13:30~14:00	**Registration**
14:00~14:10	**Welcome and Introduction** **Introduction :** Yanghee Kim (Director of Gender Mainstreaming Department, KWDI) **Welcoming Address :** Kyung-ai Kim (KWDI President)
14:10~15:00	**Session** I Moderator: Chin-sung Chung (Professor, Department of sociology, Seoul National University) 'Migration and Diversity in Multicultural Singapore: A Broad Perspective of Some Patterns and Issues' Presenter: LAI, Ah Eng (Senior Research Fellow, Asia Research Institute at the National University of Singapore) 'Managing Migrant Workers in the Singapore Workforce: Managing Flows and Challenges' Presenter: Noorashikin Abdul Rahma (Department of Geography, National University of Singapore) **Panel Discussion** Sooyeon Lee (Director of Gender-Equality Policy Research, KWDI) Untaek Im (Professor, Department of sociology, Keimyung University) Seungjun Han (Professor, Department of administration, Seoul Women's University)

15:30〜15:40	**Break**

15:40〜17:00　**Session** Ⅱ

Moderator: Youngock Kim (Professor, Korean Women's Institute, Ewha Womans University)

'The Role of Cyberspace in Marriage Migration in Asia : Claiming Spaces for Women's Intervention'
Presenter: Marion Bernadette G. Cabrera (Programme Coordinator for Governance, Citizenship and Democracy Programme, Philippines)

'Current Conditions of Filipino Women in Marriage Migration: Preliminary Review of Related Literature'
Presenter: Elmer Malibiran (Research Fellow, The University of Philippines)

Panel Discussion
Yiseon Kim (Research Fellow, KWDI)
Hyeonmi Kim (Professor, Department of sociology, Yeonsei University)
Jongryeol Choi (Professor, Department of sociology, Keimyung University)

17:00〜17:30　**Floor Discussion**

Moderator: Mihye Chang (Research Fellow, KWDI)

13:30~14:00 등록

14:00~14:10

개회식

사　회 : 김양희 (한국여성정책연구원 Gender Mainstreaming연구본부장)

개회사 : 김경애 (한국여성정책연구원 원장)

14:10~15:00 제Ⅰ세션

사회: 정진성 (서울대학교 사회학과 교수)

다문화적 싱가포르에서의 이주와 변화: 이주형태와 현안문제에 대한 고찰

'Migration and Diversity in Multicultural Singapore: A Broad Perspective of Some Patterns and Issues'

Presenter: LAI, Ah Eng (Senior Research Fellow, Asia Research Institute at the National University of Singapore)

싱가포르의 이민노동자에 대한 관리: 노동이동과 과제

'Managing Migrant Workers in the Singapore Workforce: Managing Flows and Challenges'

Presenter: Noorashikin Abdul Rahma (Department of Geography, National University of Singapore)

지정토론

이수연 (한국여성정책연구원 평등정책실장)

임운택 (계명대학교 사회학과 교수)

한승준 (서울여자대학교 행정학과 교수)

15:30~15:40 **휴식**

15:40~17:00 **제Ⅱ세션**

사회: 김영옥 (이화여자대학교 한국여성연구원 연구교수)

아시아에서의 결혼이주에 있어서 사이버공간이 차지하는 역할:
여성이 개입할 수 있는 공간에 대한 요구를 중심으로
'The Role of Cyberspace in Marriage Migration in Asia : Claiming Spaces for Women's Intervention'
Presenter: Marion Bernadette Cabrera (Programme Coordinator for Governance, Citizenship and Democracy Programme, Philippines)

필리핀 여성들의 결혼 이주 현 상황 : 관련 보고서에 대한 예비적 고찰
'Current Conditions of Filipino Women in Marriage Migration: Preliminary Review of Related Literature'
Presenter: Elmer Malibiran (Research Fellow, The University of Philippines)

지정토론

김이선 (한국여성정책연구원 연구위원)
김현미 (연세대학교 사회학과 교수)
최종렬 (계명대학교 사회학과 교수)

17:00~17:30 **질의 및 종합토론**

사회: 장미혜 (한국여성정책연구원 연구위원)

| Contents

Session Ⅰ

Presentation 1

Migration and Diversity in Multicultural Singapore:
A Broad Perspective of Some Patterns and Issues

LAI, Ah Eng
(Senior Research Fellow, Asia Research Institute at the National
University of Singapore)

Presentation 2

Migrant Workers in the Singapore Workforce:
Managing Flows and Challenges

Noorashikin Abdul Rahma
(Department of Geography, National University of Singapore)

Migration and Diversity in Multicultural Singapore: A Broad Perspective of Some Patterns and Issues

LAI, Ah Eng

(Senior Research Fellow, Asia Research Institute at the National University of Singapore)

Abstract

Singapore as an aspiring global city (also state) in Asia is often presented as a socially diverse and multicultural place, particularly in terms of its cultural, ethnic, religious and linguistic characteristics which have strong roots in migration both past and present. While a state-imposed `multiracialism' with an Chinese-Malay-Indians-Others (CMIO) ethnic identity framework and people's interactive responses shape social relations and issues in these areas of social life, the massive entry of immigrants and foreigners from various countries and parts of the world to study, work and live in the city both enrich and challenge this state of effervescent diversity and multiculturalism. This presentation offers a broad perspective of historical and recent migration patterns and diversity issues in Singapore, showing continuities and new developments. It scans the following: 1) dimensions of migration related to demographics, labour and family; 2) the dynamics and impacts of migration on cultural diversity and integration in various contexts and settings; and 3) policy fields in terms of immigration and integration. Methodologically, it refers to both macro and survey data obtained from published sources and ethnographic material gathered through anthropological perspectives that focus on social relations around ethnicity, nationality and other identity markers and on everyday life, behaviour and interaction.

Background on Singapore

- society with immigrant roots and present migration movements
  - ○ one quarter of 4 million population are non-citizens
  - ○ highest figure of non-resident workforce in Asia
- aspiring to be an attractive global city (state)
  - ○ business, work, studies, visits and living
    - ■ global talent competition
    - ■ global schoolhouse
    - ■ tourism
- multiculturalism and cultural diversity
  - ○ immigration's contribution
  - ○ evolving and effervescent
    - ■ as strength and attraction
    - ■ difficulties and dangers
  - ○ state involvement
    - ■ economic: immigration-labour
    - ■ social: integration
      - • "multiracialism" framework of nation-building (multireligiosity, multilingualism, multiculturalism)
  - ○ people's ongoing construction and negotiation

Migration Demographics, Patterns and Types

- Historical Migration (colonial till World War 2)
  - ○ Contexts of colonial economy
    - ■ Primary production, entrepot trade & services
    - ■ Ethnic division of labour
  - ○ Types of immigrants
    - ■ Workers and indented labourers
    - ■ Gender distribution (largely male workers, few female immigrant wives & service providers)

- Recruitment systems and state controls
  ○ Places of origin, ethnicities and nationalities
    ■ S China, S India & Ceylon,MalayArchipelago,Europe
  ○ Large working classes and small elites
    ■ Racial/ethnic and class ideologies and stereotypes
      • Malays, Chinese, Indians, Europeans
- Contemporary Migration (since 1980s)
  ○ Contexts of postcolonial economic development & diversification
  ○ Types of immigrants
    ■ Workers (bifurcated labour system: unskilled, skilled & talented)
      • Gender distribution (unskilled: male construction workers, female service providers)
    ■ Entrepreneurs
    ■ Spouses (mainly foreign wives; bifurcated)
    ■ Students (alone; with accompanying parents)
    ■ Recruitment systems and state controls
      • controls for unskilled: temporary, use & discard
      • incentives for skilled: permanent
  ○ Places of origin, ethnicities and nationalities
    ■ all of SoutheastAsia,China,Indiansubcontinent,Europe,US,othercountries
  ○ Large working classes and small elites
    ■ Racial/ethnic and class ideologies and stereotypes
      • Locals and foreigners
      • Distinctions among foreigners (by country, by skills)
- Changes over time in
  ○ types of migrants and backgrounds
  ○ diversity and multiculturalism
    ■ evolving and effervescent forms and expressions
  ○ sense of belonging: from place to nation

Dynamics and Impacts of Migration

- social and public services
  - ○ for skilled and better off: clubs, associations, support groups
  - ○ for lower-skilled workers: lacking, public places and spaces
- rights
  - ○ for lower-skilled workers
  - ○ for lower-skilled foreign spouses and others
- cultural diversity and multiculturalism
- interaction and integration

Migration, Cultural Diversity and Multiculturalism

- Ethno-cultural and diversities within subgroups
  - ○ Chinese, Malay, Indian, Eurasian, European, Others
- Ethno-religious and religious diversities within subgroups
  - ○ Chinese, Malay, Indian, Eurasian, European, Others
  - ○ folk religions, Taoism, Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, Christianity
  - ○ new religious movements
- Ethno-linguistic and diversities within subgroups
  - ○ Chinese, Malay, Indian, European, others
  - ○ dialects and languages
  - ○ English and Singlish, switching
- Other dimensions
  - ○ cosmopolitan cultures
  - ○ multiple identities and beings
- State multiracial and CMIO framework
  - ○ ill fitting

Migration, Interaction and Integration

- Immigrants' networks

- ○ Clubs, associations, support groups, web sites
- ○ Variations among immigrant types
  - ■ Few or none for unskilled
- Interaction contexts and spaces and places
  - ○ workplace
    - ■ hierarchy, power and status
    - ■ diversity platforms (MNCs)
  - ○ residence
    - ■ separate communities
  - ○ public spaces/places
    - ■ community clubs
    - ■ competition for spaces and facilities
  - ○ schools
    - ■ separate systems
    - ■ what is a "good mix" of students?
    - ■ competition and performance
    - ■ friendships, memory and belonging
      - • International Students' Day
- functional and social interaction and integration
- functional
  - ○ use and sharing of spaces and facilities
  - ○ everyday life
- social
  - ○ language
    - ■ language differences
    - ■ command of English
  - ○ social interaction
    - ■ joint activities limited
    - ■ stereotypes of foreigners (some negative examples)
      - • dirty, smelly and crime-prone (male construction workers)
      - • husband-stealers (mainland Chinese women)
      - • rich (Indonesian Chinese students)
      - • loud and arrogant (Americans)

- stereotypes of locals (some negative examples)
  - stingy and demanding employers
  - exploitative agents
  - uncaring government
- racism, ethnocentrism and ignorance
  - colour (construction and domestic workers)
  - culture
  - hierarchies by skills
- tensions and conflicts (examples)
  - within families/households (domestics, foreign wives)
  - intercultural differences

Policy Fields

- immigration and governance issues
  - recruitment agencies and regulations
  - state's focus on immigration-labour
  - state's lack of focus on immigration-integration policies
    - citizenship issues - who qualifies?
      - children of women citizens married to foreigners
      - unskilled foreign spouses/wives
      - unskilled foreign workers
      - foreign young males and national service
    - older poorer male citizens and young foreign unskilled wives
      - legal and economic positions of wives

Current Discourses and Debates

(views in a receivingcountry)

- Future planned population size of 7 million
  - Where will immigrants come from, of what backgrounds?

- Do we really need (some of) them?
  - ○ For low-wage, unskilled work?
  - ○ Will they compensate for locals' low fertility rates?
  - ○ Will transnational elites really stay or just use Singaporeasasteppingstone?
- Social facilities and services
  - ○ Availability and competition
  - ○ Differing social and cultural habits
- Rights and responsibilities
  - ○ Employees' and employers' undergoing constant negotiation
- Interaction and integration issues
  - ○ Language differences, e.g. in public services and use of English
  - ○ Avenues for interaction and integration limited
- Tensions and conflicts
  - ○ Stereotypes and prejudices evolving
  - ○ Is there xenophobia?

Concluding Remarks

- Immigration: rapid pace, large scale, varied backgrounds
- Social divides
  - ○ between locals and foreigners
  - ○ Old and new immigrants
  - ○ Intergenerational
- Interaction and Integration:
  - ○ State approach and policy
    - ■ Immigration-integration to match immigration-labour
    - ■ Integrating the unskilled
      - • economic-social mobility
      - • Values of human rights, equality and ethics
  - ○ People negotiating similarities and differences
    - ■ Tolerance and pragmatism
    - ■ Intercultural skills and competences

- ■ Values of human rights, equality and ethics
- ■ Building bridges and solidarities
  - • Everyday life
○ Food, friendship and family
  - • Activities and organizations
  - • Intergenerational

Migrant Workers in the Singapore Workforce: Managing Flows and Challenges

Noorashikin Abdul Rahma

(Department of Geography, National University of Singapore)

Introduction

One of the many challenges that Singapore has always had to address as an independent nation is ensuring the sustainability and adequacy of its labour force. Being a country that has virtually nothing to offer in terms of generating economic wealth but human resources and skillful economic planning, a robust labour force becomes an ever vital factor of production in responding to globalisation. Singapore's shrinking population base also adds to this challenge and together these have made it necessary for Singapore to continue to welcome labour from overseas.

It has been more than four decades since Singapore started to open its doors to migrant workers, a move motivated by an economic need[1]. However, the impact of such a policy transcends the economic sphere and is felt in the social, cultural and political spheres. The ubiquitous (and increasing) presence of foreigners of different classes and nationalities in the country has, to a significant extent, impact upon the country's social and cultural landscapes. This brings about new challenges for the state in managing relations with the citizenry and the international community and balancing these with long-term economic survival.

---

1) Hui W T, "Regionalization, Economic Restructuring and Labour Migration", *International Migration*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (1997), pp. 109-126.

The 1989 volume of *Management of Success*, in examining the inflow of skilled workers into the local labour market, concluded that "The possible displacement of local expertise by the foreign talent and the apparent inequalities in the income, housing, and fringe benefits between expatriates and locals have not yet become issues of contention".[2] This chapter serves to update this conclusion firstly by outlining the policies governing the flows of two segments of migrant workers into Singapore – skilled workers taking up white-collar jobs and immigrant workers who perform manual work in various sectors of the economy. Secondly, the chapter provides a brief description of the composition of migrants in the Singapore workforce. Thirdly, it describes the contrasting policies governing the flows of the two groups of migrant workers uncovering the values and principles underlying these policies. Fourthly, the chapter highlights three significant tensions that have emerged from Singapore's openness to migrant workers and describe how these bring about challenges to the state. Last the chapter concludes that in managing these challenges, the state thus far has prioritized economic goals and the majority of its citizenry.

Migrant workers in the Singapore workforce - composition and nationalities

One in three persons who is gainfully employed in Singapore at the end of 2007 was a foreigner. Workforce statistics released by the Ministry of Manpower in January 2008, noted that there are 900,800 foreigners amongst the 2.73 million people who are employed in Singapore making up 33 per cent of the country's total workforce[3]. Of this population, a majority is reportedly engaged in lower end jobs in various sectors of the economy such as manufacturing, shipyard and shipbuilding, construction, services as well as in private households as live-in domestic workers. Specific data detailing the breakdown of the foreign workforce in higher end and lower end jobs are rather elusive. More recently, to placate unsettling perceptions that more than half (61 per cent) of new jobs created in 2007 went to foreigners, the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) released a more detailed breakdown of employment figures based on statistics compiled for 2006[4]. In a report published on its website, MOM revealed that by the

---

2) Pang Eng Fong, Tan Chwee Huat and Cheng Soo May, "The Management of People", *Management of Success: The Moulding of Modern Singapore*, edited by Kernial Singh Sandhu and Paul Wheatley, (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1989), p. 135

3) Ministry of Manpower, "Employment situation in fourth quarter 2007", http://www.mom.gov.sg/publish/momportal/en/press_room/press_releases/2008/20080131-employment.html, (last accessed: 11 Feb 2008)

4) *Weekend Today*, "Jobs Bonanza", (1-2 Mar 2008),

end of 2006, foreigners constituted almost half (45 per cent) of the manufacturing workforce and 61 per cent of the construction workforce with "many" occupying jobs that are unpopular with Singaporeans because of demanding work conditions such as long hours of shift work and working in a clean room environment[5]. By far, data reported in a *Straits Times* article published in November 2007 is the most detailed in providing a breakdown of the foreign workforce in terms of skill levels. The article reported that out of a total population of 756,000 working foreigners in Singapore in 2006, 646,000 are work-permit holders who are engaged in unskilled and lowly skilled manual jobsin various sectors. The remaining 110,000 are Employment Pass and S Pass holders who have recognized skills or professional qualifications and earn a monthly salary that is equal or more than $1,800[6].

Malaysia was the primary source of migrant labour for Singapore in the late 1960s but by 1978, other countries joined in the league of recognised sources of labour for Singapore. These countries which MOM categorised as non-traditional sources (NTS) include India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Philippines and Pakistan. Today, the marine, manufacturing, construction and services sectors also welcome workers from the People's Republic of China (PRC) and other northeast Asian sources such as Hong Kong, Macau, South Korea and Taiwan[7]. In addition to these sectors, Singapore's medical services are also highly dependent on foreign healthcare workers of various skill levels. Singapore is notably one of the two main host economies in the Southeast Asian region for such workers[8]. It is also important to note that, Singapore does not only welcome foreigners to fill labour needs in the lower rungs of the labour market. The study conducted by Pang and Lim noted that Singapore has also always welcomed "professionals and entrepreneurs with industrial experience and capital" especially highly qualified and/or wealthy Chinese from Malaysia, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Indonesia and other Southeast Asian countries who were readily granted employment passes and permanent residence.[9]

---

5) Ministry of Manpower, "Singapore citizens benefit from record employment creation, securing good quality jobs", available at http://www.mom.gov.sg/publish/momportal/en/press_room/press_releases/2008/20080229-SC_PR.html, (last accessed 3 Mar 2008)

6) *The Straits Times*, "Jump in number of new PRs, citizens", (7 Nov 2007)

7) Ministry of Manpower. "Application requirements", http://www.mom.gov.sg/publish/momportal/en/communities/work_pass/work_permit/application/requirements.html, (last accessed: 11 Feb 2008).

8) Arunanondchai, Jutamas and Carsten, Fink, 'Globalization for Health: Trade in Health Services in the ASEAN region', *Health Promotion International*, Vol. 21, S1 (2007), pp. 59-66

9) Pang Eng Fong and Lim, Linda, 'Foreign labour and economic development in Singapore', *International Migration Review*, Vol. 16, No.3 (1982), p. 549.

Alongside these Asian countries, the Singapore workforce also comprise of expatriates from various western countries such as the UK, Australia, New Zealand, Germany, France and Switzerland among others. These western expatriates are mostly employed in the higher end jobs in various sectors. The existence of well established social clubs and international schools that cater to these different nationalities strongly suggest their relatively enduring and significant presence in the country[10]. Another significant contributor to Singapore's workforce and economy are the Japanese nationals[11]. Published academic articles and media reportsof the different groups of foreigners working in Singapore such as the ones cited above bear testimony to the international composition of the country's workforce. However, more recent official employment figures of the different nationalities and the breakdown in the sectors they occupy are not publicly available. Indeed, Singapore's Manpower Minister admitted in 2003 in response to calls made by academic researchers for such data to be made more transparent, that these information are considered "sensitive data" and are being "held back for reasons of national interests".[12]

Welcoming migrant workers - fulfilling cyclical demands and supporting long-term development

Singapore's demand for migrant labour stems from both longer term plans of economic restructuring and the more immediate needs brought about by shorter term business cycles of booms and busts. As pointed out in the section above, since independence, the country has always welcomed skilled migrants with industrial experience and capital and high-net worth individuals who can be incorporated without much difficulty in society. It is thought that these individuals, in addition to multinational corporations (MNCs), can provide a boost to

---

10) Brenda Yeoh and ShirlenaHuang, "Foreign Talent in Our Midst: New Challenges to Sense of Community and Ethnic Relations in Singapore', *Beyond Rituals and Riots*, edited by Lai Ah Eng (Singapore: Eastern University Press, 2004) Beaverstock, J, 'Transnational elites in global cities: British expatriates in Singapore's financial district', Geoforum, 33(2002), 525-538

11) Ben-Ari, E, "Japanese in Singapore: The Dynamics of an Expatriate Community", in *Global Japan: the experience of Japan's new immigrant and overseas communities*, edited by Roger Goodman (New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003); Ben-Ari, E, "Globalisation, 'Folk Models' of the World Order and National Identity: Japanese Business Expatriates in Singapore", *Japanese influences and presence in Asia*, edited by Marie Soderbery and Ian Reader (Surrey: Routledge Curzon, 2000); Thang, LL., MacLachlan, E. and Goda, M, "Expatriates on the Margins: A Study of Japanese Women Working in Singapore", Geoforum, Vol. 33 (2002), pp. 539-551.

12) These remarks were made in 2003, in response to the conclusion of a group of economics professors that three out of four new jobs created from 1998-2003 went to foreigners.

industrialisation as the newly independent Singapore was lacking in local entrepreneurs and capital. Similarly from 1979, when restructuring plans for the economy started to be put in place, the country looked toward skilled migrants and professionals to help itsventure into valued-added manufacturing and consolidate its position as an international business hub for the region. Various immigration rules were liberalized to attract Hong Kong and Chinese citizens in the aftermath of the Tiananmen Square incident in 1989. To maintain racial composition, from the late 1980s, immigration criteria were also liberalized to attract skilled South Asians and a task force was set up to attract overseas Malay professionals[13].

The open door policy for skilled migrants and professionals intensified in the late 1990s with the launch of the *Manpower 21 Plan* in 1999. The plan spelled out various initiatives to help Singapore achieve its vision of becoming a "talent capital" or a "centre of ideas, innovation, knowledge and exchange".[14] The "talent capital" vision is a pillar supporting Singapore's goal in moving towards a "new economy", an economy that is defined by knowledge-based business activities in the areas of innovation, cutting-edge research, niche marketing and techno-capitalism[15]. New niche sectors that have started to be developed in Singapore and are predicted to have significant growth in the 21st century within the "new economy" are the biomedical industry, chemical industry, electronics industry, engineering and environmental services, finance, healthcare, info-communication and digital media industry, maritime and marine and offshore industry amongst others. One of the targets of the *Manpower 21 Plan* is to enhance the work of Contact Singapore to attract more international talent to the country.[16] This emphasis is indicative of the significant role of skilled migrants in the country's long term economic goals as has been carved out by the Singapore state.

The state's view towards migrant workers who occupy the lower end of the workforce is starkly different. It was not until 1968, when immigration policies were liberalized to allow such migrants to enter Singapore on temporary work permits. Unlike skilled migrants, unskilled migrants are deemed not to have a long term place in Singapore's economy. For example, it

---

13) Hui (1997)

14) Ministry of Manpower, "Launch of Manpower 21 Plan",
   http://www.mom.gov.sg/publish/momportal/en/press_room/press_releases/1999/19990831-LaunchOfManpower21Plan.html,
   (last accessed: 18 Feb 2008).

15) Koh, Aaron, "Global Flows of Foreign Talent: Identity Anxieties in Singapore's Ethnoscape", *Sojourn*, Vol. 18, No. 2, (2003), pp. 230-257.

16) Contact Singapore provides information on career opportunities in Singapore. It has offices in major cities in Canada, Australia, the U.S., China, Indian and Europe.

was once announced that Singapore should completely phase out dependency on unskilled migrant workers by 1991. This target was thought as necessary in order to exert greater pressure on industries to restructure and automate production.[17] However, this has not been achieved and generally since the late 1960s, there has been an increase in the population of unskilled migrant workers. The inflow of unskilled migrants into the country is very much dictated by shorter term business cycles. Administrative controls are particularly relaxed during periods of economic boom for example from 1968-1973, 1981-1984, the first half of the 1990s and more recently in 2007, to feed labour shortages in various sectors.[18] Conversely, the inflow of such migrants are discouraged during periods of economic downturn in the 1970s, parts of the 1980s, the later parts of 1990s and the first few years of the new millennium.

Despite the long term target of zero dependency on unskilled migrants in Singapore, the presence of these workers has endured, making up a majority of the overall foreign workforce in Singapore. There are various reasons for this. Firstly, the continued process of economic restructuring in Singapore has not and will not necessarily lead to a complete eradication of jobs at the lower end of the workforce. In fact, as observed by Saskia Sassen, advanced economies do stimulate demand for low-wage workers especially in the services sector.[19] In Sassen's view, this stems from the personal needs and lifestyle of the more affluent white-collar workers. The high-income consumption habits of the latter such as dining out, shopping and purchasing bigger houses can stimulate a bigger demand for low-wage service workers as the work involved in maintaining these consumption practices can be more labour-intensive than their lower priced equivalents[20]. Moreover, the business activities of the "new economy" generate an inevitable demand for lower skilled support workers such as drivers, delivery personnel, clerks, cleaners, maintenance workers and other general workers[21]. Secondly, there seems to be unwillingness amongst the indigenous workforce to perform low-wage service work and other manual work especially in the construction, shipyard and shipbuilding sectors. It has been noted that Singaporeans are reluctant to take on such jobs,

---

17) Pang and Lim (1982)
18) *Channel NewsAsia*, "Government Eases Regulations on Hiring Foreign Workers", (28 Nov 2007); Hui, W T, "The Regional Economic Crisis and Singapore: Implications for Labour Migration", *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, Vol. 7, No. 2-3, (1998), pp. 187 – 217 Stahl, Charles W, "Singapore's foreign Workforce: Some Reflections on its Benefits and Costs: A Rejoinder", *International Migration Review*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (1984), pp. 160-163.
19) Sassen, Saskia, "Global cities and survival circuits", *Global woman: Maids, Nannies and Sex workers in the Global Economy*, edited by Ehrenreich, B and Hoschschild, A R (eds). (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2002)
20) Ibid.
21) Ibid.

even during times of economic recession, because these jobs are physically demanding and are perceived to be "less glamorous"[22]. As such, companies turn to migrants to fill in labour demands for these jobs. Unskilled workers perform a critical economic role in Singapore as their availability helps control wage inflation in sectors experiencing labour shortages thus keeping business costs and cost of living low and enhancing Singapore's economic competitiveness.[23]

Another group of unskilled migrants that has an enduring presence in Singapore are the live-in domestic workers who are predominantly from neighbouring countries such as Indonesia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, India and Myanmar[24]. It is estimated that there are 170,000 of such women in Singapore which is a sizeable increase from a modest estimated population of 40,000 in 1988, a decade after the Foreign Maid Scheme was first introduced in 1978[25]. Live-in domestic workers are relied on for a multitude of domestic responsibilities and care work within the home such as cleaning, cooking, child caring and looking after the needs of the old, sick and disabled. The increasing population of live-in migrant domestic workers is attributed to several inter-twining factors. At the heart of it is that more local women are now participating in the formal economy given increasing education, more employment opportunities in this sector and attractive wages. The inflexibility of the work culture in Singapore and long working hours have been identified as underlying reasons for couples to turn to full time paid domestic service[26]. The social acceptability of such a practice is also believed to have underscored continued dependency of live-in domestic workers in Singapore. An ingrained patriarchal mindset in Singapore that sees domestic work as inextricably intertwined with women's roles in society made it natural for families to purchase the labour of another woman when the women in the family are unavailable to perform domestic work. This is also supported by the fact that the middle and elite classes in Singapore have always had a long cultural tradition of relying on paid domestic service.[27]

---

22) Brenda Yeoh, "Bifurcated Labour: The Unequal Incorporation of Transmigrants in Singapore". *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geographe*, Vol. 97, No. 1(2006), pp. 26-37.
23) Pang Lim (1982)
24) Abdul Rahman, Noor, Yeoh, Brenda and Huang, Shirlena, "Dignity overdue: Transnational Domestic Workers in Singapore", *Asian Women as Transnational Domestic Workers*, edited by Shirlena Huang, Brenda Yeoh and Noor Abdul Rahman (Singapore: Marshall Cavendish, 2005).
25) *The Straits Times*, "At least 15 Indonesians seek embassy's help each month", (21 Feb 2008); Wong, Diana, "Foreign Women Domestic Workers in Singapore", *Asian Women in Migration*, edited by Battistella, G and Paganoni, A (Quezon City: Scalabrini Migration Centre, 1996)
26) Abdul Rahman, Yeoh, and Huang (2005)
27) Ibid.

Lastly, families seem to prefer live-in domestic workers to non-home-based options such as old age homes and childcare centres because of limitations such as the range and inflexibility of such facilities and their costs. Moreover, as the home is valorized as the site of care work and traditional values like filial piety are still valued as important in society, these non-home-based care options are perceived by some as inferior. Furthermore, the Singapore state sees very little interest in developing these facilities as it expects families to be the primary care-takers of dependent family members as this arrangement ease the pressure for the state from having to channel resources to fulfill such welfare needs.[28]

In summary, migrant workers of various skill levels have a place in Singapore's economy. They are relied on to ensure that Singapore's economy can remain dynamic both in responding to short term business cycles as well as in achieving long term developmental goals. Nevertheless, the ease of entrance into Singapore and the privileges migrant workers are entitled to are distinguished by the level of skills and talent that they can offer. In the next section, I will describe the graduated work pass system that consolidates the different place these migrants have in Singapore.

Managing migrant workers - the graduated work pass system

The graduated work pass system introduced by MOM in 1999 is the main mechanism through which the flow of migrant labour into Singapore is managed. It was amended in 2004 whereby the Q2 category was replaced by the S pass category. The amendment was made in response to a changing economic landscape which generates greater demand for middle level skilled workers. Within the system, a worker's eligibility for different types of work passes are assessed on criteria such as salary, educational qualifications, work experience and the nature of the job. In turn, work passes are differentiated and categorised based on monthly salary (Table 1).

Privileges are offered to P, Q and to S pass holders who earn a monthly income of S$2500. These privileges are a means to enhance Singapore's attractiveness as a destination for work, a move which the state deems as necessary in a time where there is intense competition from other economies for such talent. Furthermore, these pass holders are also seen as a resource that can be tapped on to address the long-term threat of a declining

---

28) Ibid.

population. This is done by welcoming these pass holders to apply for permanent residency and citizenship. In addition to privileges, other support measures were introduced to facilitate the flow of workers who possess the right skills into Singapore. P, Q and S pass holders who earn a minimum fixed monthly income of S$2,500 are also eligible to apply to rent residential properties under the Scheme for Housing of Foreign Talent (SHiFT) managed by Jurong Town Corporation (JTC). This scheme allows foreign talent to rent Housing Development Board (HDB) flats of various sizes that have been bought over by the JTC. The scheme was established in 1997 in order to enhance Singapore's attractiveness to foreign talent.[29]

On the other hand, controls are imposed for the hiring of middle-level skilled workers (S pass holders) and unskilled migrant workers (R pass holders or work permit holders). The main mechanisms of control are the compulsory monthly levy, company quotas and sectoral dependency ceiling. The objectives of imposing these controls are two-fold, firstly to ensure that local workers with similar skills and qualifications are not squeezed out of the job market and secondly, to prevent industries and companies from lacking initiative to restructure and move-up the value chain.[30] The cut-off salary of $1800 for the category of S pass holders was a calculated move to ensure that middle- level skilled migrant workers are relatively more expensive than similarly skilled local workers such that the marketability of the latter in the jobmarket will not be compromised[31]. Restrictions are imposed on R pass holders and lower income S pass holders from marrying in Singapore and bringing over their immediate family members. Such restrictions are imposed to avoid potential social burden given that these workers are paid very low salaries and are more than often housed in dormitory-style living quarters[32]. By manipulating the monthly levy, company quota and dependency ceiling, the state is also at liberty to tighten or relax the admission of S and R pass holders in accordance to the needs of the economy. This makes the workforce more robust in responding to business cycles. In addition, it provides the state with some power to manage the discontentment of its citizenry over job scarcity during periods of economic downturn when those who occupy the lower end jobs in the workforce are especially vulnerable to retrenchment.[33]

---

29) *Business Times*, 28 August 1997, 'JTC starts offering HDB housing to foreigners'.
30) Ng Eng Hen, "Committee of Supply: Responses by Minister for Manpower, Dr Ng Eng Hen to Members of Parliament on Attracting Foreign Talent to Work Pass System",
   http://www.mom.gov.sg/publish/momportal/en/press_room/mom_speeches/2004/20040319-attractingforeigntalenttoworkpasssystem.print.html?Status=1, (last accessed on 18 Feb 2008).
31) Ibid.
32) Ibid.
33) Stahl (1984); Hui (1998)

From the above, it is evident that in addition to serving economic needs, the graduated work pass system has been shaped to put in check potential negative social implications of an open-door policy for migrant workers. Despite this careful calibration by the state, there have been tensions between the state and the citizenry around the increasing material presence of migrant workers in Singapore. These tensions bring about new challenges to state-society relations with implications on nation-building as well as the nation's credibility in the eyes of the international community. It is these tensions that I will turn to in the following sections.

Table 1: Graduated work pass system

Type of Work Pass	Salary Level	Controls	Entitlements
P1	> S$7000	None	Can bring immediate family members Eligible to apply for a personalised Employment Pass (PEP) that is valid for a period of 5 years. The pass legitimizes a person to stay in Singapore for up to six months to look for work without a sponsorship of a particular employer. Eligible to apply for permanent residency and citizenship
P2	>S$3500 - <S$7000	None	Can bring immediate family members Eligible to apply for a PEP after two years and earn a fixed salary of at least S$30,000 Eligible to apply for permanent residency and citizenship
Q1	S$2500 or more	None	Can bring immediate family members Those have worked for five years onQ1 pass and earn a fixed salary of at least S$30,000 for the preceding year are eligible to apply for a PEP Eligible to apply for Permanent Residency and Citizenship

S	S$1800 - S$2500	Monthly levy of S$50 payable by employer Percentage quota at the company level	Those earning S$2,500 are entitled to bring their families with them. Eligible to apply for Permanent Residency and Citizenship
R (Work Permit)	< S$1800	Monthly levy payable by employer Source country restriction for all sectors Dependency ratio at sectoral level Man year entitlement system applies for the construction sector Not entitled to bring in immediate family members Not eligible to apply for permanent residency and citizenship Marriage Restriction Policy (MRP) applies. Application for marriage to Singapore citizens and permanent residents must be approved by MOM.	None

Source: Ministry of Manpower

Management of Discontentment: Who are the Real Losers and What is the Impact on Nation-building?

The inclusion of migrant workers in the geo-body of the nation brings about new pressures on state-society relations. Thompson and Zhang describe Singapore as a 'transnational municipality' whereby the state does not only see to the needs and interests of its citizenry but also strivesto ensure transnational openness towards capital and labour markets.[34] Indeed, balancing the interests of its national citizenry and maintaining transnational openness has

---

34) Thompson, Eric and Zhang, Juan, "Immigration and Reconfigured Ethnicity in a Transnational Municipality", paper presented at the Eight Southeast Asia Geographer's Association Conference, 28-30 November, Nanyang Institute of Education, Singapore, 2006.

become one of the major challenges facing the Singapore state as these two can at times be in conflict with each other. Despite the fact that Singapore has had an open-door policy for migrant workers for over four decades now and that one in three working persons in Singapore is a foreigner, the level of comfort of the citizenry towards the presence of migrant workers in Singapore is rather disconcerting. A *Sunday Times* survey carried out in 2007 involving 448 Singaporeans, show that an overwhelming majority (over 86 per cent) of those polled expressed fear that white-collared foreign professionals will take away jobs from the m.[35] Although, a much lesser proportion (64 per cent) of those polled expressed similar fears towards lower skilled migrant workers, the results show that there is an inherent mindset in society that perceives foreigners as a threat to their livelihoods. The survey result also indicated that a significant proportion (43 per cent) of the respondents feel that the state cares more for migrant workers than citizens[36].

The more visible material presence of migrant workers in Singapore landscapes has also brought about a different kind of uneasiness amongst the citizenry. Over the years, numerous reports have appeared in the media of unhappiness amongst HDB-dwelling citizens who find it unpleasant having to share their residential space with lower skilled migrant workers. These workers are either renting units in public housing estates or living in dormitories near housing estates and have resorted to colonizing the void-decks of public housing flats to gather after work hours or on Sundays[37]. Citizen dwellers are unhappy with the presence of these workers and have made allegations that they are given to anti-social behaviours such as public drunkenness, rowdiness, fights, and urinating in public threatening the security and disrupting the peace and harmony of HDB neighbourhoods. Time and again, Members of Parliament (MPs) have raised this issue in parliament signaling growing discontent amongst the citizenry over it[38].

The Singapore state employs discursive strategies and exercises political power in managing such discontent. Discursive strategies are targeted at educating Singaporeans of the benefit they gain from opening up to migrant workers. Significant national events have been used as

---

35) *The Straits Times*, "Plight of Foreign Workers on 'Special Passes'", (20 Jul 2007)
36) Ibid.
37) *The Straits Times*, "Foreign Workers Destroy Ambience of his HDB Block", (8 Jun 2006); *The Straits Times*, "Foreign Workers at Void Decks Leave Residents Seething", (25 Nov 2007); *The Straits Times*, "Barriers Clear Way for Residents at 5 Little India Blocks", (31 Jul 1997)
38) *The Straits Times*, "Why Tensions Over Foreign Workers Will Continue', (6 Mar 2008)

a platform to articulate and re-iterate the economic benefits of the open-door policy toward migrant workers. State officials construct the rhetoric of "survival" and "vulnerabilities" in appealing to Singaporeans to be understanding of its decision to pursue such a policy. For example, Goh Chok Tong, in his National Day Rally speech in 2001 when he was Prime Minister, said to Singaporeans that they should adopt a more accepting attitude towards the rising numbers of foreigners in the country as it is a "matter of life and death" for the nation to do so.[39] More recently, Lee Hsien Loong in his 2006 National Day Rally speech reminded Singaporeans that the practical constraints of the local workforce, such as continuing population decline and the out-migration of home-grown talents who (are encouraged to) seek work overseas, have necessitated the need to "welcome immigrants and embrace talent".[40] In 2001, under attack by opposition parliamentarians for continuing to court foreign talent despite growing levels of unemployment amidst the worst recession Singapore had ever faced, the state commissioned the Ministry of Trade and Industry to analyse the economic contribution of foreign talent to overall economic expansion.[41] Findings from the study were subsequently disseminated through the media in defense of the policy.

To placate concerns of HDB dwelling citizens of the "disturbances" caused by having unskilled migrant workers living in their midst, the state introduced a law in 2006 disallowing home owners from renting out their flats to foreign construction workers unless they are Malaysians.[42] More land parcels further away from existing new towns have also been released to be developed as dormitories to house these workers. A recent report announcing the building of 12,000 dormitory units near existing cemeteries is an example.[43] The state has resorted to consolidating the privilege of a Singapore citizenship by further differentiating the financial subsidies rendered to citizens, permanent residents and foreigners. Under the new policy, foreigners will not be entitled to any medical subsidies, while the subsidies allocated to Permanent Residents (PRs) have been reduced. Education fees have also been increased for foreigners and PRs with the former paying the highest fees for all levels of schooling.[44] These changes were introduced as they can help promote a dual objective. One is to reassure

---

39) *Asian Wall Street Journal*, 'Goh Urges Acceptance of Foreign Workers: Singapore Won't Use Reserves to Aid Economy', (20 Aug 2001)
40) *The Straits Times*, "Embrace Talent, Technology to Secure Singapore's Future: PM" (21 Aug 2006)
41) *Agence France-Presse*, "Foreign Workers Made Hefty Contribution to Singapore Economy: Study", (31 Oct 2001)
42) *The Straits Times*, "Foreign Construction Workers Now Can't Rent HDB Flats" (10 Nov 2006)
43) *The Straits Times*, "Foreign Workers to be Housed Next to Cemetery", (2 Mar 2008)
44) *Dow Jones Newswires*, "Singapore to Raise Education Fees for Foreigners", (19 Dec 2006)

citizens that they come first before foreign talent and the other is to encourage more foreigners to take up PR status or citizenship.[45]

Despite the above measures undertaken by the state, there are still ongoing tensions on the ground over the growing presence of migrant workers in Singapore. These issues are still aired in recent parliamentary debates signaling the lack of effectiveness of these measures[46]. The move to offer financial incentives which synonymously distinguishes the privilege of citizens over foreigners may placate, to a certain degree, feelings of discontent amongst its citizenry. However, I would argue that it does very little in terms of addressing a much more deep-seated issue of community integration which forms one of the building blocks of nation-building. As Singapore opens itself to migrant workers, the ethnic composition of its population becomes more diverse and complicated which could be a cause of celebration but could also pose challenges to community relations[47]. Given that an increasing proportion of the skilled migrant workers are taking up PR status and eventually citizenship, financial incentives do very little to address the real issues of polarization between these new members of the citizenry and Singapore-born citizens. Synonymously, housing policies directed at lowly skilled migrant workers promote spatial segregation along the lines of class. Although these workers do not have a permanent presence in the geo-body of the nation, I would argue that this may lead to the formation of ghettos, contributing to the ongoing tensions between lowly skilled migrant workers and the rest of Singapore society which may result in violent confrontations if there is no real effort to address the prejudicial mindset against these workers.

The presence of migrant workers in the geo-body of the nation has also brought about new pressures for the state in negotiating the louder voices of local and international civil society groups concerned over the treatment of lowly skilled migrant workers in Singapore, in particular the plight of migrant domestic workers. Over the years, many cases of physical and sexual abuse and blatant neglect of the welfare of these workers have been reported in the local and international media.[48] In 2005, Singapore's squeaky clean image was severely attacked by the *Jakarta Post*. The country was labeled a "killing field" in a report published

45) *The Straits Times*, "The Dollars and Sense of Citizenship", (20 Jan 2007)

46) *The Straits Times*, (6 Mar 2008)

47) Yeoh and Huang (2004)

48) *BBC News*, "Singapore Accused of Maid Neglect", (6 Dec 2005); *The Age*, "Hell's Kitchen for Singapore Maids", (24 Jul 2002); *The Straits Times*, "Man gets 18 Years, Cane for Causing Maid's Death", (22 Jul 2002); *The Straits Times*, "300 Maids Run Away Each Month" (31 May 1995)

in the newspaper on findings of a research conducted by the Institute of ECOSOC rights, a Jakarta-based research institute, on the conditions of Indonesian domestic workers in Singapore.[49] The research was prompted by the high incidence of deaths of Indonesian domestic workers in Singapore from 1999-2004 which average out to one death per month. Later in the same year, again the ugly side of Singapore was put under international spotlight when the *Human Rights Watch Group* released findings of its fact-finding mission and claimed that live-in migrant domestic workers in Singapore suffer routine abuse and exploitation at the hands of employers and employment agencies.[50]

Local civil society groups (with the support of local media) have also become bolder in exposing the vulnerabilities of lowly-skilled migrant workers in Singapore and in being critical of loopholes in existing policies which underscore these vulnerabilities. A recent example was the uproar over the plight of 50 male migrant workers who were largely jobless and had been living in deplorable conditions on the streets of Little India for many months while waiting for MOM to resolve with their employers outstanding matters such as salary and workmen's compensation claims.[51] Such exposures at both international and local levels may dent Singapore's credibility, a country that has always taken pride in its good governance. To a certain degree such scrutiny and pressures may also force the Singapore state to re-examine and rectify loopholes in policies and laws that underscore the vulnerabilities of lowly-skilled migrant workers. However, embarking on such a path means that the state risks going against the interests of the majority of the citizenry who are benefiting from the labour of these workers and incurring their ire. More importantly, doing so may also compromise the country's economic competitiveness. Unlike the efforts shown in managing other discontents highlighted in the earlier parts of this section, the Singapore state has thus far been very conservative when it comes to addressing the concerns of international and local civil society groups in granting better rights to lowly skilled migrant workers.

Conclusion

The chapter has examined the place of migrant workers in Singapore. It has described in detail the role that has been carved by the state for the different groups of migrant workers

---

49) *Jakarta Post*, "S'pore a "Killing Field"for RI Migrant Workers: Study", (16 May 2005)
50) *BBC News* (6 Dec 2005)
51) *The Straits Times* (20 Jul 2007)

and their contributions to Singapore's economy and society. By examining the graduated work pass system and other supporting policies governing the flow of migrant workers into Singapore, it highlights the special privileges given to migrants who can offer the right skills and talent important for Singapore's long-term developmental goals. Concurrently, work pass system also consolidates the transient place of lowly-skilled migrants in Singapore. The chapter highlights that the openness of Singapore to migrant workers has brought about various challenges to the state in managing its relationship with the citizenry. These challenges stem from discontentment over the perceived special place of foreign talent in Singapore and the increasing material presence of lowly skilled migrant workers in the country. At the same time, Singapore also finds itself under greater scrutiny from local civil society groups and the international community over its perceived neglect of the welfare of lowly skilled migrant workers in the country. Nevertheless the chapter has shown that in managing these challenges the state has prioritized firstly, long-term developmental goals and secondly, the interest of the majority of the citizenry. The main losers in such an approach are, not unexpectedly, the lowly skilled migrant workers. Moreover, such an approach may potentially sabotage the state's nation-building project as it does not serve to address issues of polarizations and divisions that arise from the more diverse nature of Singapore's human landscape as a result of globalization.

Session Ⅱ

Presentation 1

The Role of Cyberspace in Marriage Migration in Asia: Claiming Spaces for Intervention

Marion Bernadette G. Cabrera
(Programme Coordinator for Governance, Citizenship and Democracy
Programme, Philippines)

Presentation 2

Current Conditions of Filipino Women in Marriage Migration: Preliminary Review of Related Literature

Elmer Malibiran
(Research Fellow, The University of Philippines)

The Role of Cyberspace in Marriage Migration in Asia: Claiming Spaces for Intervention

Marion Bernadette G. Cabrera

(Programme Coordinator for Governance, Citizenship and Democracy
Programme, Philippines)

The Pre-Research Process as an Opportunity for Self-reflexivity

For the longest time I have only considered myself as a user of ICT, and I consider my knowledge about cyberspace very limited. I also had very strong opinions against developing relationships on-line, because I had a friend who had her heart broken too many times from on-line relationships.

The pre-research process on marriage-migration in Asia was not only a learning experience but it also leads me to a process of self reflexivity. This process of self-reflexivity, of questioning my bias against cyberspace and women and intercultural relationships was a way for me to re-visit what I believed to be one of the core values of feminism, and that is *openness*. In gathering related literature on this phenomenon, interviews with Filipino women who have experienced marrying foreign men and their various reasons for doing so, talking to women who are savvy users of ICTs, and also hearing from women who are more into on-line dating than going to bars to meet people, all of these conversations have challenged my biases. It opened my mind to various ways of how relationships are formed, and reasons and circumstances of marriage in different cultures.

Being part of this research team that looked into marriage migration in Asia as well as my new work environment has provided me with the venue to also understand, expand my knowledge, and provide me with the opportunity to appreciate cyberspace – understand how

it participates in facilitating "services" for the sex industry, an on the other hand it is also a site of where relationships are built and sustained especially in the context of migration, and well its relevance to social movement as a space for agency and intervention.

Defining Terms Used

There are two terms that need to be defined in this discussion paper, and these are *cyberspace and women's agency*. Webopedia offers a simple definition of c*yberspace* or the de facto synonym for the *internet*, and what we would later call the *World Wide Web* in the 1990s, especially within the academic circles and activist communities. It is also used a metaphor for describing the non-physical terrain created by computer systems. On-line systems, for example create cyberspace within which people can communicate with one another (via e-mail), do research or simply window shop. It is also described like physical space, because it does contain objects (files, mail messages, graphics etc.), and different modes of transportation and delivery. To explore cyberspace does not require any physical movement other than typing on the keyboard and, or moving a mouse. Users experience a virtual reality, where they are presented with visual, auditory and even tactile feedback that makes cyberspace feel very real.

Another important term that this paper should define is women's agency. In the book Women's Agency in Classical Economic Thought: Adam Smith, Harriet Taylor Mill, and J.S. Mill, by Ronald G. Bodkin (1999), women's agency is defined as the capacity of a female economic agent for rational decision making. However the use of women's agency in the pre-research phase of literature review and having sponsored two round table discussions on marriage migration has also expanded to include women's experiences of making the most of their situation, in the following ways:

- her ability to rise above the situations she is pressed with;
- participation in the community;
- assertion of identity;
- how she continues to survive and make changes for herself and her immediate environment and community;

Developing a discussion paper on women's agency and cyberspace has proven to be very challenging as cyberspace and the development of ICTs are predominantly perceived in terms

of its swift facilitation of the sex industry business, commodification and sexualisation of women and how it has facilitated the movement of women and children or its participation in human trafficking. Such are certainly real and long standing concerns that need to be addressed by women's movements, development agencies, and States.

Despite the challenges of presenting a holistic viewing of cyberspace, the subsequent topics of the discussion paper hopes to discuss the different perspectives of viewing cyberspace. It will also go into how virtual reality has been used to facilitate the services of the sex industry. In the same way we also need to look into how cyberspace can offer women a site where they can also be active agents. It will also be discussed as a space where social movements are built and strengthened.

Various Ways of Viewing Women and Cyberspace

1. Women as Victims: The Commodification of Women in Cyberspace

The impact of information technology on gender issues with specific focus on trafficking is seen as the most "sinister aspects of information technology, especially the internet", according to the: Gender, Information Technology, and Developing Countries publication of LearnLink a project of the Human Capacity Development Center of USAID. This publication identifies two main problems to ICT Development: 1) amount of sexually explicit material and 2) the ease of access to it are well known. "Sex" is identified as the most common search performed on any search engine on the internet. Recently the internet has become the most effective tool in the prostitution of women. The women are tricked or forced into performing sex acts for digital photos that appear on globally accessible web sites. The internet offers several ways to sell sex. The global sex syndicates are using the web to recruit women from all over the globe; all of these contribute to the "globalization of sex trade". I have also had conversations with religious sisters working with girl children in internet prostitution, and one of the experiences they encounter is that in the same way as the parents' play a role in bringing their children into prostitution, it is the same case in internet prostitution, it is still the parents bringing their children to be viewed naked through web cameras, convincing their children that it is okay to do this because "they are viewed but not touched".

Other articles also offer an account of how the Asian, Oriental woman is sexualised, this

article lists actual texts of the men's experience and views of Asian women in sex tours, or guides to adult travel. Texts mentioned may be too graphic to cite in this discussion paper. The availability of experiences shared on line, is only one of the several ways they continue to market sex and the "Asian, Oriental Woman". These are examples of how the sex industry has taken advantage of almost all ICT development to enhance the sex industry business, and even identifies it as one of the top five groups that have invested in state of the art computer equipment, and buy the fastest and most expensive phone lines that is able to transmit high resolution images, that makes the sex tour experience as real as possible. Available literature in this area points to the advancement in internet technology as contributing to the trafficking of women and children in both the physical and virtual form, and stresses this as the most sinister aspect of internet and ICTs.

2. Women as Savvy Users of the Internet and other ICTs

The participation of Isis International Manila to this collaborative project with ARENA on Marriage Migration in Asia is to look at the role of cyberspace in the marriage-migration process. Although this was not a pronounced area during the interviews done with women who are married or have attempted to marry foreign men, we felt that it was an area that could still be probed. Consultations have also lead us to conversations with women who urged us not only to look into women as subjects or commodities in cyberspace, but also to look at the experience of women who actively use the internet, and have the technological know-how to do so. A number of women in the Isis staff and circle are into website development, blogging, and even pod casting. The podcasts done by the Isis women during the ASEAN in December 2006, and Feminist during the ASEAN December 2006 Feminist Dialogues January 2007, served to share news reports in the form of audio files that may be downloaded in the website. More and more women are into blogging or web log, are website entries in chronological order commonly displayed in reverse chronological order. Blogs are often used as providing commentary on news or on a particular subject, or for others on-line diaries, in a sense it provides a venue to make public your most private and intimate thoughts. Although most blogs are primarily textual according to Wikipedia, there are also other forms of blogs that focus on art, photos, sketches, videos, music, and podcasting – and these form part of the wider network of social media.

In 1996, a book entitled: Wired_Women: Gender and New Realities in Cyberspace was published, it tried to document women's experiences and knowledge of net culture. It was a

space where women could express what they want which is: Community, Information, Connection, illuminating the many routes women are taking to stake claim in cyberspace. In this book the contributors were able to share on various topics and experiences, like: email courtship, gender attitudes, overcoming macho stereotypes, fine lines between freedom of speech and harassment, virtual sex, or reflections on whether gender is indeed meaningless on-line. Although the book is privileges the experience of western women it nevertheless shares ways on how women can also stake claim over cyberspace.

3. Cyberspace as both empowering and disempowering to Women

The Role of Cyberspace in the Marriage Migration Process

Similar to the viewing of Cyberspace and women's experience of it, there are also various ways of viewing the cyberspace and its role in the marriage migration process. As was shared by the Isis' research on the most effective tools used by women, there are certain premises and assumptions to our understanding of ICTs that also includes how cyberspace should be understood:

- Social divides or inequalities pre-exist the "digital divide" (e.g. inequities by class, gender, race, religion). Women's representation vis-a-vis the Western Male Gaze pre-dates the development of the internet as the new tool where these images are shared
- ICT-development is market-driven. It is also a business, as evidenced by how it has been used by the mail-order-bride industry to "improve" their business, "Exotic Love at your fingertips"; implies the speed to which women are made available to the prospective husbands
- The use & development of ICTs takes place in unique cultural, political, & economic contexts. It manifests how as a tool for communication and information it can operate both at a level of "exploitation of women", and also a tool able to mediate women's agency;
- The value of ICT is in its utility or non-utility. The discussion will be looking at ICTs on both sides, in how it facilitates human trafficking and at the same time offering areas to development organisations to share advocacies

Commodification of Women in Intermarriage Websites

The most popular discourse on cyberspace and marriage migration is that of commodification of women in intermarriage websites, and this is something the Philippine

Research team can attest to in our search for relevant articles. One of the articles reviewed for the last two-day write-shop activity was an article entitled: Exotic Love at your Fingertips: Intermarriage Websites, Gendered Representation, and the Transnational Migration of Filipino and Thai Women (Angeles and Sunanta, 1999). The authors in their analysis of six intermarriage websites have stressed how the new digital technologies have transformed the mail-order bride business and facilitated the commodification of women in the ThirdWorld. The speed to which cross border marriages are made realizable and imaginable, described in "at your fingertips" that also connotes a faster process in hyper speed. This article highlights the following significant points:

- Women who still go for inter-marriage websites see this as an opportunity for upward mobility

- Women's packaging as brides in these websites are still the same as there colorful catalogues. Women are still portrayed through the colonial male gaze and its gendered representations of women, for example Thai Women are represented as sex workers and Filipina women as helpers and wives

- Third world women are portrayed as the other, and in comparison to Western Women. They are portrayed in contrast to western women depicted as domineering, and nagging, while Asian women are presented as docile and subservient, traditional, family oriented, and feminine (as opposed to feminist).

- These brokered marriages between 1st world men and 3rd world women account for transnational migration

- Cyberspace has a thin line between the mediated world and the virtual real world. In the article exotic love at your fingertips the authors talks about intermarriage websites as blurring the distinction of the virtual (cyberspace access of men to women in intermarriage websites) vs. the real world, technology has made the experience and the access of these women very real (through visual and auditory effects). Another way the authors talk about this is that women advertised in this internet websites are women in flesh and blood. These advertisements of women lead them to actual marriages and migration.

- The representation and experience of violence. The authors talk about two levels of when violence, 1) is in how the women are represented and are made accessible to the men, 2) the women are also represented in ways that are opposite to how they are in real life. The men expect to get the package of the traditional wife, and they do not

appreciate the fact that these women are able to exercise and agency and assert themselves, that then leads to domestic violence.

The research team recognizes and is critical of how cyberspace has contributed to making the sex industry on the web more lucrative, and how it continues to facilitate the process of marriage migration. However, the team would like to pose other ways of viewing cyberspace, and raises a question: Can Cyberspace offer possible spaces for intervention? It seeks to pose this question as it explores cyberspace as a site for education, and space where information and resources on marriage migration can be shared among feminists, activists, advocates and the academe.

Cyberspace: As Space for Intervention

The short section on Impact of Information Technology on Gender Issues: Trafficking also ends on a positive note on the use of ICTs. In as much as it recognizes the role of cyberspace and ICTs in globalization of the sex trade, it also was the same space used by anti-trafficking activists in Brazilandelsewheretowarnthewomenaboutsexslavery. Several organizations operate a website that hosts electronic newsletters, internet chat rooms that combat trafficking in women and girls. Thus cyberspace and other ICTs are used by both profiteers form the sex industry and those who combat them.

In the Preface of Women@Internet, Wendy Harcourt summarizes the four feminist challenges in the virtual world as well as the context needed for such work to exist. Harcourt summarizes the feminist challenges in the web world (cyberspace): 1) women must not be left behind in the gap between those who have access to the new information technologies, and those that do not; 2) women should be active agents in ensuring that the potential of new information technologies are directed towards enhancing human well-being rather than strengthening existing power monopolies; 3) establishing partnerships with men in developing new concepts and cyberspace; 4) the possibilities that new forms of communication and expression should be navigated for our place-based knowledge and action.

Harcourt, also talks about the context for which these challenges can be met; this context values democracy and human rights, but most importantly it recognizes the freedom and braveness required by creativity, that facilitates the creation of new values and institutions.

In as much as cyberspace is host to numerous intermarriage websites, and the sex industry, it is also the space that we occupy to advertise our organisations and services, promote our advocacies and positions on social issues, organise protests and mass actions, to disseminate

information, for knowledge sharing, linking women and movements across the globe, and a space where social movement is built and strengthened.

List of References

Angeles, Leonora and Sirijit, Sunanta (2007). "'Exotic Love at Your Fingertips': Intermarriage Websites, Gendered Representations and the Transnational Migration of Filipino and Thai Women". Kasarinlan: Philippine Journal of Third World Studies 22(1):3-31.

Editors: Cherny, Lynn and Weise, Elizabeth Reba (1996), "Wired_Women: Gender and New Realities in Cyberspace". Seal Press, Seattle Washington

Hafkin, Nancy and Taggart, Nancy(AcademyforEducationalDevelopment)(2001): Gender, Information Technology, and Developing Countries: An Analytic Study, Office for Women in Development Bureau for Global Programs, Field Support and Research (USAID)

Editor: Harcourt, Wendy (1999). "Women@Internet (Creating New Cultures in Cyberspace)". Zed Books Ltd.

Current Conditions of Filipino Women in Marriage Migration: Preliminary Review of Related Literature

Elmer Malibiran

(Research Fellow, The University of Philippines)