Malaysian Journal of Economic Studies 48 (2): 185-201, 2011 ISSN 1511-4554

Migration as Cultural Capital: The Ongoing Dependence on Overseas Filipino Workers

Diane Sabenacio Nititham*[1]
University of Illinois at Chicago

Abstract: This article examines how the dependence on overseas migration is a part of Filipinos' cultural capital. Drawing on doctoral fieldwork with Filipinos in Ireland and the Philippines, this article addresses the key factors of Filipino overseas migration and how these in turn affect how Filipinos orient and identify themselves. More specifically, the article examines how familiarity with outward migration, the international demand for reproductive labour and healthcare workers, the reliance on remittances, and the economic crisis in the Philippines shape the lenses through which Filipinos interpret their social norms and experiences in the diaspora.

Keywords: Cultural capital, diaspora, ethnicity, migration, Philippines
JEL classification: F22, F24, J16, J24

1. Introduction

This article examines how dependence on overseas labour migration is an integral aspect of Filipinas' cultural capital. This ongoing dependence reveals how the culture of emigration, as well as specific migration circumstances, shapes migrant workers' understanding of their role as overseas workers in a transnational landscape. As a form of cultural capital, the dependence affects their understanding of home, departure and return. The dynamics of cultural capital, in this context, refer to values, beliefs, education, social norms and other behaviours that hold social value. Drawing on doctoral fieldwork (interviews, workshops) with Filipinas in Ireland and the Philippines conducted between 2007 and 2009, this article addresses the key factors and effects of Filipina overseas migration on how Filipinas orient and identify themselves as a diasporic population. More specifically, the familiarity with outward migration, the international demand for reproductive labour and healthcare workers, the reliance on remittances, and the economic crisis in the Philippines shape the lenses through which Filipinos interpret their social norms and experiences in the diaspora.

This study focuses on Filipina migrant women, who have been historically under-represented in migration research due to the tendency to focus on male migrants and industries and their relationships to globalisation, free trade, economics and policy (Bhattacharjee 1997; Piper 2004; de Jesús 2005; Lie and Lund 2005). Moreover, research on Filipinas tends to focus on prevalent images of Filipinas as domestic workers, sex workers

* Department of Sociology, University of Illinois at Chicago, Behavioral Sciences Building, 1007 West Harrison, Chicago, IL 60607, USA; Email: *nititham@uic.edu*

[1] I wish to thank the Migration and Citizenship Research Initiative for research scholarships and seed funding for fieldwork in Ireland and the Philippines. I wish to extend special thanks to the research participants and Unlad Kabayan Migrant Services Foundation, whose assistance made this research possible.

and mail-order brides (de Jesús 2005). This study, by contrast, focuses on women in order to disrupt these tendencies, as their experiences in the diaspora yield stories from multiple subject positions and circumstances.

In the first section of this paper, an overview of labour migration from the Philippines to Ireland is provided. The profile of Filipinos in Ireland is discussed, along with their recruitment to Ireland and social positioning in the diaspora. Second, the familiarity and culture of outward migration is examined. The third section concerns the rationalisation of emigration and the ongoing dependence on remittances. Intersections between gendered labour migration, cultural capital, and the ongoing dependence on remittances reveal that experiences in the Filipina diaspora are manifold, and that differing levels of cultural capital can determine people's access to political and social opportunities. This is important as it affects Filipinas' understanding of their role and function in the global flow of Filipina labour migration.

2. An Overview of Filipino Labour Migration to Ireland

During Ireland's booming decade of economic growth (mid-1990s to mid-2000s), this 'Celtic Tiger' became the fastest growing destination for overseas Filipino workers (or OFWs) in Europe (O'Hearn 1998; Fagan 2002).[2] Therefore the rapid growth of the Filipino community in Ireland can be attributed to Ireland's economic growth, which led to labour shortages in many sectors and subsequently heavy recruitment of overseas labour. Prior to the economic boom, there were an estimated 257 Filipinos in 1991, many of whom were considered 'romantic migrants' because they came to Ireland through marrying Irish men (interview with John Ferris, Honorary Philippine Consul, Dublin, February 2008). A number of these Irishmen were in the Philippines as religious missionaries, while others were merely searching for mail-order brides (Kennedy 2009). From a meagre 257 in 1991, the number of Filipinos in Ireland reached nearly 18,000 in 2007 and more than 20,000 by 2009 (interview with members of the Philippine Embassy, Dublin, November 2009).[3]

Filipinos in Ireland are well recognised for their place in the health sector and domestic industries. While not all Filipinos interviewed for this study came to Ireland through migrant care, almost all of them are in the care sector and their lives are highly affected by this role. Most Filipinos in Ireland work in the health and social work sector (64 per cent), followed by service sector work, which comprises nearly 26 per cent of workers (Central Statistics Office 2008). Others entered as dependents – either spouses or children. With women having a

[2] First coined by the US investment bank Morgan Stanley, Celtic Tiger is a play on the Asian Tiger economies and their tremendous growth (or miracle) during the 1980s and early 1990s.

[3] Estimates of 18,000–20,000 come from the Honorary Philippine Consul and key informants from the Filipino community, although there is a marked divergence between their estimates and official census data. Census data from 2002, for instance, reveals that there were 4,086 Filipinos in Ireland (65 per cent female), while in the 2006 census there were 9,548 Filipinos in Ireland (59 per cent female). The divergence can be attributed to a number of factors. First, according to John Ferris from the Honorary Philippine Consul (interviewed in Dublin, 2 February 2008), many Filipinos were not interested in filling out the census due to time constraints or expectations that they might not be in Ireland long because of Ireland's highly stratified immigration process. Second, John Ferris indicated that there was conceptual misunderstanding of 'citizenship' when filling out the census. A MCRI (2008) study found that many migrants in Ireland understood citizenship as the place where one lives and works, and thus wrongly selected 'Irish' on the census form.

labour force participation rate of 91 per cent, and with a majority of women working in care and hospitality (fields traditionally seen as women's work), the intersections of global economics, gender and race become visible.

Filipinas are situated within multiple axes of power, which shape migration, migrant networks and everyday experiences. Included in this is their social positioning. Many of the participants involved in this study entered Ireland as professionals in the healthcare industry, and are dependents of healthcare workers or siblings of care workers. Many of them were actively recruited by Irish recruiting agencies in the Philippines, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Others applied through agencies and were placed in Ireland. While almost all research participants noted that moving up the economic ladder and creating opportunities for their future were primary factors in leaving the Philippines, they were not the sole factors. Remnants of the Philippines' colonial legacy, such as mass poverty, economic hardship, unstable government, the recruitment of labour, family reunion, visions of 'greener pastures' and a sense of adventure intertwined with recognition of the diaspora abroad, contributed to participants' decision-making processes.

Filipino migration and cultural capital, and the understanding of Filipino social positioning, are intricately tied to the colonisation of the Philippines by Spain and the US, where Filipinos experienced intense racial, class and gender discrimination. While an entire discussion on Filipino colonial history is beyond the scope of this paper, it helps to situate the analysis of migration as part of their cultural capital. The history of colonisation has profound implications for understanding Filipino migration, both historically and contemporarily, as well as how Filipinas view their social positioning (Bonus 2000; Choy 2003; Espiritu 2003; Ignacio 2005).

During Spain's colonial period (16th–19th century), a racialised, classed and gendered hierarchy was established.[4] Spaniards referred to indigenous Filipinos as 'Indios', establishing a dynamic of coloniser/colonised, leaving Spaniards at the top and Filipinos at the bottom (Ignacio 2005). When the United States of America took over after the Spanish American War in 1898, there was a commonly held perception that the US 'rescued' the Philippines from Spain (Espiritu 2003, Ignacio 2005). Although the US arguably provided more opportunities for Filipinos by establishing a widespread educational system and introducing a reformed political structure, these changes permeated all parts of Philippine society. The educational system, the government and other institutions were modelled upon American-based ideals and values, used English as the medium of communication, and were embroidered with assumptions of racial inferiority, class and gender discrimination. Moreover, Filipino men were racialised and feminised under Western ideals of femininity and masculinity, compounding the belief that service jobs are for women and/or people of colour (Espiritu 2003; Parreñas 2008). Thus, Filipinos were doubly inscribed as inferior by Spanish and US colonial powers (Brewer 2004; Samson 2005). Furthermore, the era of US domination left the Philippines with a dependency on the export of primary commodities, agriculture and the cultivation of sugar (Espiritu 2003: 25).

---

[4] Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan led a Spanish expedition that arrived in the Philippines in March 1521. Subsequent Spanish expeditions were sent to the Philippines, but Miguel Lopez de Legazpi's expeditions were most substantial. In 1571, Legazpi and his crew established a town in Manila, beginning three centuries of Spanish control lasting until the Spanish-American War in 1898.

In 1965, Ferdinand Marcos was elected as president, beginning a period of political instability, mass governmental corruption and excessive spending (Hedman 2006). When Marcos was re-elected for a second term in 1969, the election drew widespread criticism for vote-buying, fraud and coercion, as well as the use of USD56 million towards the funding of his campaign from the Philippine treasury (McCoy 2009). Throughout the 1970s and 1980s martial law was declared, allowing Marcos to extend his presidency beyond the constitutional two-term limit. In addition, civil liberties were restricted, members of the political opposition were arrested, and public finances were mismanaged as the Marcos regime spent excessively on military personnel and weapons, as well as personal gifts for family members and political cronies (Brands 1992).

During this era, large-scale out migration from the Philippines came into play. The political and economic crisis in the Philippines coincided with an increase in the recruitment of international professionals by advanced industrial nations. In 1974 Marcos instituted the Labor Code of the Philippines in an effort to regulate employment practices. This Code institutionalised overseas employment and the recruitment of skilled workers as an economic strategy, beginning a sustained culture of emigration (Cabato 2006). With the political and economic crisis and the establishment of martial law, the numbers and significance of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) increased. The rise of an emigration culture is reflected in the establishment of a number of institutions under the Department of Labour, including the Overseas Employment Development Board (OEDB), the National Seamen Board (NSB), the Office of Emigrant Affairs (OEA), the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency (POEA), and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA). In 1975 alone, 36,035 migrants were deployed (CMA 2006).

President Marcos lifted martial law in 1981, although his regime remained in power until 1986. By this time, the national debt was USD28.3 billion, rising from USD360 million in 1962 (Boyce 1993). With increasing public dissent and the People Power Movement (1983–1968) of Corazon Aquino, Marcos and his wife went into exile in 1986. After the Marcos administration ended, the country was essentially bankrupt, having incurred huge debts with no reliable economic or political institutions. Aquino remained in office until 1992, passing constitutional reform and implementing programmes to re-establish civil liberties and sound economic management, including the 'Act Establishing the Overseas Workers Investment Fund to Provide Incentives to Overseas Workers, Reduce Foreign Debt Burden and for Other Purposes' (Gonzalez 1998). With the large debts and the encouragement of labour emigration to support the Philippine economy, increased labour emigration became a firm reality.

According to recent indicators, by 2006 it was estimated that 38.5 million Filipinos (or 43 per cent of the population) were dependent on remittances (CMA 2006). Consequently, the government continues to encourage the export of skilled labour, defined here as persons with tertiary education. One of the biggest aims is now to train nurses and healthcare workers to be ready for emigration (Flynn and Kofman 2004). Nursing education programmes have grown from 140 in 1970 to 370 in 2005 (Kingma 2006). As of 2010, the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration reported that the number of processed contracts was 1,644,439, an increase from 1,204,862 in 2005 (POEA 2006; POEA 2010). Most of these overseas workers are women (Cabato 2006; Padilla 2007).

According to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, remittances in 2004 totalled USD8.55 billion, or 10.8 per cent of the Philippines' GDP (Sto. Tomas 2006).[5] By 2010, estimates were as high as USD 18.7 billion (*The Economist* 2011). Through the remittance of their earnings, Filipinas provide the largest source of foreign currency and constitute the biggest flow of migration. Filipinas are encouraged by the government to emigrate not only to support their families, but also to help repay International Monetary Fund (IMF) loans and World Bank debts through taxation on remittances.

Research participants in this study positively interpreted their recruitment to Ireland, for they felt that they were contributing both to the Philippines and their destination countries. They contribute indirectly to the Philippine economy through remittances, and directly in Ireland through their daily activities and transactions. As a result, most participants saw themselves as strong independent women and heroines. Despite this construction, Filipinas in Ireland are, for the most part, on the lower rungs of the social and financial ladder, and remain vulnerable as a result of their immigration status and, in many cases, are underemployed and de-skilled. Furthermore, this heroine construction is paradoxical, as government and public discourse in the Philippines calls for the return of migrant mothers to protect the nuclear family while simultaneously encouraging labour emigration (Asis *et al.* 2004). Such heroine narratives do not address the difficult circumstances that cause gendered labour migration in the first place, or the growing inequality and widening gap between developed and developing nations.

Consciously or unconsciously, the contradictions surrounding Filipinas' recruitment shape their understanding of their roles as migrant women of colour in Ireland. Recognising the battles faced by racialised women, Smith (2002: 62) writes: 'I felt that, historically, white women were working hard to liberate themselves from housework and childcare, while women of colour got stuck cleaning their kitchens and raising their babies'. Although there are advances, with more employment opportunities for women, women continue to be segregated and differentiated across key markers such as race, class and citizenship (Parreñas 2008: 13).

While the Philippine government actively encourages the out-migration of its citizens, the Philippines should not be seen exclusively as a sending country, but rather one with choices. Men and women specifically choose professions that allow them to emigrate. The demand for care workers directs migration of women from the Philippines (Parreñas 2008). The need for health professionals worldwide, including Ireland, drives people to follow these occupations, coinciding with the need to provide for families in the Philippines (Chammartin 2002; Yeates 2006). Moreover, the decision to work abroad should not be seen as a conscious decision to reify their social positions in the diaspora. Indeed, the decision to move abroad is not merely a personal choice, but one that is situated within larger institutional frameworks, and constituted by the structure of the global economy as capital and labour move across borders (Hu-de Hart 1999).

Furthermore, Filipinos have what is often called a 'colonial mentality' and a history of limited upward mobility owing to colonial legacies, restrictions in immigration laws, anti-

[5] According to Bagasao (2007: 25), in 2005, formally recorded remittances were over USD10 billion, though the amount through informal channels was estimated to be an additional USD7 million. Therefore consideration must always be given to discrepancies in the calculation of remittances.

Filipino sentiments, and ongoing contentious relationships between the Philippines, Spain and the USA (Ignacio 2005; David and Okazaki 2006).[6] The legacies of these colonial conquests still retain a hold on the contemporary structure of the Philippines, particularly in regards to racial, gender and class identity. Migration circumstances consign people to different social locations, and in some cases determine life's trajectories. For many Filipinos in the diaspora, there is a strong awareness of income disparities between the Philippines and advanced nations (Hochschild 2002; Espiritu 2003; Parreñas 2008). The acceptance that these disparities are part of the Filipino diasporic experience reveals the situation of dispersal and inequality for Filipinos across the globe. As these struggles, linked through gendered labour migration, are embroidered with personal experiences of imperialism, colonialism, race, class and gender, it is important to examine the ways in which these intersections shape future goals and orientations. Influenced by what they can be in their situations, Filipinos' sense of identity must be seen within political and cultural institutions. Migration is a process through which future goals and outlooks are oriented, affecting how they view remittances and their migration circumstances and their role in the global market.

3. Looking Abroad: The Culture of Emigration

There are a number of reasons why Filipinos choose to move abroad, foremost being economic imperatives. Migration is a part of Filipinos' consciousness and day-to-day living. With approximately 10.9 million (or 30 per cent) of Filipinos either unemployed or underemployed, the diaspora is oriented towards a continued culture of emigration and remittances (CMA 2006). The usefulness of remittances has been long debated, particularly whether they are helpful in the short-term or create long-term effects of debt and a migration culture (Sto. Tomas 2006; Castles 2007). The dependence on remittances to support the economy and families has led to a proliferation of research focused on unravelling the complex ties of gendered labour migration, development and economics (Parreñas 2001; Asis *et al.* 2004; Piper 2004; Yeates 2004b; Parreñas 2008). Research has also been conducted to explore the relationships between remittances and the social costs of perpetual migration.[7]

While Ireland was a relatively new destination for Filipino interviewees, emigration was a familiar occurrence. Many of the research participants in this study have existing family and friends and extended networks living in North America, Western Europe and Australia. Some research participants worked in Hong Kong, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, the United States and Thailand, and in some cases, lived and worked in more than one country. All of the workshop participants had relatives abroad or were returned

[6] The colonial mentality amongst Filipino Americans has been defined as a 'form of internalised oppression, characterised by a perception of ethnic or cultural inferiority that is believed to be a specific consequence of centuries of colonisation under Spain and the United States' (David and Okazaki 2006: 241). This paper contends that this is not limited to Filipino Americans, but many Filipinos in the diaspora, including Ireland.

[7] For Asis (2004), social costs are the concerns or anxieties that may have an effect on the migrant and the larger Philippine society. These costs include an eroding sense of nationalism; influence on family and cultural values such as conspicuous consumption; creating a dependence on remittances; the toll on family members' well-being because of absent family members, especially children; and problems with repatriation.

migrants. Only two of the eighteen interview participants did not have a history of migration in their family or extended social network, nor had they lived outside the Philippines before arriving in Ireland. But they, along with the other research participants, stated that they are aware of the economic situation of the Philippines, its structural dependence on overseas labour and remittances, the culture of emigration, and that labour migration is seen as a solution to the continued instability of the Philippine economy.

Underpinning this familiarity with outward migration is the fact that the Philippine government actively encourages the outflow of trained professionals. This, along with the growth of nursing programmes and the fact that 10 per cent of the Philippine population is overseas, reveals the prominence of out-migration in the Philippines (Kingma 2006; Sto. Tomas 2006; POEA 2006). Emigrating in order to send remittances constitutes the basis of and the driving reason for the majority of the diaspora. For research participants, the main goal of sending remittances was not only to 'support a growing family as the family stands', but also to provide education for children, to support immediate and extended family in the Philippines and other countries, to help build a house in the Philippines, or to repay existing mortgages, debts or loans. Remittances also paid for everyday expenses, like jeepney fares, medicine, vitamins and miscellaneous expenses.[8]

Participants remarked that remittances also can be 'a stepping stone' to move to another destination country and that it is 'Filipino culture' to send remittances. In the case of one participant named Eleanor, her uncle in the US, another uncle in Australia, and cousins in the UK had all left the Philippines to improve the quality of their lives and remit earnings. Of her cousins, who are nurses like herself, Eleanor said: 'If you take up nursing, it will connote something. You're going abroad, really, for greener pastures'. Workshop participants affirmed the growth of nursing programmes and the choosing of specific professions as a means not only of achieving upward social mobility, but also of obtaining a job outside the country. Migration is deeply woven into the fabric of socialisation and is part of Filipinas' cultural capital.

The cultural significance of migration is also tied to participants' sense of agency, which is often described as a sense of adventure. Agency, in this context, can best be explained using van Hear's (1998: 42) axis of choice, with 'choice' or 'more options' on one side and 'little choice' or 'few options' on the other. All participants were strongly aware of the dispersal of Filipinos from the Philippines, were familiar with transnational networks, and attentive to their sense of adventure, which many connected to their agency and available options. For many research participants, the sense of adventure was attributed to being young and spirited. Underlying this ability to move abroad is the fact that more Filipinas aspire to work abroad. Although the increased participation of women does not shift gendered structures in the workforce, this does not diminish the agency of participants. Referring again to the axis of choice, participants understood the ability to move abroad as a sign of 'more options' rather than 'few options,' for they are still able to exercise degrees of agency. Even from a position of exploitation or instability, having the opportunity to not just move abroad, but also the ability to exercise this opportunity, means they can afford

[8] A popular form of public transport in the Philippines, jeepneys were originally made from US military jeeps left over from World War II. They were stripped down in order to accommodate many passengers.

adventure while simultaneously providing for families. Thus, the dialectic between agency and adventure is intertwined with labour emigration.

Aside from those participants who had connections to Ireland through family or friends, most had not heard of Ireland or at least knew very little about it. For those who had some knowledge, they had heard of the country through Irish missionaries in the Philippines, or were familiar with music figures such as Enya and U2, or images of war from Northern Ireland during the Troubles (1963–1985). Friends and family of participants were worried that a war was still going, but this was not a deterrent. One interviewee, knowing that moving to Ireland and settling in might be difficult, imagined the foreignness, alienation and language barriers that her family members in other countries experienced: 'Like my aunt in Germany, she didn't even have a clue how to speak German in the first place. So I feel like I was also kind of motivated by (family abroad)'. With several family members working abroad, she said that they were all looking for 'greener pastures,' and she would do the same.

Migration is so deeply woven into their social fabric that some research participants readily accepted employment knowing little or nothing about the destination countries. After confirming her job with her employer, Josie, a domestic worker who worked in Hong Kong before arrival, said: 'I look at the globe and I can't find where Ireland is [laughs]. Where is this place? So they said it's just near the UK. Ok. So I don't have any idea where Ireland is'. The sense of adventure provided a justification for accepting employment. Regardless of what participants said of their circumstances, the driving factor of upward mobility and improving the quality of themselves and their families' lives remained constant.

The links between migration and cultural capital are not limited to the reasons behind emigration. Upon entering Ireland and well after arrival, immigration status becomes a core part of their understanding of migration circumstances and social positioning. The Irish Garda National Immigration Bureau designates stamps that define purpose of stay, bearing different rights and entitlements for non-European immigrants, thus linking profession and one's relationship to Ireland. These stamps confer different access to social services and welfare, education and services, fair treatment in the workplace, the right to vote, and family reunification. Thus, they mediate one's experience and levels of engagement in civil society, stratifying degrees of mobility and flexibility, and access to opportunities.

Immigration status also affects class and cultural capital. Echoing the experiences of other immigrants working with lower qualifications, some Filipina domestic workers have university bachelor degrees, years of work experience in fields such as finance, government administration, research and midwifery, but are unable to have their degrees or experience recognised (MRCI 2004; Pillinger 2007; MCRI 2008). Some nurses, despite being able to take professional development courses to learn new skillsets, feel they are being underutilised, stripped of the valuable skills they already have, unable to perform as many tasks as they were allowed to in the Philippines or other countries in which they previously worked. This is a form of limiting and 'contradictory class mobility', where migrants leave jobs that correspond with their qualifications to work abroad in lower class jobs (Parreñas 2001). The lack of universal recognition of experience and qualifications is part of a hidden strategy of exclusion, with some but not all cultural capital deemed legitimate.

Another important issue linked to migration as capital is that participants reflect a growing trend of women becoming the main economic providers for their families. The heavy recruitment of healthcare and domestic work in Ireland is implicated in this flow of

Filipina labour migration (ICI 2003; Yeates 2004a; 2006). For workshop participants, gendered labour migration was regarded as a positive thing, for it allowed women the ability to provide for one's family in ways that were not previously possible. Workshop participants stressed that it is easier for a women to get a job abroad, and this is proven by statistics from the POEA (2006) regarding job openings for female workers in fields such as nursing, teaching and domestic caregiving. What is not recognised among the research participants is that even though they have more mobility in becoming the main economic providers in the family, they still remain within gendered professions of care.

The difficulties and challenges they face abroad has led to a rationalisation of their social positions and the country's dependence on remittances. The demand for nursing and domestic work, compounded by ideologies, institutional legislation, and the vilification of transnational mothers are entangled in the 'empire of care' (Choy 2003). Care work is often seen as a woman's natural role, and thus interpreted as a private matter. For this reason, the empire of care may remain hidden and reinforce the racialised image of the sexualised and lesser 'other,' despite many women being highly educated (Hochschild 2002; Choy 2003; Espiritu 2003). The fact that participants did not see the reification of women as carers does not mean that their gendered positionalities are unimportant. Rather, difference, as experienced by participants, was primarily seen through the lens of race. Gender cannot be discussed separate from race because these discourses are highly interconnected. Yet, because care work is interpreted as private, this prevents Filipinas from being able to achieve economic equality with few challenges in public or private discourse.

Many participants argued that Filipinas are strong by nature and rationalised their social positions and the need to work abroad. This leads to the reinscription of a patriarchal and gendered self-identity across gender-based recruitment in nursing and domestic work. hooks (1990: 5) argues that the reason for this is that many people are not aware of their oppression and their position in relationship to it. In other words, 'the absence of extreme restrictions leads many women to ignore the areas in which they are exploited or discriminated against; it may even lead them to image that no women are oppressed' (hooks 1990: 5). Similarly, their ability to move abroad and earn more money may lead them to overlook their contradictory class mobility. Even if research participants were the main economic providers of their family, and were responsible for caring in and outside the home and for the well-being of their families in the Philippines, they did not see this as a burden. In constructing their migrant identity as strong women and heroines, they tended to reify their positions in the racial and social hierarchy. The variety of concerns across a broad range of experiences of Filipinas in Ireland, and the class divisions and conflicts that are engendered by these processes, are interpreted as a private concern, leading to reluctance to challenge this role in public and private discourses. This rationalisation reifies the ongoing dependence on remitting earnings, as well as their lower position in the social landscape.

4. Rationalising Ongoing Dependency

Filipinos play an active role in the Philippines by remitting portions of their earnings to give opportunities for food, basic necessities, education, accommodation, health and savings (Bagasao 2007). Aside from monetary sacrifices, these remittances do not come without social costs, such as dealing with power struggles involved in sending remittances, transnational households, overlooking difficulties, and other challenges upon return (Asis

2004). Dependency becomes normalised as it underpins their day-to-day existence. For example, Josie is a domestic worker who is underpaid and underemployed by her employers. She is on Irish Stamp 1, which means that her work permit is employer-led. In other words, her Irish employer issues her permit and she is tied to that specific employer.

Josie bears the brunt of struggles that many Stamp 1 migrant domestic workers face. They not only have few opportunities for advancement, but they feel that if they address concerns with their employers, they might lose their job and thus their right to remain in Ireland. Because of the high cost of living in Ireland, Josie and many other research participants keep a tight control of their budgets. Josie budgets tightly, but as she is underpaid, she cannot remit much. She sends approximately •150 a month: 'Sometimes my mother asks why I send so little, and makes a comparison with her neighbours who [sic] receive a much bigger amount. Everybody in our place is wondering why I am sending them small amounts. I have to explain to them that my salary is like this. And maybe they (neighbour's family) have a good employer who is paying the right wages and that's why they send more money than me'. Josie is caught in a bind; she wants to send more money home, but feels that her employers will not keep her if she asks for a wage increase.

While remittances do provide real mobility for Filipinos in the Philippines, the circumstances in which remittances are made possible are not straightforward and are subject to their own set of power relations. According to research participants, remittance recipients equate 'greener pastures' with endless opportunities for wealth generation. When remittances are small or below expectations, this brings about unwanted anger from remittance recipients. As Hochschild (2002: 18) observed, 'the people of the poor south now know a great deal about the rich north. But what they learn about the north is what people *have*, in what often seems like a material striptease'. Immigration status in Ireland causes barriers to mobility where 'only some of the people can walk some of the time' (Bhattacharjee 1997: 317). Josie stays and rationalises her situation because she needs to remit money.

Indeed, remittances can and do provide real mobility, although they also bring competition among families and communities, carrying emotional, cultural and colonial baggage. As the political underpinning of Filipino migrant culture, participants illustrate that remittances are not simply transferred and dispersed, but used for multiple purposes, and in some cases are abused, generating instability. Workshop participants in this study, many of whom were returned migrants, said that the sudden inflow of money can create anxiety and unsettled feelings of home and belonging while they were in Ireland. The sudden increase in money causes many remittance recipients to spend more, as though they have moved up a social class. Purchasing power, income and resources increase, but so does the rate of spending, leaving the recipients with even less money than before, trading in necessities for luxuries. The common notion of the overseas Filipino worker is 'one who is awash with dollars, euros or pounds, after having 'made it' overseas' (Gutierrez 2007: 387).

Filipina labour migration, moreover, has led to transnational households becoming a reality. Due to changes in global recruiting, more Filipinas leave the Philippines to work, meaning that mothering occurs transnationally. Women's struggles may have led to more production and opportunities outside the home, but this does not necessarily mean that they have found a sense of empowerment through their employment. In a report on the feminisation of migration into Ireland, Pillinger (2007) found that women work permit holders

who predominantly work in sectors such as catering, domestic work, care and health sectors are underemployed. Her report covers a broad range of experiences among migrant women and focuses on the interconnections between migration policy and women's migration patterns and experiences in sending and receiving countries. She writes:

> "Immigrant women have higher qualifications than Irish women, with 41.2% of immigrant women holding third level degrees or over, compared to 18.8% of Irish women. It is important to note that many of these women are also over-represented in lower skilled jobs compared to both Irish women and Irish men." (2007)

Pillinger argues that women migrant workers are disadvantaged and that women migrant workers in Ireland are triply disadvantaged as:

> "...they face inequalities in the Irish labour market that is characterised by gender inequality, they experience a second layer of inequality by virtue of their race or ethnic origin, and they are triply disadvantaged as migrant workers, often with limited legal protection or long-term security in the labour market." (2007)

While Pillinger contends that the experience of women is extremely important, her analysis remains superficial. While she mentions that migrant women do have a sense of empowerment through their employment, the links between the individual experience and the systemic barriers are not made. Filipinas remain in a marginal position, particularly as women of colour, and remain invisible. Filipinas still remain largely on the margins.

Moreover, migrant Filipinas do not return to the Philippines as often as men do. Women maximise financial gains because of the expense of flights and challenges of border crossing (Parreñas 2001). While not all OFWs are mothers, caring for children and maintenance of the household does not generally transfer to Filipino men, but rather extends through other networks of women (aunts, grandmothers and other non kin), and therefore the role of women as reproductive labourers continues.

Transnational households reveal an entanglement of gendered spaces within global labour migration. Migration and its effects are multi-directional; global economic patterns not only affect migrants' own lives, but also their family, those with whom they interact, with whom they work and for whom they work. There can be painful consequences for families, resulting in many emotions including regret, instability and insecurity for both migrant parents and children separated by labour migration (Parreñas 2001). Gendered labour migration becomes an accepted role, which research participants readily accepted. Additionally, the ability of Filipinas to move abroad and earn more money may lead them to overlook the challenges in their transnational lives.

Transnational households can experience multiple barriers. Home is seen as a private space and that any problems in the home are up to individuals to solve, despite some of these problems being caused by institutional dynamics. In addition, with the domestic sphere often cast as a woman's 'natural' place, work done in the home such as domestic work or hospice care is not subject to labour standards or union protection, nor considered as productive and additive to the labour force (see Tung 2000; Hochschild 2002; Parreñas 2001; 2008). Because carework is relational, it involves emotional investments, not just an exchange of goods. Multiple investments across borders produce transnational challenges.

Despite the active encouragement for skilled labour emigration, there exists a damaging contradiction for women in Philippine public discourse (Parreñas 2002). According to Parreñas,

the dominant ideology contends that a woman's place is in the home. The Philippine government, supported by media sensationalism, criticises migrant mothers for causing their children to suffer in transnational households (Parreñas 2002). Instead of calling for the return of migrant women, Parreñas recommends that gender egalitarian views of child rearing are essential, and that gender be redefined so that women are not seen as the sole providers of care. She argues that motherhood should include providing for one's family:

> "Gender should be recognised as a fluid social category, and masculinity should be redefined, as the larger society questions the biologically based assumption that only women have an aptitude to provide care. Government officials and the media could then stop vilifying migrant women, redirecting their attention, instead, to men. They could question the lack of male accountability for care work, and they could demand that men, including migrant fathers, take more responsibility for the emotional welfare of their children." (2002: 54)

Asis *et al.* (2004) explore how migrant women and their families deal with the social costs of migration, given the transnational households they have. Asis *et al.* would agree with Parreñas, for they find in their study that when the mother is absent, caregiving and domestic tasks tended to be redistributed to other females in the family (2004). Migration changes the ways in which reproductive labour is distributed, but such labour remains gender determined. Women will continue to leave the Philippines to work.

Global economic patterns not only affect migrants' own lives, but also their family, those with whom they interact, with whom they work and for whom they work. Another important issue intertwined with these concerns is the successful/failed migration dichotomy of OFWs. One example is that of Eileen. Eileen's husband moved to Ireland in 2001 for work, and Eileen followed in 2003. A few months after her arrival, their four children joined them. Eileen fits the desired model of a migrant success story because she maintained her nuclear family and successfully garnered a full-time job, thus improving her family's economic circumstances. According to most research participants, this is the best-case scenario because accessibility to and the means to provide for family equated to feeling 'at home'. But, after a few months of the family being together, the family faced the reality that the marriage was not working. Eileen asked her husband to move out, giving him a timeline of three months. Towards the end of that time, he was involved in a serious accident and was in hospital for three months. She reassessed their relationship and gave up her job to be with him, leaving the family without a steady income. At the time, her eldest daughter started working part-time to support the family, but because of her Irish immigration stamp, the Garda National Immigration Bureau demanded that she stop working. When Eileen's husband was discharged from the hospital, she went back to her job, but her salary was not enough to support the family. When his last disability payment arrived, he unexpectedly sent the entire amount to a woman in the Philippines with whom he was having an extra-marital relationship. Eileen asked him to move out, and he now lives with his sister, who is also in Ireland.

Eileen's story sits within a false dichotomy of successful/failed migration stories. While pastures may be greener, migration brings new dimensions and challenges while previous ones, if unresolved, still linger. While transnational family reunions are of 'momentous importance in the life of transmigrants,' especially when family members are in different

locations prior to reunion, family reunions are not conflict-free (Skrbis 2008). Challenging this dichotomy of success/failure is important because workshop participants search for success stories so as to further encourage migration, even when many stories are actually negative. While it is important to know about the difficulties of migration procedures, settling in the destination country, and the ins-and-outs of everyday life, workshop participants in this study wanted to ensure that future OFWs were not disillusioned. Success stories that gloss over hardships often lead potential OFWs to think that moving abroad is quite easy. Returned migrants who participated in the workshop feared that many are not ready to handle the social costs involved in migration and that they will be ill-prepared for the challenges of living and working abroad.

For those OFWs who returned to the Philippines, the links between migration and cultural capital also came to the fore. Workshop participants faced class issues with fellow Filipinos, particularly when they believed returnees may be awash with money (Bagasao 2007). One group in the workshop emphasised that these struggles were extremely tough in the first few months and sometimes lasted years: 'Some (OFWs) became more distrustful coming home, wary of other people who are just after their money or their green card'. These returned women often faced exclusion from those who stayed in the Philippines. This exclusion is also a manifestation of the colonial mentality. Ignacio (2005: 116) found that Filipinos who live or who have spent time in the US are challenged regarding their 'Filipino identity' because Filipino is 'usually defined against the Filipino/United States dichotomy'. Despite government portrayals of migrants as heroes and heroines, their loyalty to the Philippines is viewed suspiciously. Furthermore, the tensions of class relations become more apparent. OFWs are perceived as a 'have' by 'have-nots', with a perception that they lived in continuous affluence. The 'haves' are portrayed as betrayers of poor and working class interests and are not seen as viable stakeholders (hooks 1990). They are accused of 'selling out' in the colonial motherland (Ignacio 2005).

Another challenge that returnees faced was that they themselves constantly compared their situation to the destination country. The difficulties in settling back in, adjusting to lifestyle, seeing that other people's lives continued while they were away, as well as substantial changes in the physical landscape, led to existential challenges, particularly related to identity and belonging (Tannenbaum 2007; Ralph 2009). Having lived abroad for a significant period of time, workshop participants not only have to negotiate the cultural capital that they acculturated in the destination country, but also any social changes that occurred in the Philippines over the years, and in some cases, decades that they were abroad. For instance, Manila has become a global metropolitan city over the last few decades, and this shocked many returnees, leaving them unsettled with the pace of life, congestion, pollution and increasing poverty.

Whether they had good or bad experiences, returnees recommend migration because they were able to save, spend money and return to the Philippines. While some OFWs become more distrustful, one workshop participant conceded that: "When you come home your relatives and your friends know that you worked abroad and that you've earned. Usually, others […] have a different perception […] they think that you are really well-off and that you can spend a lot of money. So, I think, in that context, you become wary that people are taking advantage, or thinking that life was very easy, earning there [abroad] and not having a hard time. Some people have that perception." Feeling marginalised upon

return, returned workshop participants experienced difficulties upon re-integration, and sometimes were coerced into redistributing wealth that they had earned. Return to the homeland does not happen without power struggles. Friends and families that have long been separated do not always fit together again naturally.

With continuous gendered labour migration of Filipinas, structural relations remain more or less the same, and Filipinas stay somewhere in-between an axis of agency, with 'choice' or 'more options' on one side and 'little choice' or 'few options' on the other side (van Hear 1998: 42). Many workshop participants also stressed that they were not only in charge of finances while they were abroad, but that the role of primary caregiver and provider did not change when they returned. In most cases, they picked up more responsibilities, such as household chores and caregiving for other OFWs' children who were left behind. The persistence of women in this position of reproductive labour hinders a radical transformation of gender roles (Parreñas 2008). The moral disciplining of migrant mothers, which continues upon return, ignores the struggles that OFWs have undertaken in order to contribute to their family's wellbeing. It downplays the sacrifices that these women have made while abroad, and the responsibilities of migrant women in the global labour market.

The circumstances of migrants are largely constituted by remittances; it is the basis of how OFWs understand their position in the destination country, their role as labour migrants, and how they see themselves in the diaspora. The workshop participants provided these insights into the social aspects of remittances based on their experiences. Remittances, despite the problems they bring, allow participants and their families to focus on their future in ways they could not have done before (Bagasao 2007). Research participants, when abroad, acknowledged that return was not imminent and that a corrupt government and extreme poverty, which allow few chances for upward social mobility, are the major deterrents for returning to the Philippines. With this in mind, despite the challenges faced abroad, Filipinas continue to recommend migration as a good option.

5. Conclusion

The dependence on overseas Filipino workers to sustain the livelihood of families is often a last choice resort and is intricately tied to the Philippines' dependence on OFWs and global demand for care labour. In other words, the Philippines remain dependent on the migration of women (Parreñas 2008). Participants understood this role of Filipinas, and regardless of the complications involved, they supported continued migration. While they stressed it was important to tell of the opportunities that migration and remittances can allow, the encouragement of more positive stories to further support outward migration continues a cycle of dependence on remittances. In the same vein, this leads to the continued disruption of traditional and nuclear families and the vilifying of migrant mothers by the Philippine government. With few challenges in public and private discourse, the continuing dependence on migration and the vilifying of migrant mothers in the Philippines is a damaging contradiction (Tung 2000; Parreñas 2001; 2008). Furthermore, as workshop participants emphasised, what is missing is that OFWs often keep challenges and difficulties to themselves so as to promote further migration.

Choosing to work abroad is a way of mitigating difficult circumstances (Asis *et al.* 2004). Ultimately, the particular challenges and successes of other OFWs, one's migration

history and immigration circumstances reveal how migration is a part of Filipinas' cultural capital and thus how they see themselves in the diaspora. Larsen *et al.* (2005: 357) refer to these migration circumstances as a 'life change strategy' which looks at migration as a 'means to create the possibility of a new, and better, way of living'. Looking at migration as a life change strategy presents viable ways of incorporating the ranges of personal experiences along with the institutional dynamics of diaspora. It also recognises choice, agency, and the diversity of people's circumstances and goals. These stories, all driven by complex stimuli, sit within a larger framework of global politics and economics. These stories illuminate the ways in which Filipinas interpret their social positioning and role as Filipina labour migrants alongside other OFWs in the diaspora.

References

Asis, M.M.B. 2004. The social costs (and benefits) of migration: what happens to left-behind children and families? Paper presented at the *World Conference of OFWs: Shaping the Future of Filipino Labor Migration*, Manila, Philippines, 16–18 December 2004.

Asis, M.M.B., S. Huang and B.S.A.Yeoh. 2004. When the light of the home is abroad: unskilled female migration and the Filipino family. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* **25(2)**: 198–215.

Bagasao, I. F. 2007. Filipinos in Europe: economic contributions, challenges and aspirations. In *De Olde Worlde: Views of Filipino Migrants in Europe*, ed. F.M. Hogsholm, pp. 28–57. Quezon City: Philippine Social Science Council.

Bhattacharjee, A. 1997. The public/private mirage: mapping homes and undomesticating violence work in the South Asian immigrant community. In *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures*, ed. M. J. Alexander and C.T. Mohanty, pp. 308–329. New York: Routledge.

Bonus, R. 2000. *Locating Filipino Americans: Ethnicity and the Cultural Politics of Space.* Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Boyce, J. K. 1993. *The Political Economy of Growth and Impoverishment in the Marcos Era*. Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press.

Brands, H.W. 1992. *Bound to Empire: The United States and the Philippines*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Brewer, C. 2004. *Shamanism, Catholicism and Gender Relations in Colonial Philippines, 1521–1685*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing.

Cabato, D.M. 2006. A note on the Philippine policy on managing migration. *Philippine Labor Review* **30(1)**: 2–16.

Castles, S. 2007. The factors that make and unmake migration policies. In *Rethinking Migration: New Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives*, ed. A. Portes and J. DeWind, pp. 29–61. New York: Berghahn Books.

Central Statistics Office. 2008. *Non Irish Nationals Living in Ireland, Census 2006*. Dublin: Stationery Office.

Chammartin, G. F.M. 2002. The feminisation of international migration. *Labour Education Review No. 129*. Geneva: International Labour Organisation.

Choy, C. C. 2003. *Empire of Care: Nursing and Migration in Filipino American History*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

CMA. 2006. CMA Working Paper on Overseas Migration. Manila: Center for Migrant Advocacy.

David, E.J.R. and S. Okazaki. 2006. The Colonial Mentality Scale (CMS) for Filipino Americans: scale construction and psychological implications. *Journal of Counseling Psychology* **53(2)**: 241–252.

de Jesús, M. L. 2005. Introduction: toward a peminist theory, or theorising the Filipina/American experience. In *Pinay Power: Theorising the Filipina/American Experience*, ed. M. L. de Jesús, pp. 1–18. New York: Routledge.

Espiritu, Y. L. 2003. *Home Bound: Filipino American Lives Across Cultures, Communities, and Countries.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Fagan, G. H. 2002. Globalisation and culture: placing Ireland. *The Annals of the American Academy* **581(1)**: 133–143.

Flynn, D. and E. Kofman. 2004. Women, trade, and migration. *Gender and Development* **12(2)**: 66–72.

Gonzalez, J. L. 1998. *Philippine Labour Migration: Critical Dimensions of Public Policy*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Gutierrez, E. 2007. The Filipino diaspora: changing the terms of reference. In *In De Olde Worlde: Views of Filipino Migrants in Europe*, ed. F. M. Hogsholm, pp. 394–401. Quezon City: Philippine Social Science Council.

Hedman, E-L. E. 2006. *In the Name of Civil Society: From Free Election Movements to People Power in the Philippines*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Hochschild, A. R. 2002. Love and gold. In *Global Woman: Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers in the New Economy*, ed. Barbara Ehrenreich and A. R. Hochschild, pp. 15–30. New York: Owl Books.

hooks, b. 1990. *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics.* Boston: South End Press.

Hu-DeHart, E. 1999. Introduction: Asian-American formations in the age of globalisation. In *Across the Pacific: Asian Americans and Globalization,* ed. E. Hu-DeHart, pp. 1–28. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Ignacio, E.N. 2005. *Building Diaspora: Filipino Cultural Community Formation on the Internet*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

ICI. 2003. Labour Migration into Ireland: Study and Recommendations on Employment Permits, Working Conditions, Family Reunification and the Integration of Migrant Workers in Ireland. Dublin: Immigrant Council of Ireland.

Kennedy, V. 2009. Good news, bad news. *Filipino Forum: The Filipino Voice in Ireland*. Dublin: Ireland.

Kingma, M. 2006. New challenges, emerging trends, and issues in regulation of migrating nurses. *Policy, Politics, & Nursing Practice* **7(3)**: 26S–33S.

Larsen, J.A., H.T. Allan, K. Bryan and P. Smith. 2005. Overseas nurses' motivations for working in the UK: globalization and life politics. *Work Employment and Society* **19(2)**: 349–368.

Lie, M. and R. Lund. 2005. From NIDL to globalisation: studying women workers in an increasingly globalised economy. *Gender, Technology and Development* **9(1)**: 7–29.

McCoy, A. W. 2009. *Policing America's Empire: the United States, the Philippines, and the Rise of the Surveillance State*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

MCRI. 2008. Getting On: From Migration to Integration: Chinese, Indian, Lithuanian and Nigerian Migrants' Experiences in Ireland. Dublin: Migration and Citizenship Research Initiative, Immigrant Council of Ireland.

MRCI. 2004. Private Homes: A Public Concern: The Experience of Twenty Migrant Women Employed in the Private Home in Ireland. Dublin: Migrant Rights Centre Ireland.

O'Hearn, D. 1998. *Inside the Celtic Tiger: The Irish Economy and the Asian Model*. London: Pluto Press.

Padilla, M. D. 2007. Women changing our lives, making HER story: migration experiences of Babaylan Philippine women's network in Europe. In *In De Olde Worlde: Views of Filipino Migrants in Europe*, ed. F.M. Hogsholm, pp. 83–109. Quezon City: Philippine Social Science Council.

Parreñas, R. S. 2001. *Servants of Globalisation: Women, Migration, and Domestic Work.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Parreñas, R. S. 2002. The care crisis in the Philippines: children and transnational families in the New Global Economy. In *Global Woman: Nannies, Maids and Sex Workers in the New Economy*, ed. B. Ehrenreich and A.R. Hochschild, pp. 39–54. New York: Henry Holt and Company.

Parreñas, R. S. 2008. *The Force of Domesticity: Filipina Migrants and Globalization.* New York: New York University Press.

Pillinger, J. 2007. The Feminisation of Migration: Experiences and Opportunities in Ireland. Dublin: Immigrant Council of Ireland.

Piper, N. 2004. Gender and migration policies in Southeast and East Asia: legal protection and sociocultural empowerment of unskilled migrant women. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* **25(2)**: 216–231.

POEA. 2006. OFW Global Presence: A Compendium of Overseas Employment Statistics. Manila: Philippine Overseas Employment Administration.

POEA. 2010. OFW Global Presence: A Compendium of Overseas Employment Statistics. Manila: Philippine Overseas Employment Administration.

Ralph, D. 2009. 'Home is where the heart is'? Understandings of 'home' among Irish-born return migrants from the United States. *Irish Studies Review* **17(2**): 183–200.

Samson, F. L. 2005. Filipino American men: comrades in the Filipina/o American Feminism Movement. In *Pinay Power: Peminist Critical Theory: Theorising the Filipina/American Experience*, ed. M. L. de Jesús, pp. 149–166. New York: Routledge.

Skrbis, Z. 2008. Transnational families: theorising migration, emotions and belonging. *Journal of Intercultural Studies* **29(3**): 231–246.

Smith, T. 2002. What happens when your hood is the last stop on the White Flight Express? In *Colonize This! Young Women of Color on Today's Feminism*, ed. Daisy Hernández and Bushra Rehman, pp. 54–70. Emeryville, CA: Seal Press.

Sto. Tomas, P. 2006. Remittances: the wages of movement. *The Philippine Labor Review* **30(1)**: 17–34.

Tannenbaum, M. 2007. Back and forth: immigrants' stories of migration and return. *International Migration* **45(5)**: 147–175.

The Economist. 2011. The Philippines and remittances: the house that Saud built. *The Economist* 23–29 July 2011: 24.

Tung, C. 2003. Caring across borders: motherhood, marriage, and Filipina domestic workers in California. In *Asian/Pacific Islander American Women: A Historical Anthology*, ed. S. Hune and G. M. Nomura, pp. 301–318. New York: New York University Press.

van Hear, N. 1998. *New Diasporas: The Mass Exodus, Dispersal and Regrouping of Migrant Communities*. London: University College London Press.

Yeates, N. 2004a. A dialogue with 'global care chain' analysis: nurse migration in the Irish context. *Feminist Review* **77(1)**: 79–95.

Yeates, N. 2004b. Global care chains: critical reflections and lines of enquiry. *International Feminist Journal of Politics* **6(3)**: 369–391.

Yeates, N. 2006. Changing places: Ireland in the international division of reproductive labour. *Translocations: The Irish Migration, Race and Social Transformation Review* **1(1)**: 5–21.

Referee Acknowledgement

The Editorial Board of *Malaysian Journal of Economic Studies* gratefully acknowledges the following individuals for reviewing the papers submitted for publication consideration.

Aaron Nicholas	Deakin University
Adam D. Tyson	The University of Leeds
Cheong Kee Cheok	University of Malaya
Daisy Chou	La Trobe University
Parvinder Kler	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, United Nations
Pazim Othman	Universiti Utara Malaysia
Radiah Abdul Kader	University of Malaya
Rajabrata Banerjee	University of South Australia
Rizki Wimanda	Economic Research and Monetary Policy Department, Bank Indonesia
Santha Chenayah	University of Malaya
Sharon Chang	University of Queensland
Tan Pei Pei	University of Malaya
Zarinah Yusof	University of Malaya