such as plantation,

construction, manufacturing and service sectors. Foreign skilled, unskilled and semi-skilled labourers were allowed in so that economic growth could be sustained. The figures from the Indian High Commission showed that 140,000 Indian expatriates were working in Malaysia, of which 10,000 were 'white collar' and about one-third of the 140,000 were in the unskilled category (Yahya and Kaur 2011: 116).

In 2010, the Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak made a press statement saying that there were about 39,000 Indian migrants who came with a tourist visa but were overstaying for employment (Thaindian, 13 January 2010). It seems that due to cultural and linguistic similarities, the incidences of overstaying are relatively high among nationals from India and China. An estimated 250,000 Indian and Chinese nationals overstayed in 2003 (New Straits Times, Feb 20 2004). The Malaysian government offers amnesty to curtail the reliance on illegal foreign workers every now and then. By 2004 at a time of deportation of illegal foreign workers from Malaysia, 16,000 illegal Indian workers opted to go back to India during the amnesty period (Leclerec 2007). The table given below shows the representation of legal Indian migrant work force for the year 2010 and 2011 respectively.

Table 6.1 depicts the trend of legal Indian labour migration which fluctuates from year to year as the inflow depends on the Malaysian labour market and labour policy, but the Indian labour force especially unskilled is always needed for certain economic sectors of Malaysia. Malaysia falls under the category of Emigration Check Required (ECR) for Indian unskilled labour migration under the Indian government.

In 2007 about 30,916 workers immigrated to Malaysia on (ECR) passports after obtaining emigration clearance from the Protector of Emigrants (Thaindian, 3 January 2009). The growing Indian labour work force migration to Malaysia has resulted in bilateral agreements between both the countries. Both the governments signed a bilateral MoU on employment and welfare of workers to establish an institutional framework for facilitating employment, protection and welfare of Indian immigrant labourers, especially for the unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled workers (India–Malaysia agreement 2009).

Table 6.1 The legal Indian Migrant Work Force (2010–2011)

S. no.	Economic sectors	Indian work force years	
		2010	2011
01	Maids	236	504
02	Construction	5,002	3,794
03	Manufacturing	13,866	5,707
04	Services	47,021	38,606
05	Plantation	16,675	17,749
06	Agriculture	30,997	6,254
	Total	1,13,797	87,399

Source: Labour Department, Ministry of Human Resources, Malaysia

However, Indian labourers are subject to flip-flops in labour policy which affects Indian worker recruitment time and again. The Malaysian government decided to freeze the recruitment of temple workers (Hindu priests) coming to Malaysia from 31 December 2007 (India Today, 9 January 2008). Later, the ban was lifted after protests from the Indian Hindu community as there was an acute shortage of Hindu priests in the large temples of Malaysia to conduct prayers and rituals. Although the ban was lifted, the government restricted entry through a cumbersome process of recruitment of Hindu priests. According to Hindu Sangam President, it has been receiving numerous complaints from local Hindu temples relating to the problems these temples face in applying, renewing or extending the professional visit pass for their temple priests, musicians and sculptors from the Department of Immigration and Ministry of Home Affairs (Mohanshan 2013).

Moreover, the duration of the work permit was reduced. The Malaysian Consultative Council of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism and Taoism (MCCBCHT) President said that the immigration department had given final renewal permit of six months for priests, three months for temple musicians and one week for sculptors, after which they would have to leave the country (India Today, 9 January 2008). Likewise, there was a ban on recruiting barbers from India; this move was opposed by the operators as locals are not interested in becoming barbers. The issue was later resolved by the intervention of an Indian Minister.

As the hotel industry of Malaysia has heavily relied on foreign work force, the government decided to reduce the dependence of foreign work force by increasing the levy for foreign hotel workers. Later, the hotel industry owners requested the government to defer the decision saying that it would affect their business considerably. In contrast, recently, the Home Ministry announced that Malaysia's fast food restaurants will no longer be allowed to hire foreign workers. This announcement will affect thousands of Indians, who come seeking work as waiters and cooks (The Times of India, 7 January 2014). Hence, the inflow of Indian migrants is affected by frequent changes in policy decisions of the government.

6.4 Profile of Indian Migrants to Malaysia

In the postcolonial scenario, Indian migrants can be broadly classified as skilled and unskilled or semi-skilled labourers. The skilled workers comprise professionals like chief executive officers, IT consultants, project managers, web developers and designers, system analysts, multimedia specialists, business analysts, bankers, academicians and engineers. The unskilled and semi-skilled category comprises cooks, dish washers in the hotels and restaurants, office boys, construction workers, goldsmiths, salesmen in super markets, work assistants, textile workers, fitters, welders, electricians, mechanics, hair dressers, tailors, newspaper vendors and soothsayers. There has been an increasing demand for domestic maids triggered by rapid urbanisation, expansion of middle class and the increased participation of women in the work force in Malaysia. Apart from labourers, there are about 2500

Hindu temples (based on the survey by Malaysia Hindu Sangam) in Malaysia where 250 Hindu priests or temple workers from India are employed to conduct prayers and rituals (Mohanshan 2013). Sculptors are also very much in demand either for constructing new Hindu temples or renovating the existing ones. Further, temple musicians from India are also needed.

The Malaysian Consultative Council of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism and Taoism (MCCBCHT) President estimated that there were about 100 temple musicians and about 200–300 sculptors working in Malaysia (India Today, 9 January 2008). Finally, there were about 2000 Indian students pursuing higher education in 2012 (Indian MEA Report, 12 January 2012). Thus, the profile of Indian migrants is drawn from different classes and regions in the postcolonial period.

6.5 Indian Skilled Migration

The Labour Market for Indian Professionals in Malaysia

The Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) was formally signed on 18 February 2011 for enhancing bilateral economic engagement. Malaysia is also one of India's three largest trading partners in the ASEAN countries in terms of value and trade volume. There are about 60 Indian joint ventures operating from Malaysia. They are about 90–100 Indian owned companies in Malaysia and these include 68 companies in the Information and Technology sector (Yahya and Kaur 2011). Indian companies have invested about US$ 2 billion. Indian companies that made major acquisitions include Reliance industries Ltd and Ballarpur Industries Ltd. Larsen & Toubro, Biocon, Manipal University and Strides Arcolabs have made fresh investments in Malaysia. Further, IRCON International Ltd has been actively engaged in the development of railways in Malaysia since 1988, and it is currently executing a double tracking project (Seremban-Gemas) worth over US$ 1 billion (Indian MEA Report, 12 January 2012).

Indian companies like Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Wipro, Satyam and HCL have set up their software development and servicing centres in Malaysia. Being a nascent industry, there was a huge shortage of manpower in the Information Technology Enabled Services (ITES) sectors; Malaysia looked for rank and file technicians for the expansion and growth of information technology sectors. Indians were also able to acquire high level jobs like Chief Executive Officer to give a head start to the development of information technology in Malaysia. Besides, there has always been a plethora of opportunities for IT engineers, IT consultants, IT specialists and IT workers in the multinational and Indian owned companies of small and medium sizes located in the cyber parks of Malaysia.

The IT training company Aptech has also begun its training base in Malaysia with the employment of trainees from India. As Malaysia lacked local talent to be employed in IT sectors, the government of Malaysia established Multimedia University in Malaysia where many Indian academicians are employed for training the locals. The gas and oil sectors of Malaysia have been growing steadily where Indian engineers are recruited for many technical positions. In manufacturing and various other service sectors, there has been a perennial demand for Indian skilled professionals.

Indian skilled professionals are found in manufacturing, petroleum, gas, banking and Information Technology Enabled Services (ITES) sectors of Malaysia. There are about 10,000 Indian professionals working for Indian companies, MNCs or indigenous companies in Malaysia and they are located mainly in Johor Bahru, Kuala Lumpur or Penang (Yahya and Kaur 2011). Although they are spread across various sectors, the majority of them can be found in ITES sectors of Malaysia. As Malaysia had a critical human capital shortage in the ITES sectors in the late 1990s, it targeted Indian ITES professionals.

This resulted in the migration of Indian IT professionals in substantial numbers. The official figure of the Indian IT professionals was 2000 in 2005 but if we take into consideration body shopping activity, the accurate number could be 4000 (Leclerec 2011). In terms of age, IT Professionals can be categorised into two types. The first type is young professionals around the age of 28 with a minimum of 3 years of experience. The second category is 35 years old and above working at the management level (Leclerec 2007). 70 % of IT professional immigrants in Malaysia came from the Southern Indian states (two-thirds from Andhra Pradesh and one-third from Tamil Nadu). The remaining 25 % came from the other states in India (Leclerec 2007).

6.6 Mechanism of Skilled Migration

Indian skilled professionals prefer to go abroad in search of better opportunities, higher wages and international exposure, and because of unemployment and competitiveness in India. Indian skilled professionals are either recruited directly through the employers or recruitment agencies. They are permitted to enter Malaysia only under the sponsorship of the employers. For instance, in the field of information and technology, the Indian IT professionals are hired through different ways and means. First of all, various international recruitment agencies are active in supplying Indian IT professionals for various multinational companies of Malaysia.

Second, many Indian IT companies operating in Malaysia transfer their employees from India or outsource employees for international clients in Malaysia. Third, a vast majority of them are recruited through a mechanism called ‘body shopping’ as described by Xiang Biao in Australia. ‘Body shopping is arguably a

uniquely Indian practice whereby an Indian-run consultancy (body shop) recruits IT workers to be seconded as project-based labour with different clients. Unlike conventional recruitment agents who introduce employees to employers, body shops manage workers on behalf of employers—from sponsoring their temporary work visas to paying their salaries, arranging for accommodation and the like' (Biao 2007: 04).

According to Leclerec (2011), body shopping accounts for 80 % of international recruitment in Malaysia. Fourth, some of them become aware of vacant IT positions on line or through friends, colleagues or alumni networks. So, they get recruited directly by the employers.

6.7 Circulatory Nature of Indian Skilled Migrants

Malaysia does not allow migrants to take up citizenship or permanent settlement. Skilled foreign workers are considered to be 'guest workers' who have to leave after completion of their contracts. If they intend to return, they can reapply for a work permit. Thus, the circulatory nature of migration is encouraged in general for skilled and unskilled foreign workers respectively. The case of Indian IT professionals is very interesting. Despite the huge demand in the Malaysian IT labour market, the Indian IT professionals do not intend to stay or continue as they view Malaysia as a gateway to their global career. Leclerec confirms that Malaysia for many Indian software professionals is the door of entry into a global labour market where most of them either gain first-hand professional experience or work outside of India for the first time (Leclerec 2011). Further, some Indian IT professionals have stated that they did not intend to stay in Malaysia for a longer period because it was very 'hard' to have a 'footing' in Malaysia since it was very difficult to obtain permanent residency (PR) status.

In contrast, Singapore was attractive because it readily gave PR, and this entail benefits that could engender higher savings (Yahya and Kaur 2008: 23). Further, there were an increasing number of illegal foreign professionals as foreign firms were compelled to hire them illegally because of the difficulties of obtaining work permits. In order to curtail this, there was a crackdown on foreign professionals that resulted in the rounding up of 270 Indian IT professionals by Malaysian immigration authorities on 9 March 2003 (Leclerec 2010).

These Indian professionals were employed on the invitation of companies registered in the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC). The Indian High Commission in Malaysia immediately intervened to prevent the alleged abuse of the IT professionals by the authorities and secured the release of most of them from detention. After the incident, some 30–40 Indian IT professionals left Malaysia (Yahya and Kaur 2011: 126). India took a strong stand regarding this mistreatment of its IT professionals and reviewed its bilateral economic ties.

6.8 Unskilled or Semi-skilled Indian Labour Migration: Trends, Trajectories and Tensions

Malaysian Labour Market for Indian Unskilled or Semi-skilled Labourers

As the Malaysian labour market is labour intensive and locals have shunned low paying jobs which are considered dirty, dangerous and demeaning, there has been a great demand for low skilled foreign workers. It is not surprising that there are more Indian unskilled workers than the skilled work force. After independence in 1957, the government introduced immigration controls to stop Chinese and Indian immigrants entering the country (Kaur 2012: 244). Since the late 1970s, the regulation of unskilled immigrants was relaxed in the wake of labour shortage in certain economic sectors. Indian unskilled and semi-skilled labourers were allowed to work in plantation, agriculture, manufacturing and the service sector which includes restaurants, cleaning, cargo handling, launderette, caddies in golf clubs, barbers, wholesale/retail, textile, metal/scraps/recycle activities, welfare homes and hotels/resort islands (MIDA Report 2013).

The settled Indian community, although involved in various entrepreneurial activities, also work in the hotel industry. The need for semi-skilled and unskilled Indian migrants is perennial in some Indian businesses. Local Indians are not preferred as they do not have the desired skills or expertise that the new migrants from India have. The Malaysian Associated Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MAICCI) President K.K. Eswaran said that there was a dire need for 100,000 new foreign workers in the Indian business community as it had exhausted avenues for hiring in hotels. It is difficult to source for a cook in an Indian restaurant or a craftsman for the goldsmith industry from a country other than India (Silicon India, 14 March 2010).

Responding to pleas of the Indian business community, the Malaysian Human Resource Minister S. Subramanian said that the Malaysian government has decided that 45,000 Indian workers would be recruited in a bid to overcome the shortfall in various businesses in the country. He further added that the decision would help overcome shortfall in 13 types of businesses conducted by the Malaysian-Indian Traders Association (Economic Times, 4 March 2011). There are currently about 100,000 unskilled Indian workers in Malaysia, making them the third largest group, after Indonesian and Bangladeshis (Migration News 2011).

6.9 Origin and Mechanism of Indian Unskilled Labour Migration

In terms of the back ground of Indian unskilled Indian labourers, most of the unskilled migrants come from rural and semi-urban backgrounds and are semi-literate or illiterate. The majority of them belong to southern Indian states,

especially Tamil Nadu, while a fewer number come from northern states like Bihar, UP, Orissa, Maharashtra and Punjab. Despite migrants coming from all over the state of Tamil Nadu, a large number of them originate from the southern districts like Ramanathapuram, Madurai, Pudukottai and Sivaganga districts. It is estimated that there are about 35,000 from Sivaganga district alone.[1] These districts are comparatively economically backward, drought prone, dry land areas and lack industrial development. Unemployment, poverty and family circumstances force them to migrate and look for greener pastures off shore. Broadly, two major patterns can be identified in terms of unskilled labour migration from India. One is migrants with proper work permits and the other is migrants who come on tourist visas; the latter are duped or convinced by recruiting agents that they will get jobs after arriving in Malaysia.

They are made to overstay in search of jobs, which results in their becoming undocumented or illegal migrants. There is no reliable source for the number of Indian illegal migrants. But, one can guess from a press statement of the Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak on 13 January 2010 that there were about 39,000 Indians, the majority from Tamil Nadu who came with a tourist visa to Malaysia and have disappeared (Thaindian, 13 January 2010).

As the inflow of immigrant workers is not fully in the control of the Malaysian government, the privatisation of recruitment has facilitated malpractices in the regulation, management and control of foreign labour. Agents play an important role given the recruitment system of Malaysia for unskilled labourers. Since they are the link between employer and employee, they tend to exploit, deceive and abuse migrants for profit. The agents mislead poor unskilled migrants about jobs, working conditions and wages.

The agents work hand in glove with employers while recruiting workers as there is a huge demand for unskilled labour. Some workers have been abandoned at the airports as the agents disappear once they are paid. 'With no way to return, they start looking for employment without a work permit. As a result, they are forced to surrender their passport and identification documents to their employers and work for low wages and under inhuman conditions.'[2] A social activist had rescued more than 1500 workers from Tamil Nadu, who were lured with handsome jobs by their agents in Malaysia and finally landed in government run detention camps for not possessing proper visas or permits for working in the country (The Indian Express, 10 June 2013).

Further, the hefty levy for hiring foreign workers force coupled with gruelling recruitment processes have compounded human trafficking. Moreover, the employers look for the cheapest foreign labourers. This has encouraged unscrupulous individuals or fake agents to engage in human trafficking.

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[1]Interview with Mr. Siva Somasundaram, Secretary, MEETPPU (Migrant Employees Education for Transformation, Prevention and Protection Union) Trust which is based in Madurai, Tamil Nadu. Interview Dated 14 December 2013.

[2]Interview with Mr. T. Kamalanathan, founder of Global Rescue Community, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Dated 20 December 2013.

They mislead the potential migrant worker about the wages, the conditions of employment, and the type of work and promise them jobs which may not exist. Believing these false promises, gullible unskilled Indian labourers pay the recruitment fee. Without obtaining proper work authorisation, the agents take them through various legal channels like calling visas or tourist visas. Upon arrival, the agent takes the passport by saying that it is needed for getting a work permit. Later, the agents force them to take up jobs which the migrants do not want to do. As the worker does not have the legal authorization to work, he/she becomes more vulnerable and dependent on the agent for survival. Returning becomes impossible as the migrant has spent all his money on travel and recruitment fee for the agent. The migrant worker thus gets relegated to involuntary servitude and ends up as forced or bonded labour. Eventually, they are sold like a commodity to employers who are looking for cheap labourers.

The following case shows the vulnerability of Indian labour trafficking. Sixteen workers from villages in and around Melur in Madurai District were rescued from bonded labour recently. Four travel agents, N. Selvam from Melur, K. Sethu from Othapatti, M. Kampukudi from Ambalakaranpatti and Lakshmanan from Sivagangai lured them into working in Malaysia. Each migrant paid Rs. 60,000 for their travel and visa, after they were promised jobs in a Malaysian supermarket. However, after landing there, they were handed over to an employer who made them work in various jobs including hazardous ones involving chemicals. They were beaten up and verbally abused when they raised questions about their plight. They were not given proper food while many others who were locked up in a common facility, waiting for work escaped and went into hiding. Their employer owed them a good portion of their salary (The Times of India, 12 November 2013).

They were promised decent jobs in the country. However, the travel agents sent them on tourist visas instead of work visas. The workers were sold to the employer for 3000 Malaysian Ringgit each. The employer harassed them stating that they were sold to him for money. They were given gardening work and were not paid. One of the labourers, M. Ramanathan, aged 35 said he was lodged in a dark room and beaten up brutally for complaining about the ill-treatment (The Hindu, 12 November 2013). The Indian restaurant industry in particular employs both legal and illegal migrants in large numbers, who face many hardships.

6.10 Exploitation of Indian Unskilled Labourers

Indian unskilled labourers are considered as cheap foreign labour employed in various sectors and are exploited in the absence of effective management of foreign labour under the neoliberal economic development regime of Malaysia. Many Indian unskilled labourers are hired in the booming Indian restaurant trade run by the Malaysian Indian community as local co-ethnics do not have the skills to cook

authentic Indian food. There are about 100,000 legal and illegal[3] or trafficked Indian workers employed in the Indian restaurant industry. Because of restrictions and high levies for migrant workers, the Indian restaurant traders prefer trafficked migrants who are cheaper and vulnerable to exploitation. Both legal and illegal Indian workers suffer the most from exploitation by Indian restaurant employers. These employers have clandestine agreement with agents for trafficking cheap unskilled Indian labour.

The prospective migrant will pay anything from Rs. 70,000 to one lakh to the agent who recruits him for taking up jobs in hotels. The migrants will be promised about RM 300 to RM 700 per month as salary. After getting a work permit and fulfilling other formalities, the migrant sets foot on Malaysian soil. He soon finds that the reality is different. The workers are forced to work for 12–15 h per day with a quick lunch break. They are not served good food. They are provided with cramped accommodation measuring about 10 × 10 feet and 10 × 20 feet where 10 to 30 people have to sleep. They get infected with contagious diseases very often. Since the employer has to pay a levy of Rs. 30,000 for hiring foreign workers to work in the restaurants, this amount is then deducted from the salary for the first 6 months. The workers do not get any salary for the first 6 months. Some employers pay them half of the designated salary during this time. Further, the employers confiscate their passports for security reasons and to prevent them from desertion. Besides they are not allowed to change their employer until their 3-year contract period is over as stipulated by law.

Workers who complain are beaten up, kicked, slapped, abused, tortured and subjected to electric shock, tied up by rope and intimidated by local thugs. They are in a state of constant surveillance and are not allowed to talk to their families back home. Employers often threaten them with various consequences like making the employee illegal or an undocumented worker either by not renewing his work permit or by not giving his passport. Gradually, they are relegated to involuntary servitude or bonded labour. Indian workers undergo extreme hardship but bear it silently owing to their family circumstances and vulnerability. Some of them have even committed suicide or have disappeared.

The following testimony reveals their plight in the Indian restaurant industry in Malaysia. John was lured by Peter, proprietor of Indian Air Travels, Vallioor in Thirunelveli District of Tamil Nadu. Peter introduced one Kannan of Karunjankulam village, Ramanathapuram, as the main agent and one of the partners of Sri Pavan Restaurant. Peter told John that the company would pay him Rs. 12,000 in Malaysian Ringgits. Peter also took Rs. 1 lakh stating that it will be paid as deposit till the contract gets terminated and the sum would be returned. With the assurances, John had obtained a passport and had applied for an employer visa (work permit) in the name of Pavan Restaurant. After landing in Malaysia, John was forced to work for 20 hours, allowed to sleep only for 3 hours per day and was

[3]MEETPPU (Migrant Employees Education for Transformation, Prevention and Protection Union) Trust unclassified document titled ‘Issues of Indian Migrant Labourers in Malaysia’.

provided one poor meal per day. To rub salt to the injury, the employers stopped the payment of salary to John in January 2009 and compelled him to work as bonded labour. When he resisted, John was beaten up and kept in solitary confinement for around 20 days. It was revealed that the employers had been ill-treating John and had swindled the entire salary since January 2009 (The New Indian Express, 7th April 2010).

Women who migrate for domestic work are also trapped and exploited. For example, Padma Sunder aged 41 of Tiruvetriyur in Tiruvallur District of Tamil Nadu was brought to Malaysia as a domestic help. Her agent took her to an Indian employer's house in Bukit Serdang. Her employer went on to beat and torture her, which resulted in the loss of hearing and her fingers being broken. Further, she was also tonsured. When she wanted to leave, her employer refused saying that she could not leave without completing her 2-year contract. She was not given her salary for 4 months (Makkal Osai, 23rd February 2009).

6.11 Colonial and Postcolonial Indian Labour Migration: Continuities and Discontinuities

The characteristics of colonial and postcolonial Indian labour migration to Malaya/Malaysia reflects more similarities than differences. There have been continuities in terms of origin, pattern of migration, methods of recruitment, status of migrants and unskilled labour work experience in both phases. The Indian labour migration to Malaysia either colonial or postcolonial is always characterised by the unskilled nature of Indian labour migration given the nature of labour market. Although the proportion and volume may vary at present, the unskilled Indian labourers are still numerically higher than the skilled labourers.

In the colonial period, the migration of Indian labourers was transient and circulatory as in the postcolonial period. Like the postcolonial period, the nature of migration of Indian labourers was initially male-centric in the colonial period also. Later, after the enactment of Indian Emigration Act of 1922, gender balance was maintained. In the colonial period, the Indian labourers were considered 'cheap labour and engaged in contractual nature of work'. The same perception is still prevailing in today.

The colonial Indian migration was mainly due to push factors, but postcolonial migration is mainly because of pull factors, although push factors also play a role. In the colonial period, Indian labour migration was organised, regulated, managed and controlled by the then colonial government of both countries. In the colonial phase, instruments like the Protector of Immigrants, the Indian Immigration Fund and Indian Agent helped to regulate, control and manage the Indian labour force from both sides. In contrast, in the postcolonial period, Indian labour migration is managed by the private recruiters of both countries. The government of both sides has a lesser role in regulating and controlling the Indian labour force.

In the colonial period, the majority of unskilled Indian labourers were drawn from Tamil and Telugu speaking areas of the Madras presidency then. Tamil unskilled labourers outnumbered the Telugu unskilled labourers. Even though the migration of unskilled labourers occurs from all parts of India today, Tamil unskilled labourers are still dominant. In terms of social and geographical origins, there are continuities between the colonial and postcolonial migration. In the colonial phase, the majority of Tamil labourers originated from the southern and eastern coastal districts of Tamil Nadu belonging to oppressed communities of the Hindu social hierarchy. The majority of the Tamil labourers who migrated to Malaya belonged to the hinterland around Tanjore and Tinnevelly. Apart from the untouchables, Pallids and Vanniyars, the other non-Brahmin castes also emigrated (Sandhu 1969: 57). A majority of them are still drawn from the hinterland of the same districts of Tamil Nadu today and are from the lower castes, in addition to others who are Muslims and Christians.

Skilled migration was mainly confined to the Madras presidency in the colonial years. In the postcolonial period, skilled and semi-skilled migration originated from all parts of India. Yet another commonality between colonial and postcolonial Indian labour migration is the process of recruitment. In the colonial period, in addition to the government managed recruitment of Indian unskilled labourers, the private agents played a role in outsourcing the Indian unskilled labourers given the huge demand of Malayan labour market as they did today. The recruitment of indentured labourers between 1840 and 1901 was done by speculators or employers themselves or through their private agents in India (Jain 1970: 236). For instance, both Chettiar and Labbai Muslim merchants indulged in recruitment and advertised their services in the press. One such firm, M. Kanapady Pillai and company announced in the Penang Standard that 'any gentleman requiring the services of Indian agricultural labourers can be supplied with any number of men of strong and sound constitution at moderate brokerage and within a reasonable time after notice' (cited in Amrith 2010: 237).

There are some continuities in the methods used for recruitment. For example, the use of 'network' for migration prevailed in the colonial and postcolonial periods. In the colonial period, the recruitment mechanism like 'kangani' system was considered to be a personal recruitment system in the colonial period. Kangani recruited his own kin and village folks to meet the growing demand of Indian unskilled labour force to colonial Malaya (Sandhu 1969). In the postcolonial period, the use of 'network' is common among Indian skilled and unskilled labourers to migrate to Malaysia as well. In the skilled category, the use of alumni or colleague network prevails for getting new recruits. As described earlier, the private agents were known for their manipulation, dubious and deceptive in recruiting gullible Indian unskilled labourer in the contemporary period. The following testimony would reveal the same situation in the colonial context as well. Bowness Fischer, British Consular official said 'it very often happens that a native is tempted to emigrate for the most inadequate reasons' (cited in Amrith 2010: 236).

Even though the government directly managed the migration of Indian unskilled labourers during the colonial period, there were reports of irregular migration carried out by unauthorized individuals. In colonial India, 'many of these recruiting

agents shipped their workers out from the French port of Karaikal, evading the restrictions imposed by the British authorities and thus avoiding the examination and interrogation of migrants (cited in Amrith 2010: 238). Also, having reached their destinations, migrants and their recruiters crossed political boundaries faster than governments could track their movements: several thousand Tamil migrants arrived in the Straits Settlements only to be shipped 'illegally' outside the British Empire, to the Dutch East Indies and the plantations of Sumatra' (ibid). Given the perennial demand for Indian unskilled labourers, the phenomenon of human trafficking of Indian labourers was prevalent in the colonial era as in the postcolonial period. For instance, in 1870, Hathaway, the Sub-Collector of Tanjore who was stationed at Negapatam, publicly denounced the recruitment as 'regularly organized system of kidnapping' (cited in Netto: 22). Hathaway's successor Stokes confirmed the fact that emigration did involve kidnapping of women and children and that a system of duress or illegal confinement had also prevailed (ibid).

The treatment of Indian unskilled labourers by the Indian or other employers was no different. For instance, in the colonial period, South Indian workers in the estates and elsewhere lived generally under horrible conditions, such as low wages, bad and insufficient food, and poor accommodation (Netto 1961: 33). The employees of South Indian merchants 'had to work from 6 A.M. to 11 P.M., with only three half-hour breaks for food. Most of the Muslim and Tamil employers recruited Indian assistants. They complained of crowded living accommodations, which also served as dining rooms, of poor food, of a 15-h working day, of in adequate wages ranging from Straits $7–$35 irregularly paid, and of punishments meted out to them on the slightest pretext' (Netto 1961: 56).

In the colonial period, distressed Indian workers could report their abuse, plight and grievances to the government such as an Indian agent who could intervene and redress wrongdoing. In 1925, 'the first Indian agent in Malaya, Arulanandam Pillai received an urgent telegram about the case of a young woman who claimed to have been held hostage and raped by the plantation manager of Tambang Estate in Johor shortly after she had arrived from India with her family to work there. The girl's father and brother, instead of going to the police, wrote to the Indian agent directly. Within days, the 'Tambang Rape Case' had become a political issue, with the imperial government in New Delhi pressing the Malayan authorities for a prompt investigation; widespread fears about the dangers that Indian women faced in the process of migration seemed to be vindicated' (cited in Amrith 2010: 250).

Contrary to this, the state cannot intervene to defend or to protect the ill-treatment of workers because of existing pro-capital labour laws which favoured a neoliberal economy. Instead, the state is a mute spectator and sometimes facilitator of onslaughts on the rights of workers. The workers are often at the mercy of the employers.

Both 'old' and 'new' Indian migrants lack integration with the Malaysian society. The settled Indian community or 'old Indians' is less integrated and alienated from Malaysian society due to ethnicity based political and economic models. No permanent settlement is permitted for 'new Indians'. So, they are less integrated. Overall, both colonial and postcolonial Indian labour migrations share more continuities than discontinuities.

6.12 Binary of 'Old Indian Migrants' and 'New Indian Migrants'

An increasing influx of Indians both skilled and unskilled to Malaysia since the 1980s has led to the dichotomization of 'Old Indians' and 'New Indians' at present. However there is a 'disconnect' between old and new Indian migrants in Malaysia given their migration background and experience and conditions in the receiving society. Although the Malaysian Indian middle class constitutes 20 % (Leclerec 2007) of the Malaysian Indian population and there are a significant number of Indian skilled workers who are the new Indians, there is no close interaction. As the New Indian skilled migrants are not encouraged to settle in Malaysia, they are a transient population. Besides, the advancement of transport and communication has intensified more connections and orientation with their homeland.

The presence of new Indian migrants has enabled ethnic businesses and trade run by the old Indian migrants to flourish. After the influx of new Indian skilled migrants to Malaysia for taking up jobs particularly in the information technology sector, the perception about Indians who are only considered 'coolies' by the locals has changed. The new Indian skilled migrants consider themselves superior in comparison with old Indians who are victims of racial discrimination perpetrated by Malay majoritarian politics, many of whom have been relegated to an 'under class'. In fact, old Indian migrants are presently the exploiters of new Indian unskilled labour. Unskilled new Indians experience many hardships under the old Indian entrepreneurial class.

Though there is a substantial number of the unskilled old Indian working class, they do not associate with the new Indian unskilled labourers. The 'old Indian migrants' face cultural identity issues in the wake of rise of the Islamisation in the recent decades. There is an ongoing demolition drive on ungazetted and unregistered Hindu temples of Malaysia. There are increasing numbers of voluntary and involuntary conversions among the Indian poor working class as a consequence of the Islamisation programme promoted by the government. Thus, the cultural identity of the old Indians is being challenged. This is not the case with the new Indian migrants.

6.13 Conclusion

There are more continuities rather than discontinuities pertaining to the nature, pattern, recruitment process, treatment and status of Indian migrants between the colonial and postcolonial periods. In general, Indian unskilled labourers are the victims of colonial capital and global capital in Malaysia. The abuse of Indian unskilled labourers goes unchecked despite existing laws to regulate foreign labour in Malaysia. The Indian unskilled work force continues to face numerous hardships

because of the absence of comprehensive policies and effective management of labour recruitment and regulation of foreign labour in a neoliberal economy. This has resulted in the trafficking of Indian unskilled labour and their exploitation.

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Chapter 7
Migration and Employment: A Study of Bangladeshi Male Migrant Workers in Malaysia

Rayhena Sarker

Abstract This study concerns Bangladeshi male migrant workers in Malaysia. It examines the living and working condition of these migrants and how they adapt to the blurring of gender roles in Malaysia. A total of 400 Bangladeshi male migrant workers were interviewed through a questionnaire covering the causes of migration, the problems they face, and their perceptions toward gender roles and household tasks in the family. The results show that: (a) there are varieties of factors which compel men to migrate to Malaysia; earning more money and improving their standard of living is the most common reason given and (b) they face numerous problems in their everyday lives in the work and living environment. The study highlights that migration occurs as a household livelihood strategy. Besides that migration also contribute toward a negotiated transnationalist identity because of the circumstances that require them to transcend normative gender roles. Patriarchal norms remain strongly normalized in them despite the blurring of gendered roles in the migration process.

Keywords Migration · Migrant workers · International migration · Bangladesh · Malaysia

7.1 Migration History of Bangladeshi Migrant Workers

Bangladesh lies in the north eastern part of South Asia. The size of the country is about 147,570 km^2 and the total population is 158,570,535 (Population Census, July 2011 estimated.). The country contains the eighth largest population of the world. The population density is also acknowledged to be one of the highest worldwide—only city-states such as Singapore and Hong Kong are comparable to

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the Bangladeshi situation (Siddiqui 2005). Bangladesh has so much surplus labor that it makes it difficult for many Bangladeshis to secure a livelihood inside the country.

High population density, limited resources, low rate of economic development, high unemployment rate, malnutrition, high illiteracy, frequently recurring natural disasters like floods, cyclones, droughts, and heavy dependence on foreign aid as well as political turmoil (Siddiqui 2005) are often associated with the country. This can motivate Bangladesh's citizens to move to another country in pursuit of a better life, career, and future. Amongst other things, environmental degradation and poor infrastructural conditions are considered as the causes of the comparatively slow growth rate (Asian Development Outlook 1996, 1997). Apart from that poor savings and low investment rate are also viewed as the underlying causes of Bangladesh's dire situation and subsequent heavy dependency on foreign aid (Zamir 2006). In fact, failing to secure their livelihood inside the country, Bangladeshis started to migrate to other countries even before the country's independence in 1971 (Zamir 2006). Even today, both rich and poor Bangladeshis engage in migration as a livelihood strategy (Siddiqui 2005).

There are three major types of voluntary international migration that could be identified in South Asia, namely the movement of emigrants as settlers to Europe, Australia, or North America (long-term permanent settlers); the movement of contract labor migrants to the countries of the Middle East, South East Asia, and elsewhere (temporary migrant workers); and the intraregional short-term movement of people within the South Asian region (seasonal economic migrants) (Skeldon 2005). The present study will only deal with the temporary migrant workers who have migrated from Bangladesh to other countries.

After independence in 1971, new opportunities for international migration emerged. With rising oil prices, the Middle Eastern countries went through a phase of major infrastructure development for which they needed large numbers of expatriate workers. Various categories of Bangladeshi workers joined the Middle Eastern labor market. Gradually, such migration also expanded to the newly industrialized countries of Southeast Asia. The nature of such migration was qualitatively different from migration to the West. These migrants went on short-term employment, with specific job contracts, and had to return home on completion of their contract period. This category was the largest group of migrants. Systematic recording of information on migration of Bangladeshi workers began in the mid-70s. The Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) of Labor Ministry maintains the record. Table 7.1 shows the flow of Bangladeshi migrant workers from 1976 to 2008.

This is reflected in a graph in Fig. 7.1 and we can see the changing number of migrant workers in different years. It shows that until 2005 the flow of migration increased consistently every year, but in 2006 the number of migrant workers suddenly dropped and increased dramatically in 2007. These changes occurred due to economic crisis, when the receiving countries stopped recruiting international workers from different countries.

Table 7.1 Flow of migration from Bangladesh 1976–2008

Year	Number of migrant workers	Year	Number of migrant workers
1976	6087	1992	188,124
1977	15,725	1993	244,508
1978	22,809	1994	186,326
1979	24,495	1995	187,543
1980	30,073	1996	211,714
1981	55,787	1997	231,077
1982	62,762	1998	267,667
1983	59,220	1999	268,182
1984	56,714	2000	222,686
1985	77,694	2001	188,965
1986	68,658	2002	225,256
1987	74,017	2003	254,190
1988	68,121	2004	272,958
1989	101,724	2005	252,702
1990	103,814	2006	381,516
1991	147,131	2008 (Jan–June)	475,396
Total	5,390,854		

Source Bureau of manpower, employment and training (BMET) (2009)

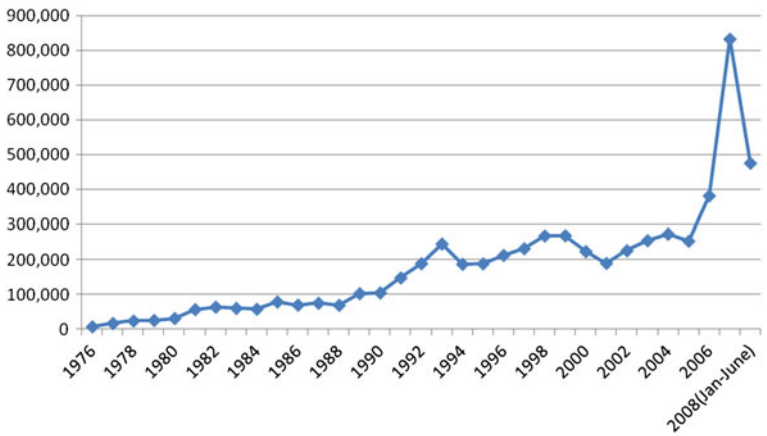

Fig. 7.1 Flow of migration from Bangladesh over different periods

Siddiqui (2003a,b) states that Saudi Arabia is the largest employer of Bangladeshi migrant workers. From 1976 to February 1999, altogether 2,679,171 people migrated from Bangladesh on overseas employment. Amongst them, 1,126,539 went to Saudi Arabia during that period. In 1998 alone, 267,667 persons went overseas on employment; more than half the number, i.e., 158,715 had gone to Saudi Arabia. From the late 1980s to 1997s, Malaysia became the second largest

employer of Bangladeshi migrant workers. However, due to the financial crisis in 1997, the number of Bangladeshis migrating to Malaysia fell drastically. If one counts the total number of people from 1976 to 1999, Malaysia still stands in second position amongst the Bangladeshi labor-importing countries (385,019). Other major countries of destination for migrant workers are the UAE, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, and Bahrain (Siddiqui, September 2003a, b).

Much of international migration from Bangladesh, an estimated 74.5 %, has been to the Middle East, especially to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (Ahmed 1998; Shah 1999). However, since the 1990s Bangladeshis have also become a notable part of the international labor migrant pool in a number of Southeast Asian and East Asian countries. Even before the country's independence in 1971, people from what was then the East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) were already migrating to other countries in search of jobs (Osmani 1986). Large-scale migration began in 1976, when the cash-rich Middle Eastern countries undertook massive development projects following the oil price hike in 1973. The crisis in the Persian Gulf during the period 1990–1991 prompted a shift in focus to Southeast and East Asia (Ahmed 1998).

7.2 Bangladeshi Labor Migration to Malaysia

In the 1990s, Malaysia suffered acute labor shortage—more so than other countries in the region (ILO 1998). Consequently, in 1992 Malaysia entered into an agreement with Bangladesh for the systematic transfer of labor on a large scale. Hence, the Bangladesh-to-Malaysia labor movement accelerated from that year onward. The importation in 1986 of 500 Bangladeshis to service the plantation sector on a trial basis was a precursor to the mass labor movement. In 1994, Malaysia entered into another agreement with Bangladesh for the annual importation of 50,000 workers, mostly for the construction industry (Ahmed 1998); however, the aftershock of the Asian Financial Crisis affected the program. In 1997, Malaysia deported 100,000 Bangladeshi workers and in 2001 announced restrictions on the importation of foreign labor (Netto 2001).

Table 7.2 and Fig. 7.2 show that during the Asian Financial Crisis from 1997 to 1998, there was a massive decline in the number of migrant workers in Malaysia.

Officially, there are 67,000 Bangladeshis in Malaysia, but different sources confirm that with illegal Bangladeshis included, there could be at least 350,000 workers (Bangladesh High Commission in Malaysia 2010). The latest report from Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training(BMET) records that until June 2014, a total of 707,339 Bangladeshi migrant workers migrated to Malaysia legally. Despite the legal and administrative channels available for employment in Malaysia, irregular migrants take high risks for a variety of reasons. Unlike the employment of highly skilled labor, the legal recruitment of low-skilled labor involves several intermediaries in the sending and receiving countries to process their movement, raising the transaction costs of migration. In contrast, illegal employment is less

Table 7.2 Bangladesh—Malaysia labor flow (1978 to March 2000)

Year	Number of total migrants in Malaysia	Year	Number of total migrants in Malaysia
1978	23	1990	1385
1979	NA	1991	1628
1980	3	1992	10,537
1981	NA	1993	67,938
1982	NA	1994	47,826
1983	NA	1995	35,174
1984	NA	1996	66,631
1985	NA	1997	152,844
1986	53	1998	551
1987	NA	1999	NA
1988	2	Till March 2000	30
1989	401		
Total	385,526		

Source Prepared from BMET and Bangladesh Bank data 2000, cited from (Siddiqui, September 2003a, b). NA means, data is not available for that particular year

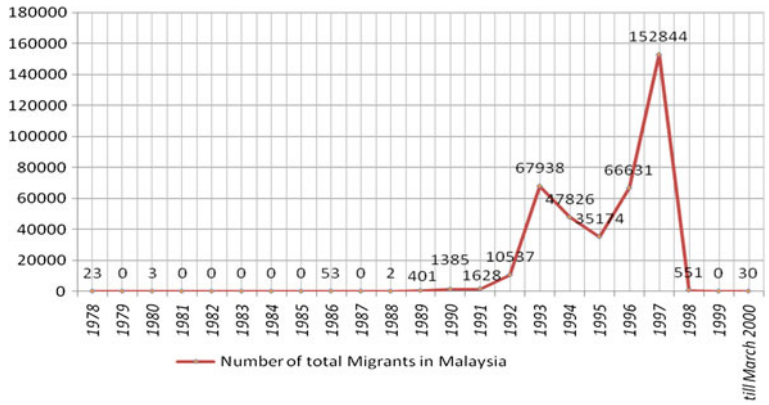

Fig. 7.2 Bangladesh—Malaysia labor flow (1978 to March 2000)

time-consuming and cumbersome, and cheaper for both employers and migrants. Policies also tie foreign workers in legal status to a particular employer and location. Hence, foreign workers who prefer greater freedom and flexibility, and seek opportunities to earn higher incomes resort to irregular migration.

The Labor Department of the Ministry of Human Resources, Malaysia states that in February 2010, officially there were 1,803,260 migrant workers working in different sectors in the country. Table 7.3 shows the number of legal migrant workers in Malaysia from different countries.

Table 7.3 Migrant workers in Malaysia (2010)

Country	Total number of migrant workers	Country	Total number of migrant workers
Indonesia	917,932	Thailand	7102
Bangladesh	307,366	Cambodia	12,091
Nepal	175,810	China	8894
Myanmar	140,260	Sri Lanka	3414
India	113,797	Laos	57
Vietnam	74,842	Uzbekistan	4
Filipina	18,640	Kazakhstan	1
Pakistan	22,989	Others	61
Total	1,803,260		

Source Labor Department, Ministry of Human Resources, Malaysia (2010)

The statistics above show that there are about 1.8 million legal workers in Malaysia. Moreover, there are more than 800,000 illegal workers living in Malaysia too. Recently, the Ministry of Human Resources announced that the migrant population will be increased to 5 million by the year 2011 to keep up with the development of the country (Ministry of Human Resource 2010). Most illegal migrant workers from Bangladesh come via Thailand to Malaysia, and are mainly concentrated in the northern region of the country. These workers are very vulnerable, and are often badly paid. Unfortunately, what is known about the legal workers is not much promising. They come on a 2 year contract; all have paid fees as high as 5000–9000 Malaysian Ringgit (RM). Although there are a few females in certain sectors like the textile industry, most of the migrants are male (Abdul-Rashid 2001).

Almost all the early migrants traveled abroad on their private initiative (Osmani 1986). In the mid-1970s, the Government of Bangladesh set up an institutional framework, the BMET under the Ministry of Labor, to regularize the procedures for labor export. From that time onward, all foreign employment was required to be cleared by BMET while private recruitment agents were required to have a license to operate. Likewise, in the beginning, labor movement to Malaysia was left entirely in the hands of the private sector. In 1995, following allegations of exorbitant fees and inefficiencies, a government-to-government procedure was introduced between the newly formed Malaysian Task Force and Bangladesh Overseas Employment Services Ltd. (Abdul-Rashid 2001).

The study examines two inter-related issues—migration and employment. The targets of analysis/respondents under study are male Bangladeshi migrant workers in the state of Selangor. It is an attempt to evaluate the impact of transnational migration and employment among a group of male migrant workers from a rural society. This study investigates the factors which are responsible for the migration of Bangladeshi migrant workers to Malaysia. It also examines their employment and living conditions in Malaysia. The study further explores how migrant workers are adapting to difficult conditions in Malaysia.

7.3 Research Methodology

In this research, all Bangladeshi male migrant workers who are working in Malaysia are regarded as the population of the study. Four types of Bangladeshi male migrant workers were selected on the basis of occupational sectors: these are the manufacturing sector, construction sector, restaurant sector, and in the cleaning sector where most Bangladeshis are employed. The total number of respondents were 400; 100 selected from each sector. There were no certain places where all migrant workers are available, so the respondents were selected randomly from Kuala Lumpur and Selangor area. The enumerators found them in market places, LRT stations, restaurants, construction sectors, and sometimes in front of Bangladesh High Commission in Malaysia.

To collect data from workers, a structured questionnaire was designed. It was used for face-to-face in-depth interviews, and also for individuals to complete. The questionnaires were available in English and Bengali languages. I used four male enumerators to collect data from Bangladeshi migrant workers. As a female researcher, it would have been difficult for me to administer the questionnaire by myself. During the pilot survey, I interviewed 10 respondents in different places and experienced difficulties in interviewing male respondents. Their attitude was not co-operative to a female researcher and sometimes they were more interested in me rather than answering questions.

The questionnaire used during fieldwork had both close-ended and open-ended questions; on the other hand, interviews with the respondents were an important tool of data collection. For the present study, the enumerators interviewed all the respondents face-to-face. Fieldwork was conducted for 4 months in 2011. All the enumerators were Bangladeshi students who were studying in the universities of Malaysia and were trained for field data collection. They were able to explain the questionnaire to the respondents in Bengali while they were interviewing.

A total of fifteen face-to-face in-depth interviews were held, asking them for personal details about their experience. An interview guide containing open-ended questions were used that included socio-economic background, personal experiences in Malaysia, opinions about gender roles, and responsibilities. In-depth interviews were held at the offices and in migrant workers' places of work, but always in strict confidence. The researcher herself conducted all the in-depth interviews. It was not safe for the researcher to go alone amongst male migrant workers, so she took her husband along for security.

The open structure of qualitative interviewing allows unexpected issues to emerge. Demographic as well as socio-economic information have been analyzed by using descriptive[1] statistics. To maintain the quality of data, all completed questionnaires were checked for completeness and consistency of responses. A revisit was required to rectify mistakes that were detected.

[1]The use of statistics to describe a set of known data in a clear and concise manner, as in terms of its mean and variance, or diagrammatically.

7.4 Data Analysis and Discussion

Socio-demographic Profile of the Respondents

A total of 400 Bangladeshi migrant workers were selected from four sectors: cleaning, construction, manufacturing, and restaurant in Kuala Lumpur and Klang valley. I will discuss the socio-demographic profile of the respondents and their living conditions in Malaysia based on the primary data collected from the field.

Age Structure

From the data, it has been observed that most of the migrant workers are young. About 176 migrants (44 %) of the total sample are within 20–30 years of age. This is not surprising because migrant workers everywhere tend to be young and several studies have found that young persons are more likely to migrate for overseas employment (Karim et al. 1999; Rudinick 1996; Lie 1995; Rahman 2000 in Rahman and Lian 2005). The second largest number of respondents, about 161 (40.3 %) of the total sample size, are from the age group of 31–40 years. Most of the respondents from this age group have stayed in Malaysia for a longer time than the workers who are below 31 years old. There are also 63 respondents among 400 whose age are more than 41 (see Table 7.4). This 30+ aged group has to work very hard in Malaysia. This indicates the increasing unemployment rate in Bangladesh which forces people to migrate to other countries to earn a better income.

Educational Background and Religious Affiliation

Normally, those with a better educational background are not interested to do hard physical work, but the present study was conducted among migrant workers who are engaged in sectors where educational background is not important. Data shows that 50.5 % of the respondents have completed their primary education, while 48 % has certificate for completion of secondary education (see Table 7.4). Only six migrant workers among the 400 respondents have college degrees and according to them they were misled by the agency that promised them a better job. They are not interested in their current jobs but they have no alternatives.

Marital Status

There are 365 (91.3 %) unmarried man and only 8.7 % married men in the sample (Table 7.4). Those who are already married are not willing to migrate and leave their families behind. Being unmarried makes it easy to migrate. Once they marry and have a family, it is very difficult for them to raise enough money for migration.

Table 7.4 Socio-demographic profile of the respondents

Age structure	Frequency	Education background	Frequency
20–30 years	176 (44 %)	Primary level	202 (50.5 %)
31–40 years	161 (40.3 %)	Secondary level	192 (48 %)
41 years to above	63 (15.7 %)	College level	6 (1.5 %)
Total	**400 (100 %)**	**Total**	**400 (100 %)**
Religious affiliation	Frequency	Marital status	Frequency
Muslim	393 (98.3 %)	Married	35 (8.7 %)
Hindu	7 (1.7 %)	Unmarried	365 (91.3 %)
Total	**400 (100 %)**	**Total**	**400 (100 %)**
Earning members in the family	Frequency	Position in the family	Frequency
One	220 (55 %)	First son	162 (40.5 %)
Two	83 (20.7 %)	Second son	70 (17.5 %)
Three	65 (16.3 %)	Third son	129 (32.2 %)
Four	32 (8.0 %)	Fourth son	39 (9.8 %)
Total	**400 (100 %)**	**Total**	**400 (100 %)**
Nature of employment	Frequency	Type of family structure	Frequency
Self employed	372 (93 %)	Nuclear family	13 (3.3 %)
Wage-employment	16 (4.0 %)	Joint/extended family	387 (96.7 %)
Mixed	12 (3.0 %)	**Total**	**400 (100 %)**
Total	**400 (100 %)**		

Those who are unmarried stay in a joint or extended family and it is easier for them to raise the money. As Mainul, who is unmarried, said

> I didn't get married before migration. If I did so then my family won't give me so much money for migration. Some people told me to get married before migration and claim dowry from girl's house. But my family didn't agree. They told me to settle down first by hard work then get married.

Origin and Types of Family Structure

In the present study, all the respondents are from the rural districts; none of them came from urban areas. There are three types of families in Bangladesh. A nuclear family consists of immediate family members of a person. A joint family consists of parents, their married and unmarried children and their children, and an extended family includes parents, their children, grandchildren and father's brothers who stay together. Potential migrants benefit more from living in extended and joint families as kin members can help to arrange for funding. The data shows (see Table 7.4) that 96.7 % of migrant workers are from joint and extended families while only 3.3 % are from nuclear families. As Imran said

> I have 4 brothers and 2 sisters. Although brothers are married but we live in joint family. I am married with 2 children. My brothers work in the garments factories in Bangladesh. My parents are sick and we have to spend a lot of money for their treatment. That's why my elder brothers told me to work in Malaysia and they have provided money for that. I have left my wife and children with my family. Now I can send money to my brothers more than I could in Bangladesh. I am so happy that I live in a joint family, otherwise it was not possible to manage money for migration.

Family Background of the Migrant Worker

First sons are 40.55 % of the sample, 17.5 % are second sons, 32.2 % are third sons, and only 9.8 % are the fourth son in the family (see Table 7.4). According to those who are first sons in the family, it is their responsibility to earn and provide for their family well-being and for his future. Fathers are usually unable to maintain a big family in their old age, so the first son has to do something to help out. Most of the time, if the first son is unmarried then he has a huge responsibility for his siblings. If the first son of the family is married and is living away from the joint family, then younger brothers have to take on the responsibility of providing for the family. In a few cases in the absence of father, the eldest son takes on the family responsibilities and sends his younger brothers to earn money abroad. About 55.0 % has one earning member, 20.7 % has two earning members, 16.3 % has three earning members, and 8.0 % has four earning members in the family.

In the case of the nature of employment, 93.0 % are self-employed (they do part-time jobs in the village, such as day labor), 4.0 % wage-employed, and 3.0 % are doing other types of work or a combination of work (see Table 7.4). The data shows that other family members are not earning much for the family. So the earnings of migrant workers are very important for their families.

Sometimes there is more than one migrant worker in the same family. 7.5 % has two migrants and 5.0% has three migrants from the same family. On the other hand, 87.5 % of migrant workers are the sole migrant of the family. If the migrant workers can earn a good amount of money, then they encourage their family members to migrate but this is few and far between. Whatever they earn is used to settle debts and for their consumption as well. So, most of the migrant workers cannot afford to pay their siblings to go overseas.

Monthly Income Before Migration

In Bangladesh, total workforce is 70.86 million (2008 est.); approximately 45 % of the workforce is involved in agriculture and 25–30 % are employed in the service and industrial sectors (2008 est.), respectively. Thirty six percent of the (36 %, 2009 est.) population live under poverty line and 2.4 % (2008 est.) of the population is unemployed (BBS Report 2009). Bangladesh has been characterized as a nation of small, subsistence-based farmers, and nearly everyone in the rural areas are

Table 7.5 Migration survey

Monthly income before migration	Frequency	Economic costs of migration	Frequency
Less than RM300	304 (76 %)	MYR7001 to MYR 12,000	9 (2.3 %)
RM301 to RM600	72 (18 %)	MYR12,001 to MYR17,000	245 (61.3 %)
No income at all	24 (6 %)	More than MYR 17,000	146 (36.4 %)
Total	**400 (100 %)**	**Total**	**400 (100 %)**
Sources of information	Frequency	Number of months waited	Frequency
Agents	374 (93.5 %)	Less than three months	306 (76.5 %)
Relatives/friends in Malaysia	14 (3.5 %)	Three months to six months	61 (15.3 %)
Newspaper	7 (1.8 %)	Seven months to 10 months	26 (6.5 %)
Television	5 (1.2 %)	More than 10 months	7 (1.7 %)
Total	**400 (100 %)**	**Total**	**400 (100 %)**
Sources of money	Frequency	Future use of remittance	Frequency
Borrowed money	164 (41 %)	Personal consumption	41 (10.3 %)
Sold land	186 (46.5 %)	Savings for business	81 (20.3 %)
Sold livestock	17 (4.3 %)	Buy lands	112 (28 %)
Pawned jewelry	4 (1 %)	Build new house	144 (36 %)
Used parent's savings	3 (0.8 %)	Education of the children	13 (3.2 %)
Used own savings	7 (1.6 %)	Buy new furniture	9 (2.2 %)
Used sibling's savings	6 (1.5 %)	**Total**	**400 (100 %)**
Used father-in-law's money	13 (3.3 %)		
Total	**400 (100 %)**		

involved in agriculture. All the respondents of this study are from a rural background and they are involved in agricultural activities. The field data shows that 76 % of the migrants had a monthly income of less than 300 Malaysian Ringgit, 18 % used to earn between RM301 to RM600 per month, and 6 % of migrants had no income at all before they migrated (see Table 7.5).

Push and Pull Factors of Migration

Migration can occur as a result of push and pull factors. Push factors are negative home conditions that contribute to the decision to migrate. This can include loss of job, lack of employment opportunities, overcrowding, famine, and war. Pull factors

are those positive attributes perceived to exist at the new location. These include a chance of a better job, better education, and a better standard of living.

Such push and pull factors are also applicable to the present study. Data shows that there are three types of push factors which are responsible for migration. About 80.3 % of the people have migrated to earn more money. This is obvious because we know that in Bangladesh about 36 % of their population lives under the poverty line. 11.5 % of the sample migrated due to family influence and 8.2 % due to unemployment problems. On the other hand, there are three pull factors of migration that attracts Bangladeshi migrant workers to Malaysia. About 71.3 % of the respondents migrate to Malaysia for better opportunity, while 26.7 % for higher income, and 2 % of the respondents migrate due to their relatives and friends who are already working in Malaysia. It is easier for them to adapt in Malaysia if they can get help from a known person. As Sharif said

> I have come to Malaysia to earn more money. My uncle is a local broker who sends people to Malaysia. He gave me the information about Malaysia. Besides this my father was in Saudi Arabia for a long time and my elder brother is still in Kuwait. I don't have higher education that's why my family decided to send me to Malaysia as I can earn more money than in Bangladesh.

Sources of Information for Migration and Cost of Migration

The role of recruiting agents and brokers is vital to labor migration; without them only few migrants would have the information or contacts needed for migration. These brokers are not outsiders; they are usually from the village. They work for the national recruiting agents who give them commission for their job. As the brokers are from the village, it is easy for them to motivate people to migrate. According to the respondents, once they are caught by the brokers they have no way to escape from them. They are persistent in recruiting as they do not want to lose a client. They continuously try to convince them, telling success stories of other migrants who are already abroad. Rahman and Lian (2005) also mentioned in their research in Singapore about the importance of brokers in the migration process

> Recruiting agents and brokers, who play a complementary role in the recruitment of prospective migrants, employ people who act as brokers in villages in Bangladesh to convince prospective migrants of the benefits from migrating. These local brokers collect fees on behalf of the national recruiting agents or migrant brokers, who in turn initiate the recruitment process. Local brokers get a fixed commission for their work, which usually ranges from 5 to 10 % of the total cost of migration. Generally, local agents collect fees from as many prospective migrants as they can for the initiation of the migration process. As a result, the demand for "in-principle approval (for work)", which is issued in Singapore, usually exceeds supply. This leads to a situation in which some of the prospective migrants are successful while others are not. Prospective migrants who fail in the first round wait for the second round. However, such a system exposes them to victimization inside Bangladesh (Rahman and Lian 2005).

The present study also has the same result from the field data. It shows that about 93.5 % of the respondents had information about Malaysia from the agents of different private agencies. 3.5 % got information from friends or relatives staying in Malaysia, 1.8 % from newspapers, and only 1.2 % from television (see Table 7.5). After getting the information about the destination country, migrant workers use different ways to reach there. Some contacted the agencies and some managed on their own. Of the 400 who came to Malaysia, 272 work through agencies and 128 found their jobs themselves. Generally, those who work in the construction and restaurant sectors came to Malaysia on their own initiative and not through an agency. All the migrant workers have to wait for a long time after paying the agents. In the present study, 76.5 % of respondents waited less than 3 months while 15.3 % waited for 3–6 months, 6.5 % waited for 7–10 months and 1.7 % waited for more than 10 months (see Table 7.5). As Nazrul described his experience

> The broker took a total of RM10,000 from me and the first payment was RM7,000 for visa fees and work permit. After that I waited more than one year. But the broker didn't send me to Malaysia and didn't give the money back. I was so depressed at that time because my family raises most of the money from money lenders. They were not happy with me because I have used their money and couldn't give anything in return. Instead they were paying interest for one year. After that the broker told me if I want to go then I have to pay another RM3,000.00 otherwise he can't do anything. We were helpless because he won't give the money back if we don't pay the second installment. We were in a trap. That's why my family decided to pay the money and after 1 year 4 months I came to Malaysia without any valid work permit.

2.3 % of the respondents paid between RM7000 to RM12,000, 61.3 % paid between RM12,001 to RM17,000, and 36.4 % migrant workers paid more than RM17,000 (Table 7.5). There are differences between payments. Some migrants paid RM7000 and some paid about RM17,000 and more. The difference is due to the number of middlemen involved. Some respondents had to pay one middleman while others who paid more than two middlemen had to spend a huge amount of money for migration. Whatever be the amount, this is enormous for people from the rural villages. To raise such a large amount, they and their families have to sell their properties, jewelry, livestock, and borrow from moneylenders—incurring large debts.

Migrant workers pursue different ways to collect money for migration as shown in Table 7.5. In the present study, the majority of the respondents borrowed money from the money lenders with high interest and sell their land and whatever they have. About 41 % of the respondents borrowed money and 46.5 % sold their land. On the other hand, 4.3 % sold their livestock, 1.0 % pawned jewelry of their mothers or their wives, three persons used parent's savings, seven persons used their own savings, six persons used sibling's savings, and 13 persons used their father-in-law's money (see Table 7.5).

It is not surprising to use money from in-laws because dowry is a common practice in Bangladesh society. This is a very significant change in dowry practice. Dowry is usually related to household products like furniture for the house, motorbike, radio, television, etc. After getting married, the bride used to bring all

the dowry consumables to her father-in-law's house and to stay with her husband's family. But now, dowry is paid as cash for the future son-in-law's migration expenditure. So, after getting married the husband will take the money and leave his wife alone at home with his family members. Rashedul related

> I have come here supported by money from my father-in-law. I don't think it's wrong because I will earn money in Malaysia and will spend for my wife. So my father-in-law should help to get me a better life. Although other people laughed at me that I have taken dowry but I don't care. I have no other alternatives other than taking the dowry. My family was not able to pay such a huge amount of money for migration.

Present and Future Use of Remittances

According to Douglass (2006), the amount of migrant remittances now circulating around the globe is an indicator of the influence of households in international migration. Migrant workers send back as much as half of their income or more to families and relatives. Moreover, many migrants say that it is this contribution to households that makes their dire working conditions bearable. To be part of a household and to contribute to it gives them identity and meaning (Douglass 2006).

The remittance pattern is mainly dependent on the socio-economic background of the migrants; mode of financing the emigration; and duration of stay in the host country. It should, however, be mentioned that most of the respondents in the present study came to Malaysia from rural areas, from a poor economic background. Prior to emigration, they were working in traditional agriculture and petty rural occupations with meager and unstable income. To finance their emigration, the majority sold off whatever little assets they possessed and raised loans. For migrant families from poor economic background, their first and foremost priority is to raise their consumption standards rather than make productive investments. There are four major uses of remittances: personal consumption 40.8 %, debt payment 48.8 %, purchase of land 5.0 %, and for wedding purpose expenditure 5.4 % (see Fig. 7.3).

The first thing migrant workers do after getting their salary is to try to settle all the debts and send money back for personal consumption, because during migration whatever money they borrowed reduces their family consumption back in Bangladesh. So, families do not have money for day-to-day expenditure. Somehow, the families left behind maintain their family and wait for the remittances. So, the present use of remittance is mainly on consumption and partial payment of loans. In the very first year, migrant workers cannot save money but later they try to save some for future use. Some plan to buy land or to start a small business. Table 7.5 shows future use of remittances: 10.3 % use for personal consumption, 20.3 % save money to start-up a new business, 28 % plan to buy cultivable land, 36 % want to use remittances for building a new house, 3.2 % save money for education of their children, and 2.2 % want to buy new furniture for their new house.

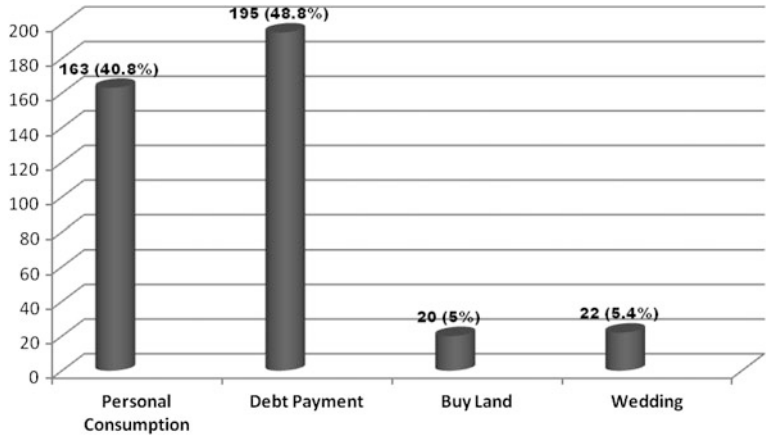

Fig. 7.3 Present use of remittance

From the pattern of use of remittance, one finds that for some families remittance is the major source of income to maintain subsistence. However, remittance is also invested; land is the safest and profitable investment. The receiving households make all kinds of land-related investments, arable, homestead, and commercial. In comparison to previous studies, investment in savings of these households is relatively low. A substantial portion of remittance is used to finance migration of other family members. Families see this as a major investment for further enhancing their household income. Remittance senders also brought items when they came back on holidays or they sent them through friends. This included cassette player, radio, television, computer, etc. (Siddique and Abrar 2002).

The impact of remittance on the economy of labor sending countries depends to a large extent on the way they are used (Richards and Martin 1983). Over the years, concerns have been expressed about the limited extent of the productive use of remittance. Different authors have different perceptions about what constitute productive use. However, there is a general agreement that the bulk of the remittance money is used in daily expenditure for food and clothing. A big amount also goes into house improvement. Demary (1986) estimated that 50–60 % of remittances in Asia are typically spent on consumption and only about 10 % goes into investment (Demary 1986 cited in Siddiqui and Abrar 2002).

Living and Working in Malaysia

Although male migrants often come to Malaysia on their own and with the help of a support network, they are still important members of their natal family in Bangladesh. They are always involved in making important decisions in the family. After migrating to Malaysia, they also bond with the other workers. They may be

from the same village or same area or other people can also click together. They develop their support network in their living and working environment. Otherwise it is difficult for them to survive. It is important to remember that the migrant household is often made up of numerous and unrelated people. As Douglass (2006) reminds us

> Individual workers are allowed to enter countries only on short-term contracts but categorically cannot bring any family members with them. Most countries also have visa stipulations that forbid immigrants to marry a citizen of the host country (2006, p. 435).

Often, men create or find their own support groups within the house. However, migrants are also ready to reveal their daily phone conversations with their families. They are important members of the family and still exert influence. Anecdotally, while I was conducting research, I overheard one man asking about his nephew's whereabouts. He was also keeping track of his movements outside of the home. The physical distance from Bangladesh to Malaysia does not keep him apart from his family. Indeed, migrant phone bills can range from RM150 to RM200 per month.

Living Conditions in Malaysia After Migration

Amongst 400 respondents, 293 are presently staying in different areas in Kuala Lumpur and 107 migrant workers are staying in Selangor (see Fig. 7.4). Normally, migrant workers share a single or double storey house, apartment in a condominium, or accommodation provided by the agency or employers or have to arrange for accommodation on their own. Migrant workers who are in manufacturing or cleaning sectors stay in houses provided by the employers. On the other hand, those who are working in the construction and restaurant sectors have to manage their accommodation themselves. 54.5 % of migrant workers in this study stay in houses managed by their employers and 45.5 % stay in rented houses (see Fig. 7.5).

Migrant workers have complained about their accommodation. According to them it is very congested and unhealthy. Employers in Malaysia used to rent a whole double or single storey house and divide one room into several rooms. Where normally one or two person can stay, there they keep 6–8 persons. When they sleep at night, there is no place to walk in the room. As Shariful said

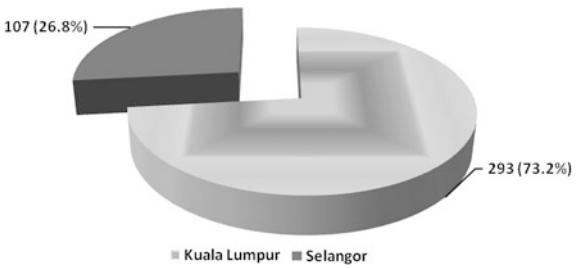

Fig. 7.4 Current living locations

Fig. 7.5 Accommodation provided

> I stay in a house with 20 people. It's a house nearby my workplace. The building is very old and located in a narrow and dark place. Outside of the house there is pile of wastage of the company. If you want to go to our house you have to stop your breath because it's too dirty and smelly outside. After reaching the house you will see few small rooms where sunshine can't get in at day time also. When we sleep there is no place to move. If we want to go out then we have to step on someone.

The house is often sublet to many people, resulting in overcrowding. Sometimes, the migrant workers sleep outside the house too, sometimes on the roof or balcony. Survey data (see Fig. 7.6) indicates that 19.3 % of the respondents stay with 10 persons in a house, 31.3 % with 11–20 people, 22.3 % are living with 21–30 people, 2.3 % with 31–40 people, 19.5 % with 41–50 persons, and 5.3 % of the respondents stay with more than 50 people in a single house. One of the main reasons for living in such a crowded place is because they work in the same place or the place of work is closely located. 18.5 % of the respondents live about a quarter of a kilometer away from their work place, while 13.3 % stay half a kilometer away from their work place. The majority of migrant workers stay one kilometer away from the work place and that is 68.2 % of the total sample of respondents.

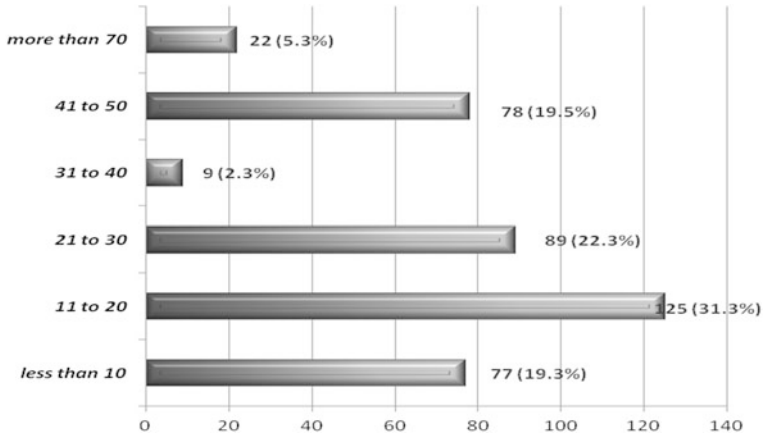

Fig. 7.6 Number of housemates

Most of them walk to work while some use bicycles, bus, or LRT. 85.3 % of the respondents go to work by foot, while only 2.8 % go by bicycles, 1.8 % go by bus, and 10.1 % use the LRT to reach their work place. Cleaners who work in LRT stations go by LRT to reach their destination. Those who have been staying in Malaysia for a long time have their own bicycles. Those who are totally new walk from their residence. Sometimes they take the bus if it is not possible to reach the place by foot.

Job-Related Information After Migrating to Malaysia

I have reviewed earlier that there are four sectors which have been selected for this study. But importantly, as Douglass (2006) argues: even where percentages are yet small, certain sectors of the economy which require 3D (dirty, dangerous, and difficult) work—nursing and care of the elderly and domestic help—have become dependent on foreign workers (Douglass 1999). They are the cleaning sector, construction sector, manufacturing sector, and restaurant sector. 100 Bangladeshi migrant workers have been selected from each sector and a total of 400 workers were interviewed. The data shows that those who work in the cleaning and manufacturing sectors is not there by choice; they are doing the job because of their contract with the agency. On the other hand, those who are in the construction sector and restaurant sector have chosen their jobs by themselves. They had no contract with any agency. So there are numerous problems regarding their salary and conditions. About 65.5 % of the respondents are satisfied with their employer or wages and 34.5 % are not satisfied with their wages and their employer.

The normal working hours for migrant workers are 8 h per day, but the majority work more than that. Sometimes they have been contracted to work more than 8 h and sometimes they are forced to work more hours. But there are some employers who pay them overtime. In the restaurant sector, there is no overtime payment. They have a fixed salary for the full month but working hours are not fixed. In the cleaning sector working hours are already fixed in their contract but in the manufacturing and construction sectors, workers sometimes get extra payment for overtime work. 21 % of respondents work 10 h per day, 29 % work 11 h per day, 18.2 % work 12 h per day, 6.8 % work 14 h per day, and 25 % work 16 h per day. The respondents who are in the cleaning and manufacturing sector have no problems in getting their salaries regularly. But respondents in the construction sector complained about irregular salary. Newcomers are usually vulnerable. Ninety three percent (93 %) of the respondents are paid regularly and only 7 % have problems in getting their salary regularly (see Fig. 7.7).

Daily Problems Faced in Malaysia

Difficulties in communicating with the local population are likely to be a major factor that restricts the earnings of migrant workers. Language proficiency is often

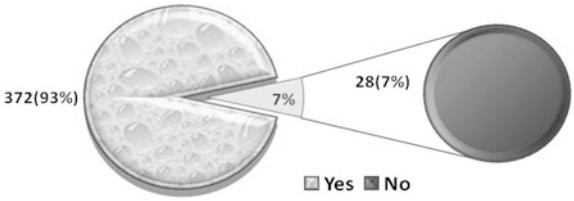

Fig. 7.7 Getting salary regularly or not

used by employers as a screening device for recruitment (Dustmann 1994, p. 138). As part of cultural adaptation, many of the respondents agreed that learning a local language was a common strategy for adapting to the receiving society.

For the migrant workers, language is a major barrier to cope with. Most of the migrant workers in this study are not well-educated or they are educated in their local language. English is a totally unknown language for them. The only way of communication is through the local language of Malaysia. So it is very important for them to learn the language as fast as possible and they do it remarkably well. For the sake of their subsistence, they pick up Bahasa Melayu (the Malay language) within one to two months after their arrival in Malaysia. Surprisingly, within a short period they start to use Malay in their workplace and in day-to-day affairs as well. All the respondents know Malay very well. According to them, without learning the local language it is difficult to work and live in Malaysia. But language is not the only thing to cope with in a totally new society.

When the respondents were asked if they know the emergency number to call when they are in trouble, only 19.8 % responded positively and 80.2 % (see Fig. 7.8) do not know anything about that. But the interesting thing is that those who know the emergency number do not call for help. None of them know how to report a crime in the police station. Many of them faced problems, but they are not interested to report at all. They have a plain and simple answer that they are scared of the police and they do not trust them.

When they were asked whether they faced any discrimination as migrant workers in Malaysia, all of them responded yes to the question. They have a long

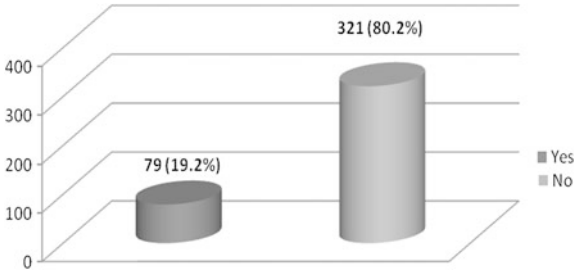

Fig. 7.8 Do you know the emergency number to call?

list of complaints. According to them, they feel uncomfortable because local people always look down upon them as Bangladeshi labors. They think that the local people treat the other migrant workers from different countries better than they do the Bangladeshi migrant workers. They work hard but still are not appreciated, they have no status and no recognition in the work place. They are Muslims but local Malaysian Muslims never treat them as Muslims. They go to mosques for prayer but are always treated as untouchables. Table 7.6 lists the problems faced by Bangladeshi migrant workers in Malaysia. Besides these, migrant workers face a lot of problems in the work place too. According to them, they have to tolerate all these problems if they want to continue their job. They mentioned that their supervisors always create problems in the work place, sometimes they ask for money; sometimes they tell them to buy food, cigarettes, etc.

Some migrant workers who work in the manufacturing and restaurant sectors say that local workers (Malay, Indian and Chinese) are allowed to take rest but they are pressured to complete the work in time. If they ignore the demand or raise their voices, they are threatened with dismissal or sometimes they are beaten. On the other hand, immigration officers and police demand money from them although they have valid work permits. Sometimes, Indian gangsters snatch money from them. In the work place, Indonesian workers create problems; they always try to dominate them. Some Bangladeshi migrant workers are also beaten by Indonesian workers who have been working for a long time in Malaysia. They dare to do it because they have good connections with local bosses.

Table 7.6 Problems faced in Malaysia

Discrimination as a migrant worker	Frequency	Type of difficulties	Frequency
We work very hard still we have no value	183 (45.8 %)	Boss creates problem in the job place	81 (20.3 %)
Local people do not treat us well	64 (16 %)	Police disturb on the road	81 (20.3 %)
Some people neglect us as poor people	18 (4.5 %)	Boss takes money	56 (14 %)
Some people neglect us because we are Bangladeshi	39 (9.8 %)	Immigration and police harass although I have visa	52 (13 %)
We do not get equal facilities as other foreign labor form Indonesia, Nepal, etc.	55 (13.8 %)	Indonesian guys disturbing in the work place	35 (8.8 %)
Local co-workers treat us as untouchable	41 (10.1 %)	Indian supervisor giving problem in the work place	95 (23.6 %)
Total	**400 (100 %)**	**Total**	**400 (100 %)**

7.5 Conclusion

Poverty is usually regarded as the motivation for migration. However, since the early 1990s, it has been recognized that the poorest often cannot migrate since resources are needed to do so, especially for international migration. It is therefore typically not the 'poorest of the poor' who migrate. While there may be a strong relationship between migration, poverty, and its alleviation, poverty in itself may not be a factor in migration. Bangladeshis who migrate to Malaysia do so to improve their standard of living, for income maximization, and accumulation of savings for future investment in Bangladesh. For a large number of rural households, remittances are a major source of subsistence. Studies reveal that remittances constituted half of the total income of these rural households. Bangladeshi migrants use remittances to pay off their debts, or invest earnings in physical capital back home, including land and houses. Remittances are also used to buy consumer items, such as ornaments, computers, televisions, and mobile phones. Such assets partly serve as status symbols, accumulation of which contributes to marriage and dowry. Migration by men from rural Bangladesh to Malaysia is driven by the prospect of upward economic and social mobility.

Being able to mobilize resources to fund migration is a key determinant of migration for the respondents of this study. Most of the respondents are poor but they are able to access loans from local sources. Most of them took loans to cover the partial or full cost of their migration. Money from family members was the next common source, followed by selling land, mortgaging land, and selling of other assets. Furthermore, a few respondents claimed dowry from their father-in-law's property. Nowadays, it is becoming one of the sources of funding for migration. Marriage negotiations for Bangladeshi Muslims involve various financial transactions including primarily the religiously sanctioned dower (*mahr*). Added to *mahr*, the practice of dowry or *joutuk*, demands made by the husband's side to the bride's side, have in the past few decades become a widespread practice supported neither by state law nor personal laws, but apparently designed to strengthen traditional patriarchal ties. A few migrants however earned enough to pay dowry for their sisters and daughters. Sometimes there is a contract between groom and father-in-law, such as "if you pay money for my migration I will marry your daughter. Or if you marry my daughter I will send you to Malaysia." This is becoming a common practice among Bangladeshi migrants in Malaysia.

This study shows the traditional patriarchal character of male Bangladeshi migrant workers in Malaysia. Although all the respondents do household work in Malaysia, they still think that it is women's work. They strongly believe in the gender division of labor. There are also differences among the migrant workers working in the different sectors. Those who work in the construction sector are more masculine than those who work in the other three sectors. When the respondents from the construction sector were asked whether women should work in the public domain, only few of the respondents agreed, while responses from the other three sectors were rather mixed. We can see the same result when respondents

were asked whether both men and women should contribute to household work. It has been observed that respondents from the cleaning, manufacturing, and restaurant sectors are not willing to do work in the construction sector. They gave the reason that it is hard to work there in the sun and the workload is heavy. Although salary is high in the construction sector compared to the other three sectors, they prefer the less demanding jobs. On the other hand, those who work in the construction sector underestimate cleaning, manufacturing, and the restaurant sector as easy work that even women can do. None of them are willing to change their jobs. It has been observed that respondents who work in the construction sector have been in the job for a long time. They started their job as a construction worker and are not willing to change their job although they have to work hard there. They think that as a man they should do more manly work to demonstrate their masculinity.

The ability to communicate with the local population is critical. Without knowing Bahasa Melayu, they cannot communicate with the employees and their supervisors in the workplace. Either they have to speak English or the local language. Learning English is almost impossible for them because they have poor educational background and their mother tongue is *Bangla*. According to Malaysians, Bangladeshi migrants are quick at learning local languages. Occasionally, they can speak Tamil and Chinese as well. In the Bukit Bintang area, a popular tourist spot in Kuala Lumpur, most of the Bangladeshi salesmen can speak Arabic, Persian, Hindi, and Urdu fluently. When they were asked about sources of learning different languages, it was revealed that they learnt it from tourists. The respondents expressed the belief that knowledge of the local languages provides access to a broader spectrum of jobs and better pay. Language plays an important role in mitigating stress by removing barriers to communication that may compound feelings of isolation.

Bangladeshi migrant workers in Malaysia are exploited by both employers and police. It was observed that migrants are often forced into labor or exploited in other ways, such as having their passports confiscated by employers, receiving no payment for several months, or forced to live in overcrowded conditions and sleep outside. During rain, some people sit beside the wall for the whole night. Sometimes the police raid their houses in the middle of the night. The fear of police and local thugs is very common among Bangladeshi workers. Despite having legal documents, some Bangladeshi workers face harassment from the police. Sometimes they are sent to detention camp without the knowledge of their employers. In many instances, the police detain these legal workers and fine them RM50, RM30, or even RM10 without providing any receipt. There is a saying among the Bangladeshi workers that the thugs are coming for a "Slap, Threat, and RM10;" (so, give them RM10 before getting the slap and threat). There are many incidents in which Bangladeshi workers were punched, beaten up, robbed, and even killed. If they do not have money, the police will seize their mobiles or wrist watches. In the workplaces, Indonesian and local workers beat them brutally. They have to keep their bosses happy with buying cigarettes, *makan* (food), *minum* (drinks), etc. Meanwhile they have to do extra work without payment for saving their job. The

situation is even worse in many construction sites and fast food restaurants. However, some employers do not allow their workers to enjoy public holidays. Moreover, some companies do not pay them their salaries on time and no payment slip is given to the workers. They cannot complain to their employers and they cannot go to the police because they are "*orang bangla*." In short, if you are a migrant worker from Bangladesh that means you are poor, vulnerable, neglected, and easily harassed by employers, co-workers, and police.

Moreover, most of the local Malaysians have negative attitudes toward Bangladeshi migrant workers. I can give example of a Malaysian Malay Muslim who had an interesting experience about Bangladeshi migrants in a food stall. His skin color and texture was similar to a Bangladeshi. Once he was queuing up to buy food and suddenly one of the staff told him that "you cannot stand in this queue because you are *orang bangla*." He showed them his IC and was allowed to buy food. In the mosque, local Muslims do not want to sit with the Bangladeshi workers saying that they are smelly and dirty. But there are a few local bosses who like Bangladeshi migrants for their hard working attitude, honesty, and punctuality. They respect them for their caring nature toward their family. These bosses are mostly Chinese and Malay. According to them, most of the Chinese bosses are good because they pay their salaries regularly, do not neglect them, and give them money during Chinese New Year.

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Chapter 8
Interrupted Histories: Arab Migrations to Pre-colonial Philippines

Teresita Cruz-del Rosario

Nothing reveals the true character of a nation, its capabilities, tendencies and resources, better than its history.
Najeeb Saleeby, *The History of Sulu* 1908.

Abstract Philippine migration studies have tended to emphasize the drawing power of the global labor market and the Philippine response to these labor demands. While these studies have obvious value to systematic investigations of global processes, there is a definite merit to explore migration within the context of an "earlier globalization" which occured roughly in the late thirteenth century until the arrival of the Spanish colonial powers toward the latter half of the sixteenth century. What emerges is a movement of migrants from the Arabian Peninsula toward many parts of Southeast Asia including the Philippines, establishing settlements and laying the foundation for institutions that have been entrenched and sustained even during the colonial period. Drawing from secondary sources as well as archival research, this paper seeks to investigate more deeply the waves of Arab (and other Middle Eastern) migrations to pre-colonial Philippines. A historical approach to the study of migration is an effort to offer a counter-narrative to the more dominant Spanish-Christian-American account of Philippine history. It also attempts to reveal the forces that have shaped a pluralistic Philippine culture despite the insistence of Christian hegemony. Finally, the paper promotes a historical perspective to migration studies that foreground transnational connections through local and regional connections, which, in the Philippine case, illustrates the enduring transnational connections between the Hadramawt region in Yemen and the southern sultanates in the Philippine archipelago.

Keywords Hadrami diaspora · Genealogies · Sulu sultanate · Maguindanao sultanate · Thirteenth-century globalization · The indian ocean trade ecumene

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8.1 Introduction

Studies on Philippine migration are almost always framed within a globalization context, particularly the demands from a global labor market which Philippine migrant workers provide through domestic work, caregiving, and entertainment (Salazar-Parrenas 2001; Ceniza-Choy 2003). Such studies emphasize the feminization of migrant labor and often carry inherent victimization overtones. Overall, migration scholarship treats foreign workers as reflective of larger problems in Philippine society, a social aberration that can be corrected through proper economic policy prescriptions (Abella 2006) and via specific measures that reduce the burdens on migrant workers through, for example, social protection schemes (Del Rosario 2014).

However, a globalization that preceded the nineteenth century, what Janet Abu-Lughod (1989) terms a "world system that came into being" long before European hegemony, prompted a different migration pattern. In the thirteenth century, the shift of maritime routes from the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea occasioned an outflow of traders, missionaries, teachers, and traders from the Hadramawt region in southern Yemen. Finding their way to Southeast Asia and to regions as far flung as Ethiopia, Sudan, India, and China, the Hadramis formed an elaborate network of migrants that has influenced the long-term socio-cultural formations in these countries, the outcomes of which continue to be evident today. In the Philippines, a wave of Arab migrations in the thirteenth century brought Islam to the archipelago and established trading outputs in Sulu, the southernmost island, with Chinese traders. The resultant rise of well-established sultanates in Maguindanao and Sulu points to a burgeoning process of institutionalization at the time of Spanish colonization. Set within the parameters of an earlier global history yields insights about the possible trajectories of the Philippine nation and their interrupted processes.

This paper attempts to frame Philippine migration through the lens of an "earlier globalization," starting from the year 1250 when the shift in trading routes occurred from overland to ocean trade, particularly the Indian Ocean. Through a historical lens that antedates colonial accounts, a richly textured version of a far more pluralistic Philippine history than has been traditionally portrayed in Philippine historiography emerges. This also serves as effective counterfoils to Eurocentric, elite-centered, "national" histories. The net effect of these efforts is to de-emphasize a portrayal of Philippine society as mono-culturally Christian and Manila centered.

An "Earlier Globalization": The Context of Arab Migration to Southeast Asia in the Thirteenth Century. Abu-Lughod's (1989) book *Before European Hegemony* charts a wide-sweeping path of history covering the period 1250–1350—a period she argues as the first globalization and which later on paved the way for the "rise of the West." This comprehensive historical treatise of the world system provides the context for Arab migrations to Southeast Asia. A challenge to Immanuel Wallerstein's World Systems Theory, Abu-Lughod promotes the idea of three economic centers during the Medieval Period that served as the "levers" of

world trade, none of them rising to dominate the others, but are locked into an interdependent co-equal network of trading partners. Of primary importance to Arab migration is the trade route linking the cities that lie along the path of the Indian Ocean, serving to connect the Arab World, Africa, and Asia.

In the thirteenth century, Abu-Lughod argues in her book *Before European Hegemony,* the world was "globalized" in the manner that we experience today, not as a comprehensive interlinking of all parts that "articulate evenly with one another (but rather as a series of) important subspheres or subsystems…within each of these blocs, certain major cities play key nodal roles, dominating the regions around them and often having more intense interactions with nodal centers in other systems that with their own peripheries" (Abu-Lughod 1989: 32). The prominent nodal cities were Bruges and Antwerp in Belgium; Venice and Genoa in Italy; Palestine and Constantinople in the Middle East which were the meeting points of the caravans coming from Central Asia; and the ports of Alexandria and Cairo in Egypt. In Egypt, the European caravans stopped. Wholesale merchants (*Karimi*) took over and transferred the goods from Europe to ships headed east toward China and India. The Middle East subsystem was connected to the Asian system via the Indian Ocean, particularly at the port of Gujarat (near present-day Bombay) and the southern Malabar Coast where Muslim traders had set up shop. Alongside Indian merchants, the Muslim traders conducted trade along the Asian circuit that moved goods between the Malay Peninsula and Sumatra and Java through the Malacca Straits toward China. The port of Malacca, though a narrow "gullet" of the sea, was of strategic importance. All ships traveling between India and China have to pass through the Malacca Straits, and it is there where traders from all over the Asian circuit set up colonies when the monsoon season grounded the ships. These lengthy layovers occasioned the rise of a cosmopolitan entrepot, where merchants from all over the Asian circuit coexisted and functioned smoothly because all players recognized the advantage of connecting these different subspheres to China (Abu-Lughod in Adas 1992: 82–85) (see Fig. 8.1). It was Vasco de Gama's successful circumnavigation of Africa in 1498 that brought the Europeans into the Indian Ocean. In 1516, Portuguese men-of-war destroyed the small Egyptian and Indian fleet defending the Arabian Sea. This gradually shifted relatively smooth trading practices within and among the circuits and changed the rules of the game by burning or boarding ships, confiscating cargo, and imposing their system of passes on the numerous indigenous but unarmed merchant fleets of the area (Ibid.). The arrival of the Europeans in the Indian Ocean interrupted the reciprocal exchanges among the circuits, and effectively inaugurated the era of war trade.

In a similar vein, Clark (2006) promotes the idea of trade networks that evolved around what he calls the Indian Ocean Trade Ecumene or OITE.[1] These networks consisted of regionalized zones centered on the Arabian Sea, the Bay of Bengal,

[1]The IOTE is defined as "embracing not only the littoral regions of the Indian Ocean ranging from east Africa through the Bay of Bengal but also the archipelago regions of Southeast Asia and the further littoral regions of China, Korea and Japan. It is my premise that these all functioned as one great integrated trade network that was rooted in the Indian Ocean". See Clark (2006, p. 38).

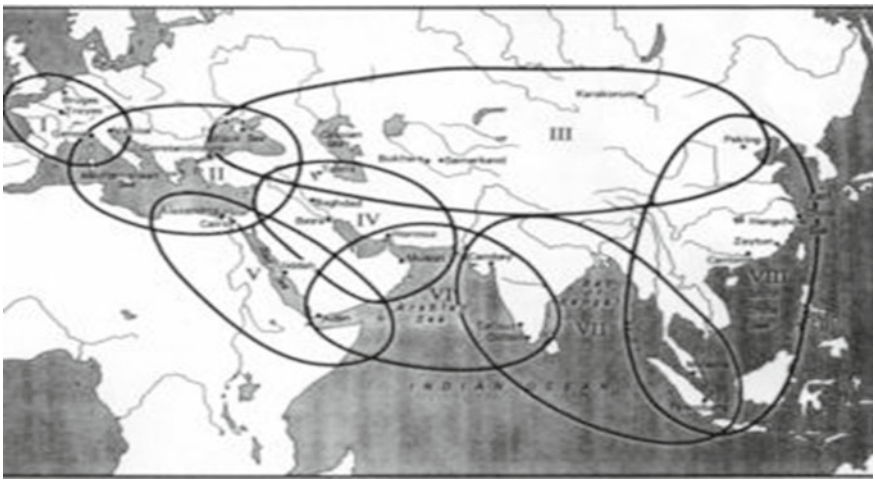

Fig. 8.1 The eight circuits of the thirteenth-century world system. *Source* Abu-Lughod (1992), 79

and the South China Sea. It was along these major circuits that the Arab sailors conducted trade especially along the "interstices" of these separate and autonomous regional zones but integrated through on-going exchange. Vibrant exchanges occurred between the southern tip of the Indian sub-continent and the Straits of Melaka extending all the way to China. These interstitial arrangements brought the Arabian world and Asia into a tight trading loop for about a century, bringing with them the movement of goods and people. Trading posts were established. The Chinese, for example, set up an outpost in the southernmost province of Sulu in the Philippines, although Sulu is considered, even to the present day, as a Muslim stronghold. There is also some evidence of Arab and Persian traders in the southern ports of China (Majul 1965: 63). Thus, the "trade diaspora" served as an explanation to the exchanges that occurred between and among the IOTE and distinguished the movement of people and goods within the IOTE from other diaspora, namely, labor, victim, and deterritorialization.[2] Defined as "a nation of socially interdependent, but spatially dispersed communities," trade diaspora connote coexistence and intermingling with the host society (Clark Ibid.: 391).

Who were the Migrants? At the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula is the country of what is currently known as Yemen, and still further south is Hadramawt —a region within Yemen that has been the focus of intense outmigration as early as the eighth century. Ho (2006: 13) identifies them as Hadrami Sayyids—a group of teachers, merchants, and missionaries with a strong adherence to Sufism. Of interest to migration scholars is the lineage of the Sayyids: they claim direct descendant from the Prophet, whose descendants and followers "imitated this model by

[2]An elaborate discussion on the different diasporas and their typology can be found in Slama and Heiss (2013, pp. 234–237).

migrating into far lands with the message of God" (Hudawi and Jaleel 2011). Ahmad bin Isa al Muhajir (The Migrant) was a 9th generation descendant of the Prophet and travelled to Hadramawt from Iraq through Hijaz and Yemen. Muhammad bin Ali al Faqih al Muqaddam (the First Jurist) initiated the Sayyid-Sufi way. All Sayyid Hadramis trace their ancestry to either one of these two men. More than two centuries later, Abu Bakar Hydarus al Adani (Adeni) migrated from Hadramawt, traveling as far as Ethiopia and converting communities to Islam. He is considered as a patron saint in Aden (Yemen), and his tomb has become a pilgrimage site and a yearly festival for thousands of devotees (Ho Ibid.: 6).

Members of his lineage followed his migratory paths, reaching East Africa, western India, and Southeast Asia. The Sayyids reached disparate distances such as Ethiopia, Malabar (India), Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia, southern Vietnam, and the Sudan (Manger 2010; Hudawi and Abdul-Jaleel 2011). In Southeast Asia, they would be mostly concentrated in Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei, and Indonesia. In the southern Philippines, they settled in the provinces of Sulu, Cotabato, Maranao, Zamboanga, Davao, and Bukidnon. The depth and reach of the Hadrami diaspora is reflected in the words of the noted Middle East scholar Richard Burton: "It is generally said that the sun does not rise upon a land that does not contain a man from Hadramaut" (quoted in Clarence-Smith 1997: 1).

The arrival of the first known missionary to Sulu in the southernmost Philippines was in 1380 although Arab traders who were already plying the trade routes since the ninth–tenth centuries, with Arab, Chinese, Hindu, and Indonesian settlements set up in the island of Sulu. Saleeby's 1905 and 1908 work on the histories of Maguindanao and Sulu undertaken on behalf of the Department of the Interior for the US Colonial Government in the Philippines provides the earliest accounts of Arab migration to the Philippines. Traders intermarried with the local population, among them, Rajah Baguinda Ali from Menangkebaw in the high regions of central Sumatra who established his own principality as early as the eleventh century (Saleeby 1905: 40; Yegar 2002: 185). Muslim missionaries came from India and the Arabian Peninsula and they began the process of Islamization in the southern Philippines. Intensive Islamization and vigorous ties with seafarers from Malacca and Java, intermarriages with ruling families from Brunei, Maguindanao, Sulu, and Ternate fostered the growth of new settlements. Malay Muslim (Sufi) clerics, as well as Muslim missionaries from Southern China, followed on the heels of the Arab traders, among them, Sherif Muhammed Kabungsuwan Bin Ali Zein ul-Abedin from the royal house of Johor of Malacca who thereafter established the sultanate of Maguindanao. Makhdum, on the other hand, is credited for introducing Islam to Sulu; he was a noted Arabian judge and scholar from Malacca who arrived in the Philippine shores in 1380. He was later on followed by Raja Baginda (Saleeby 1908: 40–41). The Filipino historian Cesar Majul records the arrival of seven brothers who were all Arabs originating from the Arabian Peninsula, as responsible for the introduction of Islam in the Sulu archipelago (Majul 1966: 64). Although not truly biological brothers, their arrival signified the more important event in Philippine history in establishing a foothold for Islam in the south, which

persists to the present day. By the time of the arrival of the Spaniards in 1565, the sultanates of Sulu and Maguindanao had been firmly established.

A northward expansion by the Muslim traders and missionaries came to an abrupt halt in 1571 when the Spaniards routed Rajah Suleiman in Manila. He was the first Muslim sultan in Manila, who had family and commercial ties to Brunei and Malacca. Collectively, the disparate ethno-linguistic groups in the south were given the name "Moros" by the Spaniards to refer to Muslim people of mixed Arab and Berber descent living in Northwest Africa. The Spaniards applied the term "Moro" to the people in the Philippines whose religion was the same as that of the African Moors (Rasul et al. 1999: 14).

In the later years, particularly during the late Spanish colonial period (1571–1898) and during the American colonial era (1898–1945), a host of migrants from the Middle East would arrive in the Philippines, notably, Armenians, Syrians, Lebanese, Palestinians, Jordanians, and Oriental Jews. The Armenians, Syrians, and Lebanese were predominantly Christians and were mostly engaged in entrepreneurship as shopkeepers and bazaar owners. Oriental Jews started the embroidery business during the American occupation of the islands. Also, persecution in Europe increased the numbers of Ashkenazi Jews from 500 to over 2500 who were fleeing from the Nazis. Others found their way to Manila from Shanghai after the 1949 Communist takeover. Palestinian Christians created a niche in "biblical tourism" and were mainly attracted to the Catholic faith of the Filipinos. Unlike the Hadramis who settled on the southern islands of Sulu and Mindanao, the other Middle Easterners came in fewer numbers and most would eventually leave for Australia. The Lebanese, for example, arrived in huge numbers during the civil war in the 1970s and was one of the largest migrants in the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Their numbers dwindled very quickly, as Manila was just a stopping point. The influx of Lebanese migrants into Australia and New Zealand was very pronounced over a ten-year period between 1977 and 1986 (Clarence-Smith 2004: 432–443). Within approximately eight hundred years, the Philippines experienced several waves of migration from the Middle East, and the migrants brought with them a variety of ideas, practices, and beliefs that would be interwoven into a complex plurality that remains an enduring feature of Philippine society today.

8.2 Landscapes as Pathways to History

To better understand Arab migration to Southeast Asia, Ho (2006: 33) suggests "the lay of the land gives shape to the social formations and political relations within it, patterning themes in its history and quickening the flow of events." This lay of the land begins and ends in Tarim, the best-known town in Hadramawt that is considered as the home of the Prophet's descendants, the Sayyids. The geography of Hadramawt is known to be an inhospitable terrain, "bounded by the Rub al-Khali desert to the north, a nearly 1000 km long frontage on the Indian Ocean… They

receive very little rainfall. Its key feature is the Wadi Hadhramaut, a system of wadis (dry river valleys) … which are dry throughout the year … but may turn into raging torrents" (Sheriff 1988: 264–265). The deep valleys are landlocked, and when the rains come, the waters are trapped, causing floods. Intermittent water scarcity causes periods of drought as well as rapid erosion that in turn increases marginality and limits the population's ability to produce enough food. It is this particular geography of Tarim that set the impetus for out-migration. Ho (2006: 189) refers to this place as the "dry immobility of life in Tarim" (see Fig. 8.2).

It is also known throughout history that Hadramawt was a through-way for caramel caravans carrying frankincense and myrrh and fragrant spices. It is located on the trading routes between Arabia and Asia and the old port of Mukalla served as a gateway to the Gulf of Aden. Thus, Hadramis were considered to be very cosmopolitan, having had to interact with traders from foreign places for centuries. Many scholars consider the versatility and adaptability of the Hadrami migrants in many parts of the world as the rationale for the "temporal depth" of Hadrami migrant networks (Walker 2011).

The Hadrami migrants' choice of the southern Philippines as a favored destination was neither accidental nor by happenstance. Sulu is an archipelago consisting of a continuous chain of islands, islets, and coral reefs; connects easily to the Celebes Sea; and facilitates movement to Borneo. The most important of the island groupings are the Basilan Group (56 islands); the Balangingi or Samal Group

Fig. 8.2 Wadi Hadramawt. *Source* http://www.abenteuer-reisen.de/reportage_galerie/11629?page=1 (accessed 27 September 2014)

(19 islands); the Sulu Group (29 islands); the Pangutaran Group (14 islands); the Tapul or Siasi Group (38 islands); and the Tawi-Tawi Group (88 islands). Of these, Basilan is the largest and boasts of a very prominent peak called Mount Matangal rising 648 meters above sea level. Tawi-Tawi island is the southernmost tip of the archipelago and is 15 miles from Borneo. From this vantage point, all movements in the Straits of Basilan emanating from the Sulu and Celebes Seas are visible (see Map of Sulu Archipelago below). In the mid-thirteenth century, the archipelago was not only sparsely populated, but also with bountiful natural resources, especially timber that was a necessary material for building boats. Surrounded by the ocean, the Hadrami seafarers found a hospitable environment with which to undertake commerce (Webster 1920). Unlike their place or origin that was landlocked, dry, and arid, with intermittent flooding when the valley was inundated with rain, the Sulu group of islands offered ample opportunities for meeting consumption needs and for trade and commerce (Fig. 8.3). According to Saleeby (1908: 137–138), Sulu occupies the

> most nearly central position of any island in eastern Malaysia. The commercial advantages of this position are unique. To the north lie the Bisayas, Palawan, Luzon, Formosa, China, and Japan; to the east Mindanao and Basilan; to the south, the Moluccas, Celebes, and Java; to the west, Borneo, Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula. Chinese merchants traded with Sulu long before the arrival of (the Spaniard) Legaspi, and while Manila and Cebu were still small and insignificant settlements, Jolo had reached the proportions of a city and was, without exception, the richest and foremost settlement in the Philippines. Jolo (the capital) with the exception of Bruney, had no rival in northeast Malaysia prior to the seventeenth century.

By the thirteenth century, even before the Spanish colonial period, Sulu played a hegemonic role as a "regional emporium in the commerce between European traders, Southeast Asian realms, and China" (Warren 1977: 73). Tea trade between the

Fig. 8.3 Map of Sulu Archipelago (circa 1908). *Source* Najeeb Saleeby, *The History of Sulu* (1908, frontispiece, Manila, Philippines: Bureau of Printing)

English East India Company and private traders in India saw the creation of a trading post in Balambangan, an island within the domain of the Sulu Sultanate in 1770. These trading posts were strategically situated throughout the Malay world for providing warehouse facilities for the trade produce intended for China. Apart from its trade value, Sulu also enjoys a picturesque landscape, described eloquently in Najeeb Saleeby's History of Sulu (1908: 8) as "a scenery hardly ever equaled and certainly never surpassed by the pencil of the artist…(which) only requires the decorations of art and civilized form to form a terrestrial paradise." Migrants established coastal settlements. They engaged in agriculture as well as cattle and horse raising. However, proximity to the sea made the Sulu waters extremely easy and lucrative fishing grounds. Jolo, the capital of Sulu, boasts of the best fish market throughout the islands. An abundance of locally grown fruits, staple foods, and root crops with a supportive fresh-water network and considerable irrigation brought prosperity to the lives of the migrants for many generations (Saleeby Ibid.: 19).

A sample of the import and export trade carried out of the port of Jolo provides the extent of exchange between and among the islands. See Table 8.1.

As can be gleaned from the table, trade was quite balanced despite the higher number of imports relative to exports. Exportations of pearl shells and copra are sources of revenue and finance the importation of food and clothing, particularly of staples (rice) and other miscellaneous goods. As expected, Chinese merchants through the trading houses Chaun Lee and Ban Guan controlled and managed a fair proportion of the trade (Saleeby, p. 17). Also, Majul (Ibid.: 69) notes that international trade diminished for approximately three hundred years between Sulu and China during the colonial era, as European powers monopolized the spice trade and marginalized the Muslim traders. However, a "few errant Arab traders still came," among them, a Turk in the eighteenth century and an Afghan in the nineteenth century. The recorded figures in the table could very well be understated.

Genealogies and Migration History. Ho (2006) argues that the Hadramis reckon with their past through genealogies. Other sources are poems, tomb inscriptions, and hagiographies that Ho has termed "the formation of canonical texts." This canon aimed to assist Hadrami migrants to deal with their present-day challenges and also to revive the memories of their forebears. Maintaining family genealogies kept the Hadrami communities connected through genealogical recordings, and also developed further ties of kinship among diaspora communities.

Recorded genealogies (*tarsilas*) of the Sulu and Maguindanao sultanates portray a well-entrenched institution in pre-colonial Philippines (Saleeby 1905, 1908; Majul 1999; Mastura 1977; Hayase 2007). *Tarsilas* or *salsilas* are genealogical sources of the sultans and datus. The term comes from Arabic *silsilah* which means "link" or "chain" (Majul 2010: 17). Its primary function is to trace the ancestry of an individual that would provide a linkage of Muslim chiefs to the Prophet Muhammad (Hayase 2007: 43) and subsequently to important and prominent families with considerable power and reputation. Rather than just a historical record or "quaint remembrances of things past," Majul asserts that tarsilas' bolsters claim to power and prerogatives, and for this reason, provides "proof *par excellence* of

Table 8.1 Import and export activity, Port of Jolo, Sulu

Imports	Fiscal year (US$)		Exports	Fiscal year (US$)	
	1905	1906		1905	1906
Animals, etc.	214	71	Animals	42	70
Brass, manufactures of	6402	2548	Hemp	486	5561
Breadstuffs	4881	3870	Cordage	5084	5054
Cement	745	989	Fish	7893	13,151
Coal	4208	–	Copra	17,870	30,052
Coffee	621	872	Copal	3793	4458
Cotton cloths, close woven	82,999	80,381	Gutta-percha	108	3939
Cotton cloths, loose woven	14,053	14,338	Hides	839	867
Carpets	5379	–	Mother-of-pearl (shells)	88,516	60,051
Yarn and thread	18,059	19,594	Tortoise shell	1971	2856
Knit fabrics	2688	3564	All others	8033	4610
Cotton cloths, all other manufactures of	949	2079			
Dyes	2691	3807			
Opium	14,578	6601			
Earthen and stone ware	1494	2419			
Fibers, vegetable	308	153			
Dried fish	216	456			
Shell fish	375	497			
Fruits, canned	272	254			
Fruits, not canned	362	407			
Glass and glassware	694	415			
Iron, steel and manufactures of	3640	2916			
Malt liquors	2020	822			
Mineral oils	742	1339			
Vegetable oils	536	503			
Paints	979	299			
Paper and manufactures of	2123	1816			
Condensed milk	1516	1363			
Rice	76,172	57,416			
Silk and manufactures of	1614	1318			
Soap	724	610			
Spirits, distilled	1643	1108			
Sugar, refined	4314	2987			
Tea	646	489			

(continued)

Table 8.1 (continued)

Imports	Fiscal year (US$)		Exports	Fiscal year (US$)	
	1905	1906		1905	1906
Tobacco and manufactures of	586	367			
Vegetables	1204	1919			
Wearing apparel		3699			
Wood and manufactures of	2270	1646			
Wool and manufactures of	2282	206			
All others	8126	7262			
Total in U.S. currency	274,281	231,772	Total in U.S. Currency	277,768	285,066

Source Saleeby (1908, pp. 14–15)

legitimacy" (Majul 1966: 65), as well as to "show kinship and historical links between Sulu and the older centers of empire" (Majul 2010: 36). Tarsilas provide detailed accounts of the intermarriages among the Muslim and non-Muslim communities. The royal genealogy of Sultan Kabungsuan, for example, relates the awarding of the title "Sharif" to Kabungsuan and his son, Maka-Alang, indicating that they are direct descendants of the Prophet. The genealogies also provide the names of the wives and children of the Muslim chiefs. The following text illustrates the extent to which the early migrants recorded their genealogies:

> Baginda Ali married Fatimat uz-Zahra and begot Sharif Hassan and Sharif Hussain. Sharif Hussain begot Sharif Ali Zain al Abidin, who begot Sharif Muhammad al-Baqir who begot Sharif Ali, who begot Sharif Isa who begot Sharif Ahmad who journeyed to Hadhramawt. Sharif Alli Zainal Abidin married Putri Jiusul Asikin (as quoted in Datu Amir Baraguir 2004: 4)

The reconstruction of the genealogy of the Sultanate of Sulu is a debt to Najeeb Saleeby (1908). In his epic tome, *The History of Sulu*, Saleeby undertook the painstaking task of collecting and translating numerous documents that would create a "knowledge of those significant historical events of Sulu which antedated Spanish discovery and conquest of the Philippine islands, the connection which those events might have had with the earlier history of the other islands and the light that they might throw upon the subject of prehistoric Malayan immigration to the Archipelago" (p. 6). But more than a mere recounting of historical events or a listing of kin relations, Saleeby's work, particularly the reconstruction of the Sulu genealogies, achieves the effect of what Ho (2006: 23) describes as the establishment of a "discourse of mobility … (which) widens the field in which people can engage and amass resources and powers." The Sulu Sultanate's genealogies have become relevant in light of an enduring claim to Sabah. Moreover, continuing referral to genealogies reinforces claims to ancestral domains. During the American period, the colonial government initiated a program of Christian out-migration to

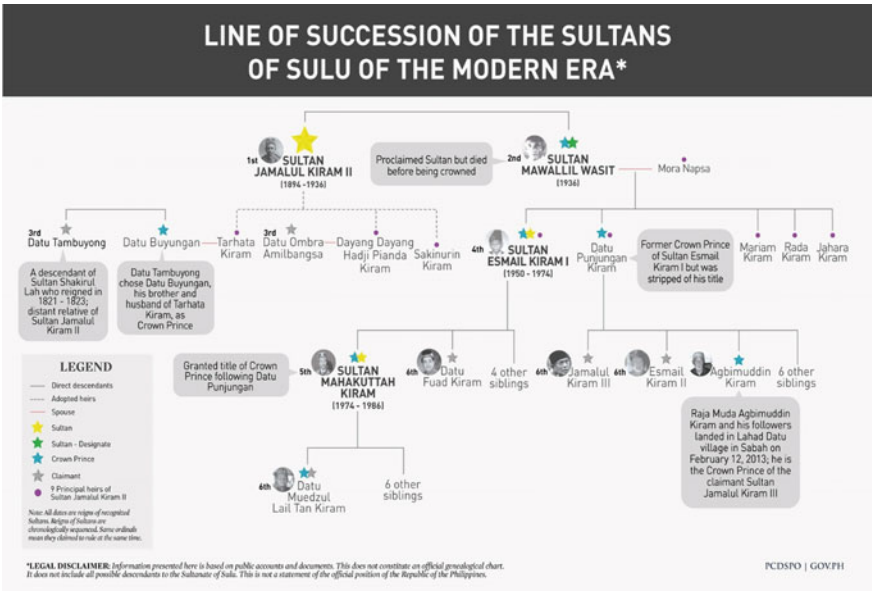

Fig. 8.4 *Source* http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e8/Sulusultanategenaolgy.jpg (accessed 1 October 2014)

Mindanao, then regarded as a "frontier." Historical claims to land rights become even more urgent in light of the post-colonial efforts of the Philippine government to resolve these land conflicts. A genealogy in support of land claims to Sabah in the post-colonial era is shown in Fig. 8.4.

8.3 Conclusion

A historical approach to migration studies is significant for migration scholars who can and should appreciate the "fundamental and structural" nature of migration for human civilizations (Lucassen et al. 2010: 6). Movement of human beings is as old as human history itself. It is the source of "major cultural and ecological impacts around the world" (Erlandson 2010: 192) both in the contemporary and ancient worlds. The enduring questions that have provoked thinkers for ages center around the very first humans—their origins, their modes of travel, their kin, and companions, the societies that have built over centuries of interactions among those who arrive, leave, and stay. It is through migration that "civilizations emerged, were challenged, and sometimes collapsed (Ibid.). The movement of human beings have had far-reaching consequences throughout history, the effects of which were both positive and devastating, as when diseases spread through travel, or when languages evolve through interaction with human beings who need to communicate in

order to construct harmonious societies. The development of material cultures occurs through migration, as trading networks are created for the exchange of goods. This exchange, in turn, fuels maritime migrations that "significantly expanded the geographic distribution of humans, with major repercussions for world history" (McConvell 2010: 192).

Further, a global historical treatment of migration establishes continuities and connections that would otherwise be lost when human movement is viewed only through the lens of singular episodes. Hoerder's massive work *Cultures in Contact* (2002: 1–4) argues that the history of the world is a history of migration, and that mobility, rather than stasis, is the defining feature of human life. Through movement, societal transformation becomes possible, and so does social construction and social maintenance. Migrants who have stayed over the long term have become stakeholders in their destination societies and contribute to the furtherance of social goals which reflect their aspirations and expectations. Further, a historical comparative approach yields structural similarities in that the migratory process, whatever the age or the era, is a search for "frontiers" of opportunity. Yet, each migration was culturally unique, "depending on economic practices, social structures, and power relationships, as well as on the right to relocate, gender hierarchies, and children's position." The overarching structural similarities and the cultural specifics of the migration process are afforded through the lens of history, particularly of world history. In this paper, I situated migration studies within the broader context of an earlier globalization beyond the Philippines itself toward an appreciation of the relationship between and among the littoral communities along the Indian Ocean in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. These connections remain well into the contemporary era. Without these connections, Filipino Muslims would lose their claims to legitimacy; without legitimacy, they would lose their claims to land; without land, they would lose their collective identity upon which their entire survival rests. The history of migration among Filipino Muslims is a narrative of their long-standing right to existence.

A global historical perspective on migration studies achieved a breakthrough in terms of rescuing migration history from a narrow Atlantic focus. Hoerder's unique contribution was precisely in employing a much longer time period (1000 years) and looking at global migration rather than remaining within the confines of a transatlantic narrative. This is referred to as "the great escape from the Euro-centered deadlock in migration history" (Lucasson, Lucasson and Manning: Ibid).

The power of a global historical treatment of migration derives from a focus on the agency of migrants. Set against a background of long time periods and frontier spaces for travel, decision-making among migrants assumes center stage. They need to devise plans, identify travelers and companions, organize roles, and allocate and distribute resources. In short, migrants need a migration strategy that assumes a measure of coherence and coordination if they are to succeed in their migration goals. In this paper, the migration of Sufi missionaries and traders from Hadramaut was due to the bigger logic of shifting trade routes operating as a structural feature of their region. Connections were made between and among regions that portray a

global pattern, systematically organized by Abu-Lughod (1989) into eight trading circuits. Alongside this was the internal *local* logic in migration decisions: the specific geographical circumstances in Hadramaut that "pushed" networks of Hadrami migrants beyond the confines of their landlocked valley into the wider world of Asia and Africa. Local geographical contexts in the origin and destination countries were important considerations to migration decisions and the formations of migrant networks were based largely on family and kinship. Employing both perspectives—that of global history as well as of agency—simultaneously avoids what (Schiller 2007: 39) terms "methodological nationalism (by allowing) multiple entry points and pathways of local and transnational incorporation." By linking global, regional, and local historical processes, migration theory benefits from universal structural features alongside specific cultural conditions that migrants shaped and created through the exercise of agency.

A specific pathway to understanding migration history is genealogy—a form of local history which Mojares (1997: 226) reminds scholars as a "history that goes behind the standard preoccupation with 'big' institutions, personalities, and events and history that takes full account of the territorial, social and cultural variations in the people's experience of events." The Philippines exemplifies such variations. The varieties of historical experience demystify Christian- and capital- and nation-state-centered histories. The Hadramis' meticulous recording of their lineages preserves the historical roots of migrants that return them to their region in Yemen, a return to Hadrami experiences through connections with families and kin across generations. At the same time, these recorded lineages serve as mechanisms for legitimizing claims to nationhood separate from those imposed by colonial and post-colonial powers—a subject that is far too tortuous and complex and thus is treated only very superficially in this paper. Furthermore, genealogies that establish descent from the Prophet help to preserve collective identity especially in the face of encroachment, but also reinforce power structures that, in the Philippine case, transcend national boundaries. In fact, the Sulu lineage reckoned as far back as the sixteenth century portrays royal connections with neighboring Sabah, and reinforces land claims that supersede the formalized institutions established by the colonial powers (Tregonning 1970). Referencing Schiller once again (p. 59), introducing "migrant departure, settlement and transnational connections (are) shaped by the positioning of localities and regions" instantly collapses the artificial construction of "nation-state." In this paper, I have studiously avoided referring to the Philippines during the period in question as a formalized nation-state. Instead, I have treated the early migration story of the earliest Arabs as a confirmation of the discomfort eloquently expressed by Ho (2006: 20): "… that the great organizing nouns—culture, society, or life—are simply heaps of mishaps artificially sorted out by the priests of science, and not very convincingly at that."

Finally, a historical perspective on migration for pre-colonial Philippines, typically bypassed by even well-meaning Filipino historians who attempt to rewrite

history "from below"[3] through the "incorporat(ion) (of) tales from the peripheries" (Abinales 2000: ix). These are tales of agency which, when woven together, yield an overarching interpretation of social and cultural distances, and not just purely physical ones, that have been crossed. In this regard, the journey of the twelfth-century Hadramis is very much the story of all the travels of humankind.

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[3]Among the well-known attempts are Teodoro Agoncillo's *Revolt of the Masses: The Story of Bonifacio and the Katipunan* (1956); Renato Constantino and Letizia Constantino's *A Past Revisited* (1975) and *The Philippines: The Continuing Past*. See full reference details below.

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Chapter 9
Foreign Domestic Helpers (FDH) in Hong Kong

A Study of Premarital Pregnancies

A.K.M. Ahsan Ullah

Abstract This paper deals with premarital pregnancy among (female) foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) in Hong Kong, who originate mostly from the Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand. These FDHs move to Hong Kong unaccompanied on a two-year contract, 'normally' extendable. This study seeks to understand the influences associated with premarital pregnancy outside of their homes of origin and their consequences on their economic, social and health status. Selected on snow ball referrals, 236 female FDHs were interviewed, using both closed and open-ended questionnaires. Preliminary findings show that 91 % of the respondents reported having premarital sexual relationship and of these 32 % experienced pregnancies. About 62 % of these pregnancies were 'unintended', while 38 % were 'desired' pregnancies. This study is of immense significance as premarital pregnancy determines and influences the overall life trajectory of these women and has policy implications for both the governments of origin and destination.

Keywords Hong Kong · Domestic helpers · Premarital sex · Premarital pregnancy

Teenage motherhood is not a new phenomenon in any society across the world. Women in the past have tended to begin childbearing during their teens (Salih et al. 2014; Miller et al. 1999; Erfani and Roderic 2007). There are evidences that children even at their elementary level of schooling—specifically those who have had their first monthly period—have experienced pregnancies (Gorne 2006; Maria and Galban 2004) and the situation varies across the world. Premarital sex is becoming more acceptable (Roche and Ramsbey 1993) nowadays outside the Western world. Attitudes towards abortion have become more favourable (Smith 1994). The increase in teenage pregnancy over the years worldwide has raised concerns about whether this is acceptable social behaviour and whether it is a social problem (Estlea 2006). Differences in sexual attitudes between males and females have narrowed over time; however, studies suggest that gender difference still

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exists, for example, males are more accommodative than females on issues of premarital sex (Roche and Ramsbey 1993), oral sex and sex without love (Laumann et al. 1994).

The socio-sexual ideology of a society, through norms and values influence sexual behaviour. While religiosity may delay and reduce sexual activities (Haglund and Fehring 2009), beliefs about sex are important in determining how it is practiced (Meier 2003). Barkin (2006) supports that religiosity may reduce the number of sexual partners due partly to the fact that religion disapproves of premarital sex. However, the more important religion is to a person, the more likely they hold conservative attitudes towards sexuality, including less acceptance of premarital sex, contraceptive use, abortion and sex without love (Salasiah et al. 2012; Laumann et al. 1994).

In many societies around the world, the virginity of a woman before marriage is a matter of pride. Therefore, sexual relations outside of marriage resulting in pregnancies are a social stigma (Medora and Woodward 1982; Ounjit 2011). Unintended pregnancies are negatively perceived because they are associated with being irresponsible, exposure to sexual diseases, and embarrassment and guilt of the families concerned (Ounjit 2011).

This paper deals with premarital pregnancy in a population of Foreign Domestic Helpers (FDHs) living in Hong Kong, originating mostly from the Philippines, Indonesia, Mainland China and Thailand. FDHs move to Hong Kong unaccompanied, primarily for a two-year contract that is 'normally' extendable (Hong Kong Immigration 2003, 2006, 2008). The majority remain in Hong Kong longer than the contract period. This population accounts for approximately 5 % of the total population of Hong Kong and an overwhelming majority (98 %) are women (Ullah 2010a). There are abundant studies on domestic helpers and their vulnerabilities. However, available literature suggests that there is a vacuum in the scholarship about premarital relationship and pregnancies among the FDHs. This research is an attempt to fill in the vacuum.

Over the last three decades, female migrants increased only about 3 % (Zlotnik 2003). Although this is not a significant quantitative change, but a qualitative change has occurred i.e. more females are migrating independently than previously. In some Asian countries such as the Philippines, Indonesia and Sri Lanka, female migrants outnumber their male counterparts (Ullah 2008, 2010b; Indonesia Country Report 2003). FDHs constitute a large number of these migrants.

9.1 Domestic Helpers in Hong Kong

The primary source of labour in Hong Kong has been mainland Chinese. However, since the 1970s, the population of non-Chinese migrant workers has steadily grown. Today, foreign domestic helpers—the vast majority of migrant workers in the territory—play an important role in the daily life in Hong Kong (Ullah 2013; AMC 2001).

With the growing number of women going to work, the demand for domestic helpers has increased. This means that the more women of the destination countries take up jobs the more the demand for domestic helpers. This means that female migrants working as domestic helpers are replacing the role of mothers and housewives (Ullah and Huque 2014). There is a correlation between the number of women in Hong Kong participating in workforce and the number of FDHs entering in Hong Kong to work as FDHs.

As Hong Kong steadily began to industrialize the economy grew in the mid-1970s, and the demand for labour accelerated. The unemployment rate in Hong Kong went down to 2 %. The business sector was concerned about the serious shortage of labour. The government, in response, liberalized the importation of FDH in the early 1980s. In 2013, there were some 320,000 foreign domestic helpers in Hong Kong, of which 50 % were from the Philippines, 47 % from Indonesia and the rest from Thailand, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka (SCMP 2014). Although they have become an important part of Hong Kong society, they are excluded from domestic labour regulations. Hence current labour laws exclude domestic work from regulation or provide less protection for them than for other workers (WHO 2011; CARAM-Asia 2007). This means that they are a vulnerable group in the receiving countries. This has crucial implications for the FDHs who get pregnant at the destination country. Premarital pregnancy may put them in a deeper predicament. There remains a lack of systematic understanding of the issue of premarital pregnancy and its consequences for the FDHs. This study attempts to understand the circumstances of their being pregnant abroad beyond wedlock and its economic, health and social consequences. This study is of immense significance because premarital pregnancy determines and influences the overall life trajectory of these women and has crucial policy implications for both the governments of origin and destination.

9.2 Methodology

I published a paper in Asian journal of women study in 2010 (Ullah 2010a) based on a research on an identical theme on 336 domestic helpers in Hong Kong. This paper is a follow up of that study. For this particular research, interviews were conducted on selected 236 female FDHs (n = 236: 126 Filipinas; 70 Indonesians; and 40 Thais) administering both closed and open-ended questionnaires. Data were collected from Sham Shui Po, Kowloon Tong, Tsim Sha Tsui, Aberdeen, Mongkok, Causeway Bay, Kennedy Town and Central Star Ferry areas in Hong Kong (Ullah 2010a). The study included only unmarried FDHs who had been in HK for at least three years. After verbal informed consent (from the FDH and the employer) was obtained, subjects were requested to fill in a questionnaire. Simple descriptive statistics have been employed for comparative purpose and to present the distribution of respondents according to the selected explanatory variables. Some inferential statistics have been applied to see the relationship between

variables. Chi-square has been used to test whether any observed difference in these variables is significant.

9.3 Profiling the Respondents

The likelihood of premarital pregnancy is closely related to their socio-economic condition. Of the sample respondents, the majority are from the Philippines (53 %). The mean duration of their stay in Hong Kong is 6 years. About 70 % (of whom 56 % from the Philippines; 31 % from Indonesia and 13 % Thailand) had graduate level education; 16 % had nursing degrees; and 14 % had secondary level of education, and 66 % spoke fluent English. A significantly higher percentage of the Filipinas spoke fluent English than those from Indonesia and Thailand (Ullah 2010a). This study indicates that more than half of the FDHs were below 30-year old. The mode of the FDHs [28] indicates that they migrated at a relatively young age.

In the previous study, I distinguished six groups of FDHs, as a function of the time they have spent in the receiving country: less than 2 years, between 2 and 5 years, between 6 and 8 years, and between 9 and 11 years. This study follows the same categories. Length of stay in the host country represents a key factor for the purpose of assessing the respondents' integration in the receiving society. Naturally, with some exceptions, I find that their social relations tend to increase with their length of stay in the host country. It is crucial to note that at least 23 % of the total FDH population has been working for more than 10 years in Hong Kong. This could have entitled them to residency, if they were non-FDH migrants in the territory. The majority have stayed for at least 4 years.

9.4 Premarital Sex and Pregnancies

There remains a scarcity of systematic research on premarital sex and pregnancies among FDHs in Hong Kong. Premarital sex and pregnancies potentially place them in a vulnerable condition (Mensch et al. 2001). The findings show that 91 % (215 of the 236) of the FDHs in Hong Kong had engaged in premarital sex and of them 32 % (68) experienced pregnancies. Only 15 % of them had experienced more than one pregnancies. Many of those who had engaged in sex thought that sexual engagement was a source of pleasure for both men and women. They enjoy it because they are estranged from their family members. They often feel down. This is one of the best ways to find pleasure. A few of them thought it was a 'woman duty'. Significantly a higher percentage ($P < 0.003$) of the Filipinas had premarital sex compared with the other two groups.

I applied logistic regression model on premarital pregnancy to test the effects of origin, education and age on premarital pregnancy. The Filipinas have higher odds

Table 9.1 Premarital sex and pregnancy status

	Filipina		Indo		Thai		Total
	f	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	
Had premarital sex							
Yes	149	69	47	22	19	9	215
Got pregnant							
Yes	37	54	19	28	12	18	68

Source Field survey, 2013

of premarital pregnancy than Indonesia and Thai women. Filipinas are more likely to have premarital pregnancies than Indonesian and Thai women. This finding endorses the fact that they are more capable of handling social relations than other respondents. Education seems to have significant impact on the likelihood of premarital pregnancy. The effect of age at pregnancy is also significant. Premarital pregnancy is more likely to occur among younger women. The increase in odds of premarital pregnancy of the Filipinas (including premarital sex and premarital abortion) was in fact very significant. On average, a woman's odds of premarital pregnancy were 0.014. It is generally believed that women with low level of education may be very conservative and are less likely to have premarital sexual experience. On the other hand, those with a very high level of education will be inclined to engage in sexual activity. Therefore, they are more likely to have premarital sex. Many of them thought that their marriage prospects declined hence they wanted a relationship with someone in the receiving society. Sexual relationship is a form of reciprocity. Many of the respondents thought that the prime time of their life has been spent overseas; therefore, there will be no prospect for marriage in their countries of origin.

The respondents came from different religious and social backgrounds which may be associated with their sexual behaviour and becoming pregnant. While all religions are against premarital sex, it is more restrictive in Islam. Therefore, for the Indonesians, religion may have had an influence on them engaging in premarital sex (Salasiah et al. 2012). While data indicate that more than 3 % of respondents have not had premarital sex, logistic regression outputs distinguished respondents' premarital sexual behaviour by academic performance, religious involvement and countries of origin. Specifically, the odds of participants engaging in premarital sex are inversely related to their frequency in personal prayer and church attendance (Ullah 2010a) (Table 9.1).

9.5 Pregnancies: Intended or Unintended?

Unintended pregnancy may be the result of unmet need for contraception or contraceptive failure or improper use (Kathryn et al. 2010). "The incidence of unintended pregnancy is a key indicator of a population's reproductive health, and preventing unplanned pregnancies is a priority for most sexually active men and

women" (Finer and Zolna 2014: 42). In the study, the majority of the pregnancies were unintended. The findings demonstrate that of the 68 who got pregnant, about 62 % (42) pregnancies were 'unintended' while 38 % (26) were 'intended' pregnancies. 18 % became pregnant more than once. 4 % of them had three times and 5 % had two times of pregnancies. A significantly higher percentage ($P < 0.001$) of respondents from the Philippines experienced pregnancies than those from Thailand and Indonesia. The majority of those who had 'intended' pregnancies were from the Philippines followed by Thailand and Indonesia. Unintended pregnancy is the determining factor in a chain of events, resulting often in abortion. There are many other attendant problems related to health (Singh et al. 2010). Many studies have confirmed that unintended pregnancies are associated with a range of negative health, socio-economic, and psychological outcomes (Logan et al. 2007; Gipson et al. 2008; Tsui et al. 2010) (Table 9.2).

According to the respondents, there are many reasons for contraceptive failure (i.e. getting pregnant). About 14 % had 'intended pregnancy' to press their boyfriends/partners to marry them. Many of them mentioned that 'partners are like butterfly'. Pregnancy therefore was used as a strategy to press their partners to marry. 12 % got pregnant as they wanted to 'have a baby'. Mora and Jorge (1993) found in their study that many respondents thought that a woman's life was valuable and made sense only through having a child. Those who got pregnant intentionally thought motherhood was fundamental to womanhood. About 19 % wanted to have sex without any protection to feel real, getting pregnant; 6 % said their contract was about to finish so they wanted to give birth at home and another 11 % wanted to have a baby with a 'handsome man', while 9 % declined to answer as they were not comfortable in revealing their 'private affairs'. Condoms and vaginal contraceptives were rejected by many of them in the belief that these methods would reduce sexual pleasure. Among women, permanent methods of contraception are often synonymous with 'uselessness' and 'insensitivity', and among men, with 'sexual impotence'. 19 % 'unintended' pregnancies occurred accidentally; 15 % of them blamed their boyfriends/partners as untrustworthy because they said they promised to withdraw but did not do during the climax; 11 % said the pill did not work as it was taken inconsistently. They were often forgetful or reluctant to take the pill, and some of them reported having health problems from taking the pill; 8 % pregnancy occurred because their partners were not willing to use condoms and 7 % said that their counting/assumption on (safe period) menstrual cycle was wrong and 5 % failed to remember the reason. The FDHs can meet their partners on weekend (usually on Sundays). In many cases,

Table 9.2 Intended and unintended pregnancies by origin

	Filipina		Indo		Thai		Total
	f	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	
Intended	15	22	7	10	4	6	26
Unintended	27	40	10	15	5	7	42
Total	42		17		9		68

Source Field survey, 2013

their safe period ended on Saturday and they thought that only 'one day' would not make a big difference and thus engaged in sex without protection.

It was indeed interesting to note that pregnancy has been used to trap their partners to marry them. Many respondents were aware of the 'butterfly' character of their partners. Many of the partners without any commitment had been with them for years. Their legal status that offers little guarantee of protection of rights makes them vulnerable, which their partners exploited. More interestingly, many respondents candidly expressed their desire to have babies with a handsome man. Pakistanis therefore were their preferred partners in Hong Kong. However, Westerners were the most sought after. Many respondents spoke of other compatriots who were looking for partners to have babies because their contracts were about to end; therefore they can give birth at home.

There was no significant difference in the use of contraceptives when compared with the origins of the respondents. Most of the partners of the FDHs were Pakistanis, Nepalese, Indians and Bangladeshis. Strangers eventually became their boyfriends/partners. FDHs prefer Pakistanis as their boyfriends because of their looks. There is always a fear among the FDHs of being deserted anytime. This fear prompted them to get pregnant. Unintended pregnancy is correlated to the methods of contraception they used. Partners often do not pay heed to the request to use a condom from the beginning; hence the FDHs end up getting pregnant.

9.6 Birth Control Use and Abortions

Various methods were used for contraception. The condom is the most commonly used method among all the groups. Coitus interruptus and oral pill are the second highest used forms of birth control among the FDHs of all origins. According to the respondents, coitus interruptus is the most unreliable method as there is no way to check if any sperm is left inside before withdrawal. The perceived seven-day safe period is not a viable contraceptive option for them either. Most of the respondents can meet their partners only on weekends. Many respondents who met their partners on Sundays said that they knew that their safe period ended on Saturday, still they thought only one day would not make a difference (Table 9.3).

A considerable number of respondents either out of fantasies or to avoid being pregnant consciously engage in fellatio, anilingus, cunnilingus, anal penetrative sex and hand job. Respondents who had anal sex reported that they were more comfortable with it than vaginal sex. Their partners were also comfortable, they added. Ejaculation takes place sometimes in anus and sometimes in mouth. Therefore, being pregnant was impossible. Although anal sex is potentially risky behaviour, they said they would continue with it as long as they like. During anal sex, they use condom merely to remain clean but not consistently.

Of the 68 who got pregnant, 59 (87 %) underwent abortion of any sort and the rest completed their pregnancies in their home countries. They, however, returned leaving their kids back at home with their parents or relatives. None completed their

Table 9.3 Methods of contraception used (multiple response)

Methods of contraception	Filipina		Indo		Thai		Total
	f	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	
Male condoms	59	27	18	8	11	5	88 (41)
Female condom	2	0.93	–	–	–	–	2 (0.93)
Coitus interruptus	17	10	14	7	7	3	38 (18)
Oral pill	16	7	12	6	10	5	38 (18)
Safe period	11	5	10	5	8	4	29 (13)
The coil/intra-uterine device	4	2	4	2	–	–	8 (4)
Contraceptive patch	5	2.3	2	0.93	–	–	7 (3)
Contraceptive injections	4	2	1	0.46	3	1.4	8 (4)

Source Field survey, 2013; $n = 215$

pregnancies while staying in Hong Kong. The study demonstrates that about 76 % (45) had abortion at hospitals in Hong Kong, 9 % visited hospital after they tried abortion pills by themselves at home, 5 % performed abortions successfully using abortion pill at home. Some of them said that they tried horrific practices for example, some of them tried abortion by squeezing their abdomen hard. Some 10 % reported having miscarriages. There was no significant difference in abortion rate between the intended and unintended pregnancies ($P < 0.054$). When they thought 'practically' about the situation as a whole they considered abortion was a better option in order to continue working in Hong Kong.

As mentioned above, the abortions were not in anyway significantly ($P < 0.521$) related to either intended or unintended pregnancies. Although many of them got pregnant willingly, circumstances forced them to abort. Abortions are performed whenever there are compelling reasons to end a pregnancy. Induced abortions[1] are usually performed when circumstances such as legal constraints, medical unavailability, concerns about medical quality, cost, concerns about secrecy, prohibit women from seeking preferred procedures (Jones and Kavanaugh 2011). The most proclaimed reasons why respondents opted to abort when many of them conceived willingly are: continuation of the pregnancy may cause emotional or financial hardship; they later understood they were not ready to become a parent; they were pressured into having abortion by partners; fear of losing job, or deportations; and shame.

Side effects may occur with induced abortion, whether surgical or by pill. These include abdominal pain and cramping, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhoea. Abortion also carries the risk of significant complications such as bleeding, infection, and damage to organs. Infection can develop from the insertion of medical instruments into the uterus, or from foetal parts that are often mistakenly left inside (Ullah 2010a). A pelvic infection may lead to persistent fever over several days and

[1]An abortion is termed "induced" to differentiate it from a spontaneous abortion in which the products of conception are lost naturally also called a miscarriage.

Table 9.4 Premarital pregnancy and consequences (multiple responses)

Social	*f*	% (of 68)
Discriminated at employers' home	41	61
Discriminated at hospital	37	54
Psychological		
Guilty feelings	27	40
Depression	38	56
Flashbacks of abortion	4	6
Suicidal thoughts	14	21
Eating disorders	11	16
Relationship problems	8	12
Sexual dysfunction	4	6
Economic		
Salary cut	16	24
Alcohol and drug abuse	5	7
Lost job/contract terminated	7	10
Repatriated	8	12
Indebted	6	9

Source Field survey, 2013

extended hospitalization. There are some other potential consequences such as incomplete abortion, damage to the cervix, scarring of the uterine lining, perforation of the uterus and often death. Women who undergo one or more induced abortions carry a significantly increased risk of delivering prematurely in the future.

Many of them reported having psychological stress when they had to terminate intended pregnancies. Indonesians were less inclined to abort. They thought it was killing a life which is religiously prohibited. The Filipinas and Thais prioritized their career over religious prohibitive norms. Most of their partners did not accept their pregnancy. However, their attitude did not have a marked influence on the woman's decision on abortion. They had abortions for the sake of their work (Table 9.4).

9.7 Conclusion

Generally, individuals and couples plan the timing and spacing of their childbearing and to avoid unintended pregnancies for a range of social and economic reasons. Unintended pregnancy has a public health impact: Births resulting from unintended or closely spaced pregnancies are associated with adverse maternal and child health outcomes, such as delayed prenatal care, premature birth and negative physical and mental health effects for children (Orr et al. 2000; Finer 2010). FDHs who become pregnant abroad are particularly vulnerable to these consequences.

Premarital pregnancy has enormous impact on a woman's life trajectory. FDH who experienced premarital pregnancy face diverse predicaments at different levels

such as: personal and familial shame, compromised marriage prospects, abandonment by their partners, single motherhood, a stigmatized child, and an interrupted income and career. In some cases, FDHs get pregnant as a result of seduction by her employer; and consequently the employer expels the helper (Ullah 2010a).

The study bears out that premarital pregnancies have economic, health and social consequences for FDHs. As for economic consequences, many of them lost their jobs, some had to return home, and others had to undergo costly surgery and abortion. As for health consequences, the majority of them suffered depression, some of them feared that they would lose their fertility. The kids left behind without mothers suffered long-term psychological damage. Many of them said that premarital pregnancies ruined their marriage prospects. Deportation before their contract destroys their ability to recoup the money they spent on their migration. If they were to return prematurely the debt is doubled for all the respondents irrespective of origins.

This carries policy implications for both the origin and the destination countries. As per Hong Kong labour policy, a FDH is eligible for 10 weeks' paid maternity leave if she has been employed for not less than 40 weeks immediately before the commencement of scheduled maternity leave; she has given notice of pregnancy confirmed by a medical certificate to her employer; and she has produced a medical certificate specifying the expected date of confinement if so required by the employer (Government of Hong Kong 2008). Once the medical report confirms that they are pregnant, they try to stay as long as they can, normally six months after they conceive. However, since they are unable to work as hard as they used to, they face termination. With reduced work output and termination of the contract, the employer is put under stress as they have to go through a fresh process of recruiting the next one. Blame is normally hurled at the FDHs. They are prejudiced in the homes of the employers as soon as they disclose their pregnancy reports. The social significance of premarital pregnancy is similar to that of illegitimate births followed by the marriage of the parents (Nieminen 1964; Mensch et al. 2001). Although the Employment Ordinance provides maternity and trade union protection for workers/FDH, the retention of job after pregnancy is contingent on the wishes of the employers in most cases.

What legal challenges do FDHs face when they go back with pregnancy to their countries? According to the Philippines Revised Penal Code, abortion is legal only to save the life of the pregnant woman. Penalties are high for those that contravene the law (Singh et al. 2006).

The Thai FDH face a similar challenge. The Thai Criminal Code, Sections 301 to 305, last amended in 1957, defines offences in relation to induced abortion as "any actions causing the delivery of a dead fetus". Under Article 305, induced abortion can only be performed by a physician for two specific conditions, risk to the woman's health and pregnancy arising from rape (Warakamin et al. 2004; Virada 2006).

The women of Indonesia with unintended pregnancies face stark choices: giving birth and facing social ostracism, loss of family support network, and even harsh criminal punishment; or an abortion from a clandestine provider, risking serious

injury or death (Surjadjaja 2008; Maguire 2001). There is a widespread complain that the reality is a different story for the FDHs in Hong Kong. They experience contract violations and abuses—as reported by migrants, advocates, and the media. The Asian Migrants Centre—AMC (2001) reports that more than 20 migrant counselling centres in Hong Kong handle at least 1500 such cases a year. The Labour Relations Division of the Labour Department handled 1447 claims from FDHs in the first eight months of 2000. Data show that only two percent of the pregnant FDHs were allowed to stay back as long as they could work. The outcome from an unresolved abortion decision can be distressing which can overwhelm and spill into other areas of life. A great deal of individual human misery could be alleviated for parents and for children if only planned births occurred. The policies regarding premarital sex, pregnancies and abortion; provisions for labour polices in the countries of origin and destinations should be updated with changing global circumstances.

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Chapter 10
Packaging Talent: The Migrant Creative Labor Management of Overseas Filipino Musicians

Anjeline de Dios

Abstract In recent years, research into labor market intermediaries in migration has sought to move away from the conventional image of the unscrupulous and exploitative recruiter, toward a more nuanced understanding of the role, function, and significance of third-party processes in the mediation of migrant labor across borders. This chapter contributes to this field of critical inquiry through an analysis of the agents and managers who facilitate the employment of overseas Filipino musicians (OFMs) in hotels and cruise ships in Asia. I contend that as a sector of migrant creative labor, the provision of live music entertainment in these themed leisure venues constitutes a unique form of high-skilled, specialist labor (music performance) in work conditions characteristic of low- and semi-skilled migrant labor namely, hyperflexible and racialized. Using the concept of migration infrastructure, I frame the work of OFM agents and managers as a process of packaging talent. The process of packaging is further subdivided into the organizational practices of recruitment and training of OFMs' aesthetic and affective labor for the particular requirements of live music entertainment; and the representational strategies of "grooming" and branding to strengthen the racialized and gendered reputation of OFMs as competent yet low-cost providers of creative labor. Beyond merely facilitating the movement of workers between origin and destination countries, or between the spheres of production and consumption, OFM agents and managers are actively involved in shaping the demand for migrant creative labor, responding to and ultimately seeking to profit from the paradoxical tension between high skill and low cost which constitutes the employment context of OFMs.

Keywords Creative labor · Labor market intermediaries · Migration · Music · Asia-Pacific

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10.1 Introduction: Exploring the Intermediary Stage Through Migrant Creative Labor

Migration and music performance are two industries in which labor processes are actively shaped by intermediaries. Yet, in spite of the prevalence of third-party actors across all scales and stages of the labor process, the stage between production and consumption remains misunderstood. The familiar image of the booking agent or recruiter as the unscrupulous hoodwinker of migrants and artists obscures the significance and complexity of third-party labor processes (Lindquist et al. 2012). In recent years, scholars researching both ends of the high-skilled/low-skilled labor polarity—which I understand here as the purported divide between work in the creative and knowledge industries on the one hand, and the employment of migrant workers in labor-intensive hospitality and service industries on the other—have called attention to the ways in which brokerage and labor market intermediation represent an under-explored phenomenon. It is "the missing link between consumption and creativity" (Thompson et al. 2007) in the creative industries, and "the black box of migration" (Lindquist et al. 2012)—constituting the labor conditions of flexibility and precarity which typify both sectors.

Using qualitative research collected from 2012–2013,[1] this paper seeks to address the lacuna of critical ethnographic research on the intermediary stage by focusing on a racialized labor niche at the intersection of migration and music: Overseas Filipino Musicians (henceforth abbreviated as OFMs) who perform live music in themed leisure venues such as hotels, bars/clubs, and cruise ships. By "the intermediary stage" I refer to the totality of actors, technologies, and practices involved in the mobilization and corresponding placement of workers: recruitment, training, hiring, branding, and promotion, and the negotiation with clients regarding reservation wages[2] and contracts.

In general, cultural and labor market intermediation is about creating a continuous "point of connection or articulation between production and consumption" (Negus 2002a: 503), seeking to profitably mediate the constant changes emerging in the space between production and consumption.

I choose to use the term *precarity* instead of the more familiar term of precariousness in referring to the basic labor dynamic that third-party actors seek to manage, following Neilson and Rossiter's (2005) specific definition of the former as a "constitutively double-edged concept" that refers to both the condition of an

[1] 70 semi-structured interviews were conducted in three overseas destinations (Macao, Hong Kong, Singapore), two Philippine origin cities (Manila and Cebu City), and onboard a four-day, three-night cruise from Penang, Malaysia to the Thai islands of Phuket and Krabi. Research participants included 53 overseas Filipino musicians, 12 OFM agents, and 5 non-Filipino music directors, bandleaders, and session musicians active in the industry for live music entertainment.

[2] A term used in labor economics to describe a worker's minimum price for accepting the terms of employment in a contract. It is a reciprocally subjective figure, and represents the overlap between the employer's estimation of the highest possible rate they are willing to offer the worker, and the worker's lowest possible threshold of the rate they are willing to accept.

"interminable lack of certainty" in labor markets, and the "precondition for new forms of creative organization that seek to accept and exploit the flexibility inherent in networked modes of sociality and production." This has led some scholars to observe a polarization of labor sectors, whereby the normalization of hyperflexible work arrangements (variably termed freelance, project-based, temporary, casual, flexible, part-time, and subcontractual employment) is attended by an outsourcing of the tasks of recruitment, representation, and management to labor market intermediaries on both ends of the skill labor spectrum (Benner 2002, 2003; Enright 2013).

In the case of OFMs in live music entertainment, situated as they are at the interstices of migration and the music industry, the mediation of labor precarity in migrant creative work involves multiple points of connection between workers and overseas employers. Such a study helps recast the issue of labor market intermediaries from two relatively unexplored angles.

First, jobs in live music entertainment are an example of creative labor that is spatially, socially, and economically configured as a form of service employment, thereby confounding the conventional division between high-skilled and low-skilled forms of labor. Professional music performance is conventionally classified as a form of work in the creative and cultural industries, a term which broadly encompasses specialized work in music, theater, television and film, design, and other sectors which focus on the production of "symbolic goods for general purposes of entertainment, education, and even enlightenment" (Hesmondhalgh 2007: 4; Throsby 2001; O'Connor 2007). The labor of music performance in hotels, bars/clubs, and cruise ships has been overlooked by scholars for the most part, owing to its peripheral position in a global mainstream industry built on the production of copyrighted, original, and "authentic" music (Ng 2005, 2006; Cashman 2012; Peterson 2013).

The spatial context of performance in the hotel lobby, the cruise ship theater, and the theme park float parade (to name a few examples) determines the basic utility of live music entertainment: through the aesthetic labor of playing live a vast and recognizable repertoire of Western popular music (Ng 2005, 2006; Cashman 2012), and the affective labor of socializing with consumers both on- and off-stage, creative workers produce ambience, liveliness, and a sense of embodied interaction to enrich the "experience" of drinking, dining, and consuming products within the themed leisure venue (Pine and Gilmore 1998; Bryman 2004). In other words, by delivering a personalized experience of enjoyment to customers—making them feel special and at home, and perhaps transporting them to an imagined elsewhere—live music entertainers transform consumers into "guests" by meeting all the affective, embodied, and flexible labor requirements entailed by interactive service work (Hochschild 1983; McDowell et al. 2009).

As I argue elsewhere (de Dios, forthcoming), performance jobs in live music entertainment may be understood as high-skilled work in low-skilled labor conditions, thus bridging the assumed divide between highly skilled "talent" migrants and semi- and unskilled "labor" migrants which has thus far structured critical

social research on transnational migrant labor divisions (Favell et al. 2006; Yeoh 2006; May et al. 2007). In this paper, I show how this predicament is facilitated by intermediaries of migrant creative labor, and argue that OFM agents and managers are instrumental in determining the requirements of high-skilled labor, the structurally differentiated conditions characteristic of low-skilled labor, and the condition of precarity common to both niches.

Second, the case study of OFMs recasts the issue of migration brokers by demonstrating the complex role of race in shaping the production, segmentation, and mobilization of transnational creative labor. The extent to which music entertainers experience the hyper-flexibility, precarity, and inequality definitive of low-skilled jobs is determined to a large extent by their racial identification. In Asian consumer markets, the Anglophone nature of the music repertory and the international branding of themed leisure venues mean that the labor pool for live music entertainment is racially heterogeneous and unevenly segmented, with foreign performers whose racial appearance fulfills the demand for "authentic"-looking Western (i.e., white or black) performers receiving greater reservation wages and better working conditions than local and regional migrant performers (Ng 2005, 2006; de Dios, forthcoming).

Nonetheless, this entrenched consumer demand for racialized authenticity in migrant creative labor is only one part of the story. As I show below, OFM agents and managers employ the discursive formation of "Filipinoness" to justify and promote the labor of OFMs as ideal for the work of live music entertainment because they fulfill another market demand, that of flexibility. That is, regardless of the performer's individual skill level, experience, and reputation, their racialized and gendered identification as Filipino calibrates their labor according to a collective discursive formation that I identify as the "Filipino brand." In this paper, I demonstrate how the intermediated flexibilization (i.e., process of rendering and maintaining labor as flexible) of OFMs may be understood as an *infrastructure of migration management.* Specifically, the role of OFM agents and managers in mediating migrant creative labor may be defined as an infrastructural dynamic of packaging, encompassing two processes that shape and mobilize Filipino musicians for the overseas market: the *organizational* aspect of training and managing OFMs for the specific requirements of performance, and the *representational* aspect of promoting, marketing, and "grooming" them to adhere to racialized and gendered ideals of professionalism, attractiveness, sophistication, and respectability.

The rest of the paper proceeds as follows. I first sketch an overview of live music entertainment in Asia as a unique transnational labor sector predominated by Overseas Filipino Musicians. I then provide an explanation for the concept of migration as infrastructure, and discuss how migrant labor is packaged. The last two sections then detail the two basic dynamics of "packaging" exhibited by OFM brokers; namely, organizational labor management, and racialized and gendered branding.

10.2 Context: Overseas Filipino Musicians as a Distinct Migrant Labor Niche

The case of OFMs warrants attention for two reasons. First, the Philippines is one of the world's most prominent exporters of labor power, fueled by a comprehensive migration policy infrastructure unparalleled among other sending countries (Guevarra 2009; Rodriguez 2010; Tyner 2009). Crucially, professional music performance is one of the oldest migratory professions in a country well known for its large and diverse migrant labor force: Filipino musicians have been traveling within and beyond Philippine shores for work since the Spanish colonial era in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Irving 2010). In transnational Asian cities, such as Hong Kong, which has been a major migrant destination for OFMs since the 1930s, an established reputation thus exists for Filipino musicians in live music entertainment.

A second reason for the significance of OFMs in the study of migrant and creative labor lies in their professional specificity as highly skilled performers of a varied mainstream repertory. These migrant musicians specialize in performing music that is not "native" to them as Filipinos, posing a direct contrast with their contemporaries in other developing non-Western countries who focus on exclusively producing music "authentic" to their racial, national, and regional cultures of provenance (Watkins 2010). OFMs are a fixture in clubs, pubs, cruise ships, and theme parks in cosmopolitan cities in East and Southeast Asia, Europe, and the Middle East, performing live a vast repertoire of Western and regional pop music, from the latest Cantopop chart topper to evergreens from the 1950s and 1960s (Hoffman 2012). In global media, they are depicted as "a necessity for any self-respecting hotel, convention center, bar, or restaurant aspiring to be 'classy'" (Bowe 2005), and are "not particularly inventive," thus able to "mimic virtually every singer or singing style in existence" (Chan 2006).

This occupational specialization may be partly explained, first, by cultural and economic history. From the nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries, Filipino musicians migrated to cosmopolitan colonial cities in East Asia as purveyors of jazz, classical, and other modern Western music then in vogue (Watkins 2009, 2010; Keppy 2013; Schenker, forthcoming). A second factor behind the overseas export of Filipino musicians may also be explained by prevalent discourses about innate musicality and versatility, racialized discourses espoused not only by foreign observers and audiences, but—as I explain in the next three sections—by OFM agents and managers themselves.

Apart from these historical factors, the contemporary emergence of OFMs as a distinctly racialized labor niche is most logically explained by the Philippine state's broader export labor strategy for economic development, which intermeshes with the private sector of labor market intermediaries specializing in the overseas deployment of musicians. OFM performance, never fully incorporated in the domestic Philippine industry of copyrighted music, was subsumed under the burgeoning industry of export labor, which emerged in and through major institutional

and political shifts during the presidential term of Ferdinand Marcos from 1966 to 1985, its importance to the Philippine economy was adopted by successive presidencies from 1986 to the present (Tyner 2009; Guevarra 2009).

Studies of contemporary Philippine labor migration regime trace its development to the Labor Code of 1974, which consolidated existing labor laws to promote and manage export labor. This state-led management of export Filipino labor was later solidified in 1982 with the establishment of the Philippine Overseas Administration (POEA). Executive Order (EO) 797 reorganized two existing migrant labor management agencies—the Overseas Employment Development Board, and the National Seamen Board—into one unit, the POEA. The new government agency was formed to "formulate and undertake, in coordination where necessary with the appropriate entities concerned, a systematic program of promoting and monitoring the overseas employment of Filipino workers" (Executive Order 797).

With the formation of the POEA came the national systematization of overseas employment brokerage, and the parallel effort to govern the private sector of Filipino brokerage agents and workers, primarily through the issuance of licenses. Construction work, engineering, household service work, nursing, teaching, and seafaring—occupations with acute labor shortages in North America, the Middle East, Western and Southern Europe, and East Asia—were targeted by the POEA as key areas for developing OFW labor (Gibson-Graham 1986; Parreñas 2001). These sectors later became the focus of bilateral agreements brokered by the Philippine state with labor-receiving countries over the next three decades. Today, the majority of the 10 million OFWs around different regions of the world are employed in these sectors.

In spite of the prominence and history of musical performance as a migrant Filipino occupation, OFMs are simultaneously under- and overregulated as an OFW category, for a number of reasons. First, the demand for live music performance is not as numerically significant as the other industries. The most recent statistics show that only 1196 music performers were newly deployed overseas (POEA 2010). In general, musical performance is not considered a "necessary" job since, unlike nursing, construction work, and domestic service, it does not respond to industrial and demographic changes in receiving states.

A second reason for the peripheralization of musicians in the POEA's regulatory schema of OFWs is the categorical conflation of musical performance with the feminized migrant labor sector of nightclub hostessing and prostitution, mainly through the now-defunct category of Overseas Performing Artist (henceforth abbreviated as OPA) (Ng 2006; Tyner 2009). On paper, the OPA category encompassed three occupational sectors: musicians (i.e., instrumentalists), composers, arrangers, and singers; choreographers and dancers; and circus performers and other "novelty actors" (TESDA 2004). In popular and scholarly discourse however, the OPA label and its associated term "Filipino/a entertainer" pertain almost exclusively to the population of *japayuki*, or female nightclub and bar hostesses, in Japan and South Korea, particularly, in the late 1980s to the early 2000s (Javate-de Dios 1992; Tyner 2004, 2009; Yu-Jose 2002, 2007; Rodriguez 2009).

It was not always so, as sociologist Lydia Yu-Jose has argued: from the 1880s until the 1960s, "Filipino entertainers" referred to musicians, predominantly male, who supplied live jazz, ragtime, and (later on) disco and pop music to dance halls and clubs in Okinawa, Osaka, and Tokyo, often as part of multiracial ensembles managed by American booking agents (Yu-Jose 2002, 2007). By the mid-1980s, however, the term was used mainly to describe the state-brokered wave of Filipina women categorized by the POEA as dancers or singers, but who in reality were employed or trafficked for work in nightclubs, in collusion with talent recruitment agents.

The POEA facilitated the large-scale migration of Filipina entertainers to East Asia beginning in the late 1980s, not through bilateral agreements with receiving states, but through the issuance of an official document that certified Filipino entertainers as legitimate performers. This document was initially called the Artist Accreditation Certificate (AAC), and was replaced by the Artist Record Book (ARB) in 1991. The ARB was a mandatory requirement for the entire pre-departure migration process for OPA bound for Japan, South Korea, and Singapore: from the POEA certification of the employment contract to the issuance of an exit visa for the entertainers' legitimate outmigration from the Philippines. As a system of training, testing, and certification, the ARB document was "designed to upgrade and professionalize the overseas entertainment industry, through the development of skills and careful selection of workers" (TESDA 2004). This was done through a series of academic and performance skills tests administered by the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), the skills certification agency of the POEA. Significantly, the only certification tests issued by TESDA were for Singers and Dancers, two of the most commonly feminized occupations in creative labor which overlap with *japayuki* employment.

In 2004, TESDA produced the only official statistical report to date on Filipino/a Performing Artists (PA), documenting the total number and distribution per country of overseas entertainers from 2001 to 2003. Musicians comprised roughly half of the total number of deployments, second to dancers and choreographers: 34,892 new deployments of musicians were recorded in 2001 (49.5 % of the total), 40,770 in 2002 (55.4 %) in 2002, and 33,725 (57.5 %) in 2003. The destinations listed were Japan, South Korea, Singapore, and "others," with Japan representing the overwhelming majority of OPA deployments for musicians (34,553 in 2001, 40,382 in 2002, and 33,375 in 2003). The accuracy of these figures is considerably compromised however, for two reasons.

First, there is a widespread consensus that the ARB program was never intended to certify the competence of OPAs as legitimate or qualified musicians. Rather, it is widely perceived by the musicians and agents interviewed for this research as a cover-up for the large-scale deployment of Filipina entertainers to East Asian nightclubs from the early 1990s to the mid-2000s. Second, from the very beginning, the ARB system was allegedly used to cover-up a "corruption network" of officials in the POEA and TESDA, in collusion with agents in the private sector, who profited from the sale of ARBs to unqualified performers (Diaz 2003). Further, though the processing charges were slated at PhP 300 (USD 6) in 2002, news reports revealed that unscrupulous officials sold ARBs to both legitimate and

unqualified performers for up to PhP 25,000 (USD 550) (Diaz 2003). In 2003, a reported 20,000 prospective Overseas Performing Artists were denied exit from the Philippines because the TESDA had failed to issue ARBs, resulting in a projected loss of over PhP 192 million (Jaymalin and Ocampo 2003). The entrenched corruption surrounding the issuance of ARBs was also enabled by many Filipino musicians hired by the TESDA as skills test examiners who accepted bribes from agents of upwards of PhP 5,000 per performer (Bobby, personal communication, 12 May 2013).

Since 2004 the number of outbound OPAs dwindled as a result of the Japanese government's clampdown on illegal human trafficking. This resulted in the decline of work opportunities for qualified OFMs—and with it, the closure of what was once a key OFM destination since the late nineteenth century (Yu-Jose 2002; Drew and Monica, personal communication 2013). While the ARB was eventually discontinued in 2006, there remains a POEA-administered certification process for both land-based and sea-based OFMs which continue to be plagued by the same problems of bribery, corruption, and bureaucratic management that characterized the ARB period (de Dios, forthcoming). Moreover, although the discontinuation of the ARB has ostensibly readjusted the state's politico-legal export labor regime (Guevarra 2009), the representational shift of "Filipino/a entertainer" seems to have permanently retraced the semiotic import of the label from legitimate musician to *japayuki*, considerably shaping the function of agents and managers who "package" their talents a certain way to respond to the demands and prejudices of the market.

OFM agents and managers are thus indispensable actors in mediating the transnational movements of migrant creative workers, as these take place within the organizational, representational, and politico-legal context of contemporary Philippine labor migration. In the next section, I conceptualize their significance and function as an infrastructural dynamic of "packaging" labor for overseas mobility.

10.3 Private Sector Intermediaries of Migrant Creative Labor: The Infrastructure of Packaging

Given the slipperiness and specificity of jobs in migrant creative labor, how do third-party labor processes shape the working lives and opportunities of Filipino musicians working in overseas leisure venues? In other words, how can the management of creative labor be understood in the economic and institutional context of transnational migration?

Following the research direction set by Lindquist et al. (2013), I propose the concept of infrastructure as a heuristic device to identify and analyze the intermediary stage of creative labor migration. Writing in the context of migration management, the authors propose this approach, rather than one exclusively focused on networks or industries, to foreground "a particular form of economy [wherein] [m]obility is increasingly managed through infrastructural development as opposed to the control of bodily movement per se" (Lindquist et al. 2013: 2).

I extend this line of thinking to address the issue of cross-border labor management in a uniquely transnational creative industry and its production of labor precarity. This places an emphasis on interactions between actors and systems of governance geared towards the cross-border mobilization of goods, people, and ideas across three kinds of precarity: organizational, representational, and politico-legal.[3]

In characterizing the relational spatiality of the intermediary stage as infrastructure, I contend that actors in management and brokerage operate as a *structural modality*: individuals and institutions identify gaps between production and consumption, and bridge these gaps by building, securing, and profiting from navigable pathways of mobility. Speaking specifically of intermediaries in the private sector, booking agents, recruiters, and talent managers fulfill a basic role in the precarious and competitive labor sector of transnational musical performance: they supply entertainment venues with a steady stream of foreign talent, and provide musicians with access to overseas work contracts and future opportunities of steady work. This intermediary work encompasses a broader and flexible range of activities and services, each varying according to the agent's skill specialization, migrant work destination, performance venue, in response to political and economic changes in immigration system and market demand.

The metaphor of packaging as a range of intermediary processes seems to me potentially fruitful in thinking through the complex of resources, roles, and responsibilities accrued by agents and managers as they act infrastructurally to mediate OFMs' labor mobility. To package does not just involve the process of physically moving an object from point A to point B: it also entails rendering the object suitable for movement—gathering together and organizing different elements into a spatial coherence that will make sense to the recipient. The entry for "package" as a verb in the New Oxford American Dictionary recalls these three infrastructural dynamics:

1. to combine (various products) for sale as one unit
2. to present (someone or something) in a particular way, esp. to make them more attractive
3. to put in a box or wrapping, esp. for sale

The movement of material goods across borders and through various spaces hinges on packaging. In retail, sales of slow-moving items will pick up speed if they are sold together as a "package" deal, at a reduced price: more for less, all in one purchase. Media, marketing, and PR executives package potentially unpopular projects or personalities in a certain way to glide them through the public's suspicion or skepticism. Finally, in the delivery logistics industry, it is packaging that constitutes the possibility of movement, insofar as it enables the organization of disparate objects into a compact, mobile space—destination and proof of tariff marked clearly and indelibly on the external surface of this space.

[3]This chapter focuses on the first two areas of precarity; I discuss politico-legal precarity in another work (de Dios, forthcoming).

In retail, communications, and logistics industries, packaging relies on a material, social, and technical infrastructure that is hidden and taken for granted. Its only visible points emerge at the point of reception of the good itself, or of the designed presentation of the press release. In a similar vein, I want to consider whether packaging brings any symbolic and operative valence to the role of agents and managers in the industry for overseas musical talent. In the migrant creative labor industry of live music entertainment, the "finished product" of the performance—the provision of an embodied, interactive service that is affective as much as it is aesthetic—is belied by hidden third-party processes and practices of shaping talent to conform and in some ways construct the demand for flexible, competent migrant creative labor.

If the OFM in the overseas club, hotel lounge, or cruise ship deck is the product, possessing all the necessary professional and affective competencies to do the job of entertaining through music, night after night, perhaps the constitutive infrastructure is to be found in the intermediary stage of labor brokerage, which I identify as constituting two dynamics of packaging: (1) the organizational process of *assembling compatibility* among musicians and between OFMs and their employers, and (2) the representational process of *grooming talent* to provide a coherent visual and behavioral "look" of professionalism and competence, processes which are explained in further detail in the next two sections.

For the remainder of this section, I further develop the notion of intermediaries-as-infrastructure and their dual processes of packaging by analyzing 6 of the 12 OFM agents interviewed for this research. These are agents and managers who provide a substantial amount of financial, administrative, and even emotional support to overseas Filipino musicians, while still exhibiting considerable variations in the ways they make sense of and execute their infrastructural capacity of overseas talent management. Collectively, they have managed the sojourns of roughly 6000 OFMs over the length of their careers as agents (not including musicians of other nationalities). Tables 10.1 and 10.2 provide an overview of their occupational profiles and job specializations.

Table 10.1 Profile of migrant cultural talent agents and managers interviewed

Name[a]	Gender	Destination/clients	Previous work	Years active as agent
1. Ben & Linda (spouses)	M/F	Japan/Middle East/Turkey: clubs/hotels	Seafarer/musician and singer	30
2. Manuel	M	Cruise ships	Cruise ship drummer	8
3. Martine	F	Hong Kong: hotels	Hotel singer	20
4. Iskandar	M	Malaysia/China: hotels	Hotel F&B director	30
5. Bobby	M	Cruise ships	Producer/songwriter	20
6. Eddie	M	India, Maldives: clubs/hotels	DJ/concert producer	7

[a]Respondents have been given pseudonyms to protect their identities

Table 10.2 Services offered by migrant cultural talent agents and managers interviewed

Name	Assembling bands	Grooming talent
1. Ben and Linda	• Personally train 'from scratch' (Ben) • Provide studio rehearsal space and equipment • Provide repertoire • Provide board and lodging while training • Facilitates contract booking process with employer	• Pay for costumes • Produce promotional videos and photos and features band profile on Facebook page • Sets and implements standards for onstage appearance and professional conduct
2. Manuel	• Personally trains 'from scratch' • Provides studio rehearsal space and equipment • Provides repertoire • Facilitates contract booking process with employer	• Pays for costumes • Sets and implements standards for onstage appearance and professional conduct
3. Martine	• In-house trainer trains 'from scratch' • Provides studio rehearsal space and equipment • Provides repertoire • Facilitates contract booking process with employer	• Pays for costumes • Personally coaches female singers • Sets and implements standards for onstage appearance and professional conduct
4. Iskandar	• In-house trainer forms and coaches groups • Provides studio rehearsal space and equipment • Provides repertoire • Facilitates contract booking process with employer	• Pays for costumes • Provides in-house choreographer • Produces promotional photos and features band profile/resume on website
5. Bobby	• Handpicks seasoned musicians to form groups • Provides studio rehearsal space and equipment • Facilitates contract booking process with employer	• Augments musicians' skill set with further training • Facilitates contract booking process with employer • Sets and implements standards for onstage appearance and professional conduct
6. Eddie	• Facilitates contract booking process with employer	• Produce promotional videos and photos and features band profile on Facebook page

A consistent finding of this research was the variability of motivation, function, and specialization of OFM agents and managers. Some agents book suitable musicians on behalf of employers, while others are concerned solely with the processing of visa requirements. Others are actively involved at all stages of the overseas work trajectory: recruiting and training complete beginners to become competent musicians, forming and managing bands for specific projects, overseeing visa application processes, and addressing the concerns and complaints of musicians and their employers while abroad. Moreover, even within the relatively

narrow field of live music entertainment, there exists considerable differences in the kinds of musicians that OFM intermediaries choose to manage—not only in terms of music genre and performance venue, but especially with regards to skill level and income bracket. To illustrate, I cite two OFM agents who articulate contrasting rationales for selecting which musicians to represent:

> ISKANDAR: I mean, musicianship is an art. You [as agent] draw the line and you say, "this is the calibre I want." Some musicians practice 15, 16 hours a day you know, no need to tell them. That's the discipline I look for. I can't instill discipline. If you keep playing the same old songs, it's rubbish. You need to evolve. If you have talent but you don't improve on it, you're just stagnant. You only deteriorate. I only work with musicians with *first-class* discipline (Personal communication, 17 April 2013).
>
> EDDIE: I don't choose the musicians Anjeline, I represent everybody and anybody who comes to me and I give *everybody* a chance. And we give them the opportunity to be on our platform and we try to promote them if the clients would ask for them so we do not discriminate, we do not, let's say because the band is weak I do not say that "you do not deserve to be on my website," I always put them up even though they're weak. They're not good singers but you never know, music is *art*! And the beauty of music is in the eye of the beholder, what I may feel does not stand with somebody in the different country who in their feel [*sic*] has a good standard. So I don't choose, I try to have as *many* as I can and put as many as I can up (Personal communication, 12 April 2013).

What do such differences among individual intermediaries tell us about the management of mobility through infrastructural facilitation, rather than "the control of bodily movement per se" (Lindquist et al. 2012)? I highlight two important themes. The first is the importance of accounting for individual histories, backgrounds, and reputations in understanding OFM agents and managers' *organizational* capacity in a project-based industry such as live music entertainment. The second theme is the ways in which these subjective resources shape their *representational* strategies of packaging their musicians according to their own standards of what constitutes "quality" talent, and employers' demands for flexible creative labor.

Organizational capacity and individual capital. In thinking of labor market intermediaries as a kind of infrastructure, it is crucial to remember the nature of the industry in which they operate. Work in creative industries is understood as a kind of project-based ecology (Grabher 2002a, b, 2004; Grabher and Ibert 2006). In contrast with firm-based operations, the transnational creative sector of live music entertainment relies on transient and recurrent constellations of workers, teams, clients, and resources for the fulfillment of short-term contractual assignments and projects. Project ecologies are defined by "structural holes" (Burt 1992, 2004) between different formal and informal social relationships, intermediaries, such as managers and agents perform the important function of bridging these holes. Intermediaries become "a strategic asset—creating room for tactical maneuver, arbitrage, and opportunistic strategic games" (Grabher and Ibert 2006: 254).

The role of social mechanisms and personal/professional networks in securing employment in creative industries has been well documented (Ettlinger 2003; Granovetter 1973; Wittel 2001; Christopherson 2002; Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011; see Watson 2012). However, the assumption of these studies is that creative

workers themselves are the only actors in this entrepreneurial activity of establishing and maintaining networks of sociality for present and future project collaborations. In contrast, my research has shown that agents and other intermediaries perform the critical function of providing access to employment through their ability to secure employment for musicians. This is not to say that musicians themselves are spared entirely from networking, only that their representation by an agent can make or break their access to specific and desirable opportunities.

Further, a broker of *migrant* creative labor is not a fixed identity, and must be considered in relation to location, time, and power, as Lindquist et al. (2012: 7) suggest. Considering intermediaries as a kind of migration infrastructure, particularly in a project ecology such as live music entertainment, means thinking of the latter not as an unchanging structure enabling or disabling fixed patterns of mobility, but rather as a context-specific infrastructure dependent on the activation of capital at strategic points of opportunity. Not everyone can be or wishes to be a broker, and those who wish to be brokers can only do so if they have the necessary economic, cultural, and symbolic capital. But this still has to be "activated" by a strategic positioning in time and space.

What determines an intermediary's infrastructural capacity to bridge holes is the quality and quantity of their capital necessary to mitigate risk, mobilize resources, and managing creative labor (Townley et al. 2009: 950). Studies of the creative industries suggest that intermediaries must possess different kinds of capital (resources, expert knowledge, and connections) to establish competitiveness, secure contracts, maintain productive relationships with clients and prospective talents, and strengthen one's reputation in order to attract new clients (Townley et al. 2009). Such a connective capacity is especially needed in transnational sectors of professional music performance. In their study of migrant musicians, Kiwan and Meinhof (2011) develop the notion of transcultural capital (Meinhof 2009), "a potent resource that enables migrants to link different values, strengths, and social networks they construct and employ as part of their life trajectories and careers" (Glick Schiller and Meinhof 2011: 24). This capital emerges from actors' engagement in multiple networks in a transnational social field (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004), interconnecting "spaces within a nation, places of origin and places of settlement, as well as extending globally across multiple borders and boundaries" (Glick Schiller and Meinhof 2011: 24).

As seen in Table 10.1, a striking commonality among the agents interviewed for this research is that all of them entered agent work as a second career, after realizing that their previous professions equipped them with the necessary transcultural and other kinds of capital to bridge the many structural holes scattered throughout the live music industry and other creative economies typified by a project-based organization (Jeffcutt and Pratt 2002; Grabher 2002a, b, 2007). Some, like Iskandar, come from the clients' side of the industry, while others such as Martine and Manuel were themselves OFMs. These industry experiences were highlighted by my respondents as a major reason why they were especially equipped to not only anticipate the job requirements of overseas live music entertainment and train musicians for these specific demands, but also to anticipate and understand their

talents' needs. When agents are located in the migrant destination, they tend to provide the kind of close emotional assistance and managerial supervision that renders their work of bridging structural holes more demanding and complex.

Martine, for instance, built a 20-year long career as a hotel singer before switching to agency work, during which time she established close friendships with managers and administrators of the hotels where she worked. When she decided to set up her agency for hotel musicians, her reputation as a reliable provider and manager of Filipino talent was already cemented—enabling her to offer a unique level of stability and reliability in bridging the gap between clients and talents:

> MARTINE: For all the musicians I've handled, almost none of them have taken the bait [and transferred to another agent]. They really feel *secure* to be with me. Of course you can't please them 100%. But I'd say 95%. They feel that they've got protection—they won't lose their jobs. If they ever get fired, they know they have somewhere new to transfer to because—I'd say I've got maybe 80% or 90% of the market share [for hotel musicians] in Hong Kong. I don't have to look for clients anymore, the hotels are the ones who call me after being referred by other hotels. So the musicians with me can finish a contract in this hotel then transfer to another hotel. That's the advantage of having an agent. Of course it all depends on your *abilidad* [skill, skillfulness] and how good you are as a musician (Personal communication, 6 February 2013).

Representing and marketing OFMs as "Filipino." The second way that the infrastructural capacity of labor brokers hinges upon their unique cache of capital is seen in their function as cultural intermediaries. The term was originally formulated by Pierre Bourdieu to describe the emergence of a new class and occupational position in the cultural economy, namely

> the new petite bourgeoisie [which] comes into its own in all the occupations involving presentation and representation (sales, marketing, advertising, public relations, fashion, decoration and so forth) and in all the institutions providing symbolic goods and services […] and in cultural production and organization which have expanded considerably in recent years. (Bourdieu 1984: 359)

Keith Negus uses this definition to reframe the significance of corporate actors in the music industry, arguing that various practices of marketing, advertising, and persuasion are instrumental in constructing both *types* of creative products (in music, film, television, etc.), and the *standards* by which these products are assessed as marketable, appropriate, and desirable (Negus 2002a: 504). Further, he argues that access to formal participation and recognition in the creative industries is

> informed by patterns and power and prejudice arising from the ways in which the formation of particular industries has been shaped by such factors as class, gender relations, sexual codes, ethnicity, racial labels, age, political allegiances, regional conflicts, family genealogy, religious affiliation and language […] [such that] broader social divisions are inscribed *into* and become an integral part of business practices. (Negus 2002b: 118)

While the concept of cultural intermediaries has been thus far applied to managers, agents, and other intermediary figures in the creative and cultural industries, I suggest that a parallel dynamic of "presentation and representation of symbolic

goods and services" is being increasingly adopted by private actors and labor-sending states alike in marketing, advertising, and promoting migrant creative workers to corner specific overseas employment gaps for precarious and short-term work.[4] Certainly, the Philippines represents one of the clearest examples of cultural intermediation in the context of racialized branding of overseas Filipino contract labor for the work of "servicing the world" (Manalansan 2010), ultimately plugging into broader international regimes of temporary and "circular" labor mobility (Vertovec 2007; Guevarra 2009; Tyner 2009; Rodriguez 2010). However, as Lindquist et al. (2012) and other authors (Xiang 2012) have highlighted, and as my earlier discussion of the ARB controversy has shown, the state's infrastructure of migration management has conflicted with the private sector of agents in the common project of facilitating the competitive branding of Filipino musicians for overseas labor markets. I consider how OFM agents and managers contend with the perceived devaluation of the Filipino brand of overseas entertainment labor (owing to its conflation with the sex industry) through the work of cultural intermediation, specifically their management of the gendered and racialized attributes of respectability and professionalism.

Negus likewise points out that cultural intermediaries are "involved in the construction of what is to be 'commercial' at any one time, often retrospectively, and they are engaged in mediating many of the values through which aesthetic work is realized" (Negus 2002a: 506). Whereas in the service sector, outsourcing processes of brokerage, recruitment, and management by brokers is a measure by employers to cut labor costs by employing contractual and easily replaceable workers (Wills 2009), in the creative industries this transference of intermediary dynamics to actors in between producers and clients and/or consumers signifies a functional division of labor specialization. As cultural intermediaries knowledgeable about the specialist requirements of music performance, the ways in which OFM agents and managers "package" their talents (through the representational strategies of branding and marketing and the organizational approaches to training, "grooming," and managing musicians) exert a significant influence over the terms and conditions of employment. Owing to their infrastructural capacity in organizing and training OFMs, their actions as individual intermediaries have a cumulative impact on the economic and symbolic place of Filipino musicians in the racialized hierarchy of migrant creative labor.

As mentioned above, live music entertainment in themed leisure venues inevitably reproduces the desire for white and black performers who adhere to standards of racialized authenticity in Western popular music. How OFM agents and managers respond is by calibrating the discursive formation of "Filipinoness" as a labor category of racialized flexibility. This marginalization works to competitively distinguish OFMs from other racial labor niches, ultimately reinforcing their peripheral

[4]This also parallels emergent trends of state-led initiatives to manage and regulate conditions of precarity in creative labor sectors in domestic contexts (Kong 2011), further underlining the increasing significance of the creative industries as a key sector of national economic growth, and the plurality of industrial and organizational contexts in which states seek to harness them.

position as migrants and creative workers in the creative industry of music. Moreover, as explained later, the social and performative attributes rendered "natural" to Filipinos as racialized musicians are hewn to fit with intermediaries' gendered conceptions of professionalism and competence, as a means of counteracting the discursive devaluation of the "Filipino/a entertainer" category in global labor migration.

10.4 Organizational Packaging as Assembling Compatibility

The first way in which OFM agents and managers illustrate the organizational dynamics of packaging is *assembling compatibility.* By "compatibility," I refer to a congruence between diverse requirements and attributes of actors which, in the everyday work context of live music entertainment, need to be aligned for the fulfillment of a common purpose. Packaging Filipino musicians for live music in leisure venues simultaneously involves logistical, technical, economic, social, and creative processes that blur simplistic distinctions between the sourcing of "raw" talent or labor in the Philippines, and the movement of that labor to overseas work destinations. I focus on three basic organizational functions by OFM agents and managers: the literal sense of putting together bands for specific work contracts or projects; the provision of technical, professional, and educational resources to target the development of specific skills; and the drawing-up of contracts with employers.

Assembling and training musicians for overseas work. With the exception of certain solo performers—such as pianists, classical guitarists, solo singers, or singer-guitarists—the majority of OFMs working in hotels, cruise ships, and bars/clubs are hired as groups, from singer-pianist lounge duos to as many as seven-or eight-piece bands. Given the short-term, project-based nature of the music production cycle, especially in music performance, it is rare to find fully formed bands who are available at the precise moment that a booking for a specific venue becomes available (e.g., "five-piece combo with pianist and two female singers for restaurant in five-star hotel, able to play Broadway medleys and smooth jazz").

Agents and managers play an active role in assembling compatibility for musicians of different skill levels and capacities. If equipped with the managerial skills particular to the market for live musical performance, an agent can be equally useful to experienced and novice musicians in the business, both of whom may not have the same cultural and institutional capital or the network to assemble a band on short notice. Further, established agents' familiarity with the stylistic conventions and preferences of particular venues can become a training resource for musicians of whatever level to accrue strategic competencies in a market oversaturated with highly skilled musicians:

> BOBBY: Although I handpick my musicians who are mostly mature and seasoned, I still train them. I had musicians who didn't do vocal back-up [before] but I force-train them and

> they are now exceptional because they play an instrument *and* provide back-up vocals. I also provide them the initial repertoire materials of about 140 songs that they learn from CDs I give each one of them. The value-added we provide is more than what other agents are prepared to do (Personal communication, 12 May 2013).

In the creative industries, intermediaries can also act as gatekeepers in bridging the intrinsic divide between the artistic logic of creative production with the economic logic of consistent reproduction of that output in the face of unpredictable consumer markets, and conflicting business interests (DeFilippi et al. 2007; Eikhof and Haunschild 2007; Townley et al. 2009). While outsourcing brokerage and management to intermediaries is a measure by employers and clients seeking to cut labor costs by employing contractual and easily replaceable workers, it is also clear that intermediaries perform a critical specialist function by maintaining organizational and professional practices and conventions in work contexts defined by temporariness and unpredictability (Rogan 1988; Morrow 2013).

> MANUEL: We train the bands in our own studio. I'm the one who looks for the bands. I look for the whole unit, not just one member. […] I do the choosing, I do the grooming, then I prepare the musicians so that when they get there [the cruise ship], they're all set to play and know exactly what to do. […] I guess I just want to educate them too. We musicians need to learn how to be independent (Personal communication, 17 October 2012).

Ironically, Manuel's desire for musicians to "learn how to be independent" is premised on his ability to direct the training and education of these musicians at a critical formative stage of their employment. Likewise, as illustrated in Ben and Linda's interview below, some OFM managers take on a critical role in shaping the conventions of live music entertainment, establishing these practices themselves by developing unique "concepts" or "products" for performing groups. In so doing they effectively create rather than simply meet a preexisting demand for a specialized iteration of migrant creative labor:

> LINDA: There are many agencies now, but very few really with their own—product. Especially in terms of all-female rock bands.
>
> BEN: See, what we specialize in is management and— and *development*. We were the only ones who specialized in female bands—and that's what they were looking for in Japan before, in the 70 s to the late 80 s, because that was the *attraction*— in the clubs, usually what they need is an *attraction*. […] We take in these youths from the provinces, 17 or 18, mostly young women who can't go to college or aren't supported by their parents. They stay in the dormitory [connected to a rehearsal studio, the office, and Ben's family's residence] and everything is provided here. Nearly all of them don't know anything about music until they come here. Linda takes a look and asks them, "sing for us!" until [she says] "OK Dad, this one can be a singer." If not, OK, I have them try out the bass, the drums, the guitar, until you find… what's important to me is whether they have the reflexes to learn quickly. And where they can follow and play along the quickest, that's where I assign them. […] Everyone's different, there are some who have great reflexes but have weak timing. And there are those who— are great singers, great at their instrument, but sometimes, the personality, you can't put them in the lead singer slot. So we assign them to the instrument instead. Because the focus of the audience is always on the singer. So that's Linda's role— if the singer comes from a depressed area [informal settler area], she's the one who gives feedback on the— right attitude, the right personality (Personal communication, 16 September 2012).

Cruise ship and hotel agents develop musical acts, such as duos, quartets, and full bands in temporary work collaboration settings on a per-contract basis, similar to work cycles in creative industry sectors, such as new media and advertising (Grabher 2002a, b), and TV and film production (Blair 2001; Christopherson 2008). Unlike production and design teams, however, the need for live music entertainers to "gel" both as performers and as collaborators is paramount, since the final product of the performance can only be carried out by a unit, not by a single individual. If the members are of incompatible competencies or dispositions, it will affect working and living conditions. While abroad, OFMs typically live under one roof, often room-share, and thus, spend the majority of their daily hours together—ultimately affecting the group's ability to fulfill their work requirements on- and offstage. Conversely, if members in a temporary work setting create a solid working and performing dynamic, this allows the product of musical performance to develop more fully, building on previously acquired knowledge and expertise and creating a more intuitive practice of communication that will positively affect performance (for the importance of the establishment of commonly shared "musical pathways" in performance, see Finnegan 1989).

Thus, intermediaries meet the demands of live music entertainment projects not only by matching appropriate creative and service workers to employment opportunities, but also by defining the very conditions by which these workers secure their employment, and the norms and standards of "appropriateness" by which creative products and labor are understood and consumed (Bourdieu 1984; Dyer 2002). This parallels findings by economic geographer Chris Benner (2002, 2003 about firms choosing between two motivations or logics behind the recourse to temporary, mediated labor markets: the "low road" (to cut costs and increase labor flexibility in low- to semi-skilled work) or the "high road" (to find skilled and elite labor that can be assimilated to their permanent workforce).

Significantly, employers in hotels, bars/clubs, and cruise ships can choose either the low road or high road in the hiring of live music entertainers in their choice to prioritize economization (choosing a lower-skilled but cheaper act) over specialization (a higher-skilled but more expensive act). Where OFM agents and managers prove influential is in their ability to sway the employers' decision to go either way, depending on how they train (and subsequently brand) their musicians. Since live music entertainment comprises the affective labor of entertaining guests through interactive service, the agents of higher-paid and higher-skilled OFMs underlined the importance of giving their talents an extra edge by teaching them how to effectively engage with guests on- and off-stage.

> ISKANDAR: Where I come in is in helping [the musicians] build their clientele. How you build your clientele is if the singer for instance knows how to entertain, she knows how to talk to somebody—I mean, you should always be *in contact* with somebody, interact with people you know. If you [customer] walk into a room and the musician says, "hi, how are you Anjeline, it's nice to see you here again today lah, really so happy, you even brought two friends." I mean, next time you go to a bar, you wouldn't want to go somewhere else. You say, "I better go here, because everybody knows me there." That's what I *teach* (Personal communication, 17 May 2013).

> BOBBY: Socializing with audience members matters. It matters a lot to train musicians for that. I hear this from a lot of white hiring managers for cruise ships. So when I learned of that, I make it a point to include that information in the informal training I do for my musicians. [Mimics talking to musicians] "So, aside from being a good musician this is what you must do. Your offstage behavior. The expectations of the people around you, the crew and staff and management." Of course you need to highlight all the things that aren't allowed, but what *else* can you do that isn't being done by the others? So you can stand out and remain in the minds of your employers, so that [mimics hiring managers] "I'll be sure to get *this* band next time around, because I haven't seen any other band that's this excellent [*magaling*]" (Personal communication, 12 May 2013).

Facilitating contracts. In the transnational service economy, the increase of organizational intermediaries emerges as a cost-cutting strategy by employers who outsource labor management to third-party actors, such as temporary staffing and recruitment agencies, who in turn develop complex transnational arrangements with counterparts in destination countries (McDowell et al. 2007, 2009). Meanwhile, intermediaries in the creative industries seek to mitigate uncertainty resulting from the inherently project-based constraints of most creative sectors.

One way in which they do this is by strategic networking—a key strategy for managing precarity in the creative sector by crafting and building reputations (Christopherson 2002; Watson 2012). My own research indicates that agents and managers, more than creative workers themselves, possess the necessary economic, social, and cultural capital for strategic networking with prospective clients and collaborators to arrange contract bookings for musicians (Townley et al. 2009; Grugulis and Stoyanova 2012). This is consistent with previous research on migrant musicians highlighting the importance of "human hubs" who provide the necessary transcultural capital (Kiwan and Meinhof 2011) to establish and tap into networks of collaboration, commerce, and community (Gibert 2011).

This thickening of successful collaborative ties may likewise secure future bookings, either through the continuation of the existing work setting or the availability of new contracts. The better the performance and professional relationships between group members, the more effective and reliable they will be as performers, thus increasing their chances of being retained for future bookings. This helps explain how certain groups have been able to occupy a regular performance slot in a venue, even retaining the same membership for years (the longest duration for an OFM performance booking mentioned by an agent in my research was 15 years: a hotel duo whose three-month contract was continuously renewed throughout that period).

This occupational lifespan certainly seems remarkable at first glance, given the prevailing conditions of "permanent temporariness" (Collins 2012) and uncertainty that define migration regimes as well as employment contexts in the creative industries. However, it reinforces rather than refutes these existing structural conditions since this longevity can only be guaranteed piecemeal, through the continuous renewal of short-term contracts. While the possibility of contract renewal ultimately depends on the OFMs' work performance, the extent to which OFMs are actually able and willing to perform well on the job depends in large part on the ability of their agent to negotiate satisfactory wages and living/work conditions on

their behalf. Agents sometimes bear the "cargo" of ensuring temporary stability by advancing OFMs' salaries when employers fail to fulfill their end of the contract:

> MARTINE: The money issue isn't easy, especially if you haven't got any to lend [*abono*]. You need to cover their wages sometimes if they're delayed. One month, two months. That's the agent's burden [*cargo*]. Just think, if you haven't received payment [from the employer] in a year. Six people, two or three bands. Where are you going to get 300,000 [HK$, around US$ 39,000] to bankroll those unforeseen costs? Mm-hmm. There are other [agents] who can't sustain that (Personal communication, 6 February 2013).

10.5 Discursive Packaging as "Grooming" Talent

Apart from the organizational dynamic of training musicians and liaising with clients regarding contracts, I suggest that OFM agents and managers work as cultural intermediaries by discursively packaging OFMs and crafting a specific representation of "Filipinoness" relevant and desirable to overseas live music entertainment. As described by Fernan and Arturo, two OFMs, this representation is rooted in a paradoxical tension between the quality and cost of migrant creative labor:

> FERNAN: In terms of *demand*, you see, Filipinos are cheap. Not in the *bad* sense of the word. Cheap because compared to other countries. South Africans have musicians who go abroad, even the U.S. has musicians who go abroad. *Everywhere!* Malaysians, Thai—and Filipinos are the cheapest. And that is the—what's the right word for that? [pause] There's a proper word for that. That's how Filipinos are *branded*, see. And—Filipinos are the cheapest, *but* better than most. *That's all we have*. More than, actually. *They're* getting their money's worth, and more actually! 'Cause Filipinos—are hardworking. They are better musicians than *most*, even compared to some, though not *all* Western musicians (Personal communication, 22 April 2013).
>
> ARTURO: The reason why there are so many Filipino musicians here is because they're cheap. High-quality, affordable talent (Personal communication, 22 February 2013).

The Filipino brand—"high-quality" skill and "cheap/affordable"—is actively deployed by brokers as they respond to (and ultimately seek to profit from) the subordinate wage position occupied by Filipinos in a labor market shaped by a bias toward racialized authenticity. In this section, I focus on the concrete ways in which this cultural intermediation is enacted through OFM agents and managers' efforts to craft musicians' appearance and comportment, and their underlying rationales for doing so according to their subjective, gendered standards of professionalism and competence in live music entertainment. In doing so, they reinforce the positive connotations of the racialized stereotype of Filipino musicians as providers of flexible and high-quality migrant creative labor, while mitigating its negative associations with low- and semi-skilled Filipino migrant labor in general, and "entertainment" in the sex industry in particular.

The positive qualities of the Filipino brand align neatly with the labor requirements of subcontracted work in live music entertainment. Further, in addition to the industry-specific attributes of natural (i.e., untrained) musicality and imitative skill

(Watkins 2009; Cashman 2013), the Filipino brand of live music entertainment resonates with the branding in other transnational migrant labor sectors in the service industries: English proficiency, a quintessential "migrant" willingness to work hard, and occupation-specific flexibility and versatility (Parreñas 2001; Mckay 2007; Guevarra 2009). This branding provides an additional cache of symbolic capital that agents and musicians utilize to justify OFMs' commensurate competence with as well as greater (cost-effective) desirability over other racial or national groups.

Promoting and representing OFMs involves a packaging process of assembling, training, and hiring musicians for specific projects. In the face of a labor oversupply and intense competition for clients, projects, and markets, intermediaries bridge the gap between production and consumption by discursively constructing the value of labor as suitable, superior, and/or preferable. However, while they recognized the advantages of using race/nationality as a branding strategy in a racialized labor market, OFMs and OFM intermediaries interviewed for this research were also vocal about the contradictions of using this very strategy to promote their talents, for two reasons. The first is the industry-specific problem of the gendered discourses of "Filipina entertainment" in the sex industry. The second has to do with the general perception in host societies (and cruise ships) of Filipino migrant labor as confined to subordinate and low-skilled labor niches (Kelly 2012). I discuss these themes, respectively, in the remainder of this section.

Looking "respectable" : Refuting gendered biases of Filipina entertainment. The blurring of music performance and prostitution as feminized labor in the nightclub context has plagued the reception and treatment of overseas Filipina musicians in Asia, particularly in Japan and South Korea. While there may exist Filipina performers for whom the distinction is irrelevant (i.e., music performers who also work within the sex industry), the great majority of legitimate Filipina performers working overseas enter into a heavily gendered and racialized form of labor where associations of sexual servitude make the risk of exploitation and abuse —not only by audience members but at times by venue managers themselves— highly likely.

Agents and managers explicitly spoke of women's attire as critical to promoting OFMs in a positive way, and correcting unsavory stereotypes about Filipina entertainers (Tyner 1997). Given the highly gendered nature of creative work and live music performance in general (McRobbie 2002; Mayhew 2004), and of service employment in particular (McDowell et al. 2009), the intersectional objectification of migrant female performers translates into rigid expectations of youthful desirability and sexual attractiveness based on race, skin color, weight, age, hair length and texture, and other markers of feminine appearance (McDowell 2008). Nevertheless, OFM agents and managers placed more emphasis on the need to establish female OFMs' occupational identity and credibility through attire and comportment. Appropriate and "respectable" skirt length, dress fit, and skin exposure were cited as giveaway visual codes that clearly established the status of Filipina musicians, particularly singers, as "not *that* kind of entertainer," in the hope of preventing—or at least diminishing—the occupational risk of sexual harassment

typical of work in night time leisure environments (Chatterton and Holland 2002). An anecdote by Monica and Drew, spouses and overseas Filipino hotel and bar musicians who have performed in Japan, indicates the inevitability of such misperceptions and the subsequent imperative for Filipina musicians to combat this through their wardrobe choices and behavior.

> DREW: There were some Japanese who would go to bars—for the girls. So—if for instance you're a [female] singer—and they see you're a *respectable* singer—they'll respect you. But you'd see if the women are GROs ["guest relations officer", a euphemism for nightclub hostess]–they'd be very touchy-feely. Yes—because they know that that's the way it is—that's the norm. But like, for us, if they see Monica, they wouldn't touch or grab her. In general they're respectful, they're careful—but they're also a bit *bastós* [dirty-minded]. [Laughs]
>
> MONICA: Like nowadays—look at how—other bands dress. [pause]
>
> Q: Like if you present yourself a certain way, even if you're really a singer—they'll take you for something else?
>
> MONICA: Yes! See, there are other bands nowadays that are just dressed in a two-piece—like a bra and short shorts—and you know, I do feel sorry for them because sometimes the venues where they perform can get very cold—and it's unfortunate—and it shouldn't be like that, you know. It should be, you know—respectable (Personal communication, 6 September 2013).

In such an environment of interactive service work, male customers' behavior of being "touchy-feely" with female performers in nightclub settings is taken for granted. It is the "norm" which Drew and Monica (and many other respondents) accept. Maintaining "respectability" while on the job is the responsibility of the performer: the ability to prevent the harassment experienced by an inappropriately dressed but otherwise legitimate musician falls squarely on her shoulders. Nevertheless, for OFM intermediaries such as Ben and Linda who are committed to developing musical talent for entertainment—that is, assembling the band members and steering their musical development and repertoire—packaging is the OFM agent or manager's call to make:

> BEN: Our product was all-female bands, right. So—that was ruined when the all GROs started coming in, because they'd import—solo *singers*, supposedly, or dancers, then when they got there it was a different job. Supposedly they're *cultural* dancers, they said. But… they're in see-through clothes without any underwear, what kind of cultural dancer is that? Is it *Filipino culture* that you strip naked in clubs? So… that was part of our *campaign* to… do away with that. So we introduced all-female bands and musicians, to change that (Personal communication, 16 September 2012).

"Respectability" and "decency" were terms frequently cited by agents and managers to delineate a representational imperative to prove Overseas Filipina Musicians' status as legitimately skilled musicians. While similar tensions seem to emerge in the packaging of male musicians (as I explain below), the feminized character of the affective and emotional dimensions of live music entertainment—being warm, cheerful, and attentive to guests, for instance—underline a second area of cultural intermediation. Agents and managers' work of grooming talent not only extends to the processes of costuming and socialization but also in training Filipina musicians to comport themselves in such a way as to maintain a complex balance

between, on the one hand, the requirement to entertain through the work of performing warmth and friendliness in interactive service and, on the other, establishing clear professional and personal boundaries by looking and acting "decent." This continues to place strictures on overseas Filipina musicians to conform to rigid interpellations of femininity by appearing *maganda* [pretty] and *maayos tingnan* [decent-looking], and to stay slim and young.

However, as Manuel explains below in the context of cruise ship performance, the absence of such traits of physical attractiveness should not detract OFM agents and managers from representing genuinely competent and talented musicians. As cultural intermediaries, they are also beholden to "educate" aspiring OFMs about the correct way to groom and package oneself as a respectable and proper musician:

> MANUEL: The women, they've got to be in gowns [while performing on cruises]. No short skirts and [uses upturned palms to mimic pushing up one's chest, indicating exposed breasts and cleavage]. I saw lots of that in Japan. Long hair, dresses so short you could see their everything. 30-minute set then after that it's working tables [*tumeybol*; i.e. sit and chat with male customers at their table to entice them to buy them drinks]. What about dignity? You can still see that with singers from the [rural] provinces, they're always trying to look sexy [*nagpapaka-sexy sila*]. That's why we make it a point to educate the ones who audition for us. We tell them, it has nothing to do with how pretty you are. We try to give everyone a chance, no matter if they're fat or old or ugly. As long as they have a good voice and know how to sing. If they're beautiful but they don't even know how to sing, then sorry but we can't work with that (Personal communication, 17 October 2012).

Though primarily prompted by the need to distance OFMs from their compatriots in the sex industry and low- and semi-skilled Filipino migrant occupations, racialized branding also operates through the agents and managers' ability to match the musicians to the image or theme of the venues. Since a number of these venues, such as five-star hotels and cruise ships, are often designed to communicate a generic narrative of luxury, sophistication, and "class," male and female musicians must convey these meanings through grooming, dress, and behavior. Further, as "products" of the agencies themselves, the OFMs' appearance and performance on the job inevitably (and reciprocally) represent the agents and managers who package them. Martine vividly explains the meticulousness and foresight required for Filipina singers in particular to clearly embody these meanings through appearance and work ethic:

> MARTINE: I automatically end up training them [Filipina singers], because I sing professionally to begin with. I'm meticulous about appearances. So I teach them. Makeup and everything. Yes. You see, it'll reflect badly on me too [*mapapahiya din ako*] if they look like dishrags. You're standing there at the hotel, for the hotel. You're *presenting* the hotel. It's embarrassing to be seen by the G.M. looking like… this is not to… but looking like a *tsimáy* [Tagalog pejorative for domestic worker]. Ah, that's a minus. General meeting the next day, the G.M. will call me about it. It's not just all about the talent. Yes. Sometimes you'll have someone really talented, plus beautiful, plus savvy [*marunong dumiskarte*] and intelligent, and very pleasant, and *professional.* She's there one hour before the show, having her coffee, observing the room. Compare that with someone who's just as talented but shows up five minutes before show time with her hair still wet, missing an eyelash. How is that supposed to work? I'm sorry, but no (Personal communication, 6 February 2013).

Further, as underlined by Iskandar, a former hotelier, the discursive packaging of women musicians as "respectable" rather than "provocative" ends up being a better revenue earner for five-star hotels:

> ISKANDAR: I mean, my rules are very fair. My girls get scolded if I see them in short skirts and so on. Really, I don't like all these things. Because I think it *degrades* it even more. Right? But sometimes, the venues—force them to wear short skirts and so on. Isn't it? They want them to do this kind of thing. Sometimes I say to the G.M. [general manager], I say, "Why do you ask them to wear this kind of things?" What? What, is it going to bring extra? Right? I say, "if they are dressed more decently, you probably bring the guy [male customer], and he bring his wife, you know. His kid might come, you know. Right? Then you have additional two meals." You understand what I mean? Revenue becomes better but not because the girls are dressed too… *provocative*. I mean, who would bring their wife and son, you know? But a lot of them don't see it like that, right. Sometimes they [hotel managers] only see it from their business point of view, because some media tell them, "hey your girls are not sexy." You understand? But I mean, does sexy bring you business? Doesn't really, isn't it? (Personal communication, 12 May 2013)

Looking "proper:" Signifying competence and professionalism. The previous section focused on the ways in which the feminization of live music entertainment necessitate a deliberate effort among OFM agents and managers to package Filipina musicians as respectable, as a way of distancing their work from their counterparts in the sex industry. While this kind of explicit sexual objectification is relatively absent in the case of male OFMs, there is a connection between one's workplace appearance and behavior on the one hand, and economic, educational, and cultural capital on the other. Manuel stresses the need for male Filipino musicians to conform to aesthetic standards of neatness and professionalism as a preemptive response to negative stereotypes from foreign co-workers, employers, and audiences:

> MANUEL: The men, they've got to look proper [*maayos*], hair slicked back or gelled, proper coat and tie. Can't have long hair. Americans can wear whatever they want. Doesn't matter if they're in shorts or pants. But that's impossible with Filipino [musicians], their appearance has got to be proper [*maayos ang itsura*] (Personal communication, 17 October 2012).

The representational tension for male OFMs emerges as a similar signification of musical skill, professionalism, and class through grooming, dress, and costuming, and comportment. Manuel is blunt about the necessity for Filipino musicians to reinforce their professional and class status through their attire so as not to further aggravate their peripheral position and subordination in a racialized labor market that privileges Western musicians. Further, as Bobby explains below, the representational clarification of competence and professionalism is necessary to delineate skill and wage differences within the Filipino niche. Such differences are starkest in the comparison between bands performing in standalone nightclubs, and those working in more reputable performance venues, such as hotels and cruise ships.

> BOBBY: There's a big difference between the musicians playing in clubs and those in hotels.
>
> Q.: Skill-wise?

> BOBBY: Skills and um personality too. So [mimics employer] "Bobby, we need your members to be sophisticated, you know, to dress formally [*nakabihis*], the ladies in gowns and the men in suits." But in a club, you can wear ordinary street clothes. And they look for different things in a club. They want, say, they want women who are sexy, short skirts, willing to work the tables [*tumeybol*], that sort of thing. It happens. Whereas in cruise ships, there are strict rules for *all* crew members, especially musicians. You cannot sit at the table of passengers: you need to be standing when you're talking to them. Unless they ask specifically, then you can just say "you will have to ask permission from my cruise director." It's not permitted—they've got very rigid rules in ships. You can make friends with passengers but you cannot have romantic liaisons with any of the passengers. That'll get you fired overnight (Personal communication, 17 May 2013).

These brief anecdotes highlight the ways in which the cultural politics of racialized authenticity translates into the labor economy of precarity and flexibility. Agents and managers' strategies of grooming talent and their gendered and racialized practices of representing OFMs have consequences on the worth and work of transnational live music entertainment by migrant creative workers.

10.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed the significance of the labor market intermediary stage in constituting and bridging the divide between production and consumption. In the contexts of migration and music, this divide comprises both the geographical cross-border mobilities between significant spatialities of origins and destinations (whether of cities, countries, or regions), and the labor-economic divide between overseas employers and migrant creative workers. Using the concept of migration infrastructure, agents and brokers perform the role of bridging these divides and, in doing so, fundamentally shape the nature, function, and value of migrant creative labor as it is mobilized across borders. I further developed the notion of migration infrastructure by suggesting that agents and managers perform an infrastructural dynamic of packaging. Packaging is enacted through *assembling compatibility*, the organizational intermediation of labor through recruitment and training; and *grooming talent*, the cultural intermediation of labor through representation and branding.

The case study of live music entertainment in themed leisure venues in Asia, and of the racialized niche of OFMs in this performance sector, illustrates the ways in which the intermediary stage involves the infrastructural packaging of labor. As a specific example of migrant creative labor, I framed OFMs' employment as high-skilled work in low-skilled labor conditions, in which they are rendered peripheral and subordinate in a racialized industry that privileges the "authenticity" of Western musicians' creative labor. OFM agents and managers seek to address and ultimately profit from this precarity through their work as intermediaries: first by assembling compatibility among musicians, and between them and employers; and second by grooming talent, crafting the musicians' appearance and comportment to conform to gendered and racialized discourses of respectability, competence, and professionalism.

These findings indicate that the migration infrastructure of brokerage encompasses a far more complex range of processes and politics than has been previously considered. In meeting and in some ways shaping the labor demands of the transnational creative industries of leisure-based entertainment, the intermediary dynamics of packaging necessitate a reconsideration of labor migration—not a spatial and ontological divide between origin and destination, employer and worker, so much as a relational infrastructure of mediated mobility.

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