

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Open Access



An organizational approach to the Philippine migration industry: recruiting, matching and tailoring migrant domestic workers

Julien Debonneville

Correspondence: julien.debonneville@unige.ch
Institute for Gender Studies,
University of Geneva, 40, bd du
Pont d'Arve, 1205 Geneva,
Switzerland

Abstract

This article analyses how organizations shape migration trajectories. More specifically, by looking at the Philippine migration industry, this ethnographic research highlights how organizations such as recruitment agencies, and governmental organizations, frame migration trajectories in terms of directionality, spatiality, but also by marketing migrants in the case of domestic workers. By looking at organization's rationalities, it shows how migration flows have become institutionalized and ruled by organizations based on economic and protection rationalities in order to remain competitive on the global domestic labor market. Moreover, it underlines the crucial role played by these organizations to ensure the matching between the employers and the employee. This article highlights thus how agencies proceed by mobilizing migrant sociodemographic data to market skills such as docility, hardworking and flexibility. In addition, this research describes in detail how age, religion, marital status become key information mobilized by agencies in order to market migrants, meet employers' expectations, and remain competitive on the global market of domestic labor. Finally, this article emphasizes the contribution of the organizational approach in the field of migration studies.

Keywords: Migration industry, Organizations, The Philippines, Recruitment agencies, Governmentality, Domestic labor

Introduction

While there has been extensive research focusing on migration at the macro-level or the micro-level, research on the meso-level and the role of various organizational actors still remains under-investigated. As Goss and Lindquist already stated in the 1990s, "international migration is best examined not as the result of individual motivations and structural determinations, although these must play a part in any explanation, but as the articulation of agents with particular interests and playing specific roles within an institutional environment, drawing knowledgeably upon a set of rules

in order to increase access to resources” (Goss and Lindquist 1995, p.345).¹ Since the beginning of 2000s, the “migration industry” has become one of the most prominent concepts used in migration studies to describe the various institutions involved in migration at the meso-level (Cranston et al. 2018). However, Lindquist et al., (Lindquist et al. 2012) pointed out in the early 2010s that the migration industry remained a “black box”. This article proposes to open this black box by focusing on the role and the function of the migration industry in shaping mobility patterns and mobile identities (Findlay et al. 2013). To do so, this article uses the Philippines as a case-study which is often described by international organizations (such as the International Labor Organization and the International Organization for Migration) as displaying “best practices” in terms of migration labor policies (Guevarra 2010; Rodriguez 2010). This article will unpack the organizations’ rationalities (Meyer and Rowan 1977) inherent to the Philippine migration industry and consider their impact on migrant trajectories and identities. More precisely, by analyzing the recruitment and deployment practices of organizational actors within the Philippine migration industry such as the Philippine State, recruitment agencies, and brokers, this article will highlight the various organizational rationalities that exist within the Philippine migration industry, and describe how they overlap, and how they shape migrant trajectories and identities. This overlap reveals the ambivalence of various actors, particularly brokers, whose role it is to protect and to generate profit simultaneously.

In order to describe how migrant trajectories and identities are shaped by organizations within this migration industry, this article will focus on one specific migrant population: Filipina migrant domestic workers. Migration trajectories of this population appear to be particularly interesting to highlight the role of meso-level actors, such as recruitment agencies and State actors. Migration of Filipina domestic workers is indeed the most important migration flows (*land-based*) from the Philippines - nearly 275,000 in 2016² - and one of the most controlled and regulated flows of the archipelago due to high vulnerability resulting from the working conditions. Thus, migrant Filipina domestic workers must attend a 2 to 6 months’ training course before leaving the Philippines in order to ‘become’ a professional migrant domestic worker. During this period, candidates must complete three mandatory training programs, as well as a medical test. These courses involve learning the language of the destination country, “culture familiarization”, “stress management”, safety and health tips, managing and sending money home, practical skills (cleaning, cooking, serving meals, etc.) and “correct attitude and behavior” (smiling, politeness, respect, hard work). During this time of recruitment and deployment, domestic workers are highly dependent on recruitment agencies. They rely on their agencies in terms of contract, paper work, but also accommodation, food, and technical and emotional support. This dependency therefore requires a closer investigation of the relationship between migrants and meso-level organizations during the migration process. This article will look at one of the key meso-level organizational actors of this industry, namely recruitment agencies, in order to see how different rationalities overlap, such as economic rationalities and rationalities of protection. By analyzing one of the major issues faced by recruitment agencies

¹This statement remains to a certain extent relevant nowadays.

²<http://www.poea.gov.ph/ofwstat/compendium/2015-2016%20OES%201.pdf>, consulted on November 15th 2019.

when deploying migrants, namely that of “backing out”,³ it will show how these agencies market, train and tailor migrants while making themselves available to migrants’ needs, not only because they aim to protect them, but also because they have to fulfill certain economic conditions. This article will therefore underline the importance of looking at meso-level organizations in order to understand how transnational labor migration is governed and shaped in the context of the global care economy.

The first section of this article will present a state of the art related to the migration industry in order to define the notion of migration industry as a meso-level actor. The second will consider the genealogy of this industry in order to describe how the labor brokering market in the Philippines is structured by a tension between economic and protection rationalities. The third section will describe how this industry shapes the directionality and the temporality of migration trajectories in the Philippines. The following section will focus on how the migration industry, through recruitment agencies shape mobile identities based on sociodemographic data. In conclusion, this article will emphasize the contribution of the organizational approach in the field of migration studies.

An ethnography of the migration industry

This research draws on a ten-month ethnography in the Philippines conducted between 2013 and 2014. Ethnographic observation was conducted in eight training centers (private and governmental), five recruitment agencies and several governmental institutions involved in migration such as the Overseas Worker Welfare Administration [OWWA], the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration [POEA] and the Department of Foreign Affairs. Training centers and recruitment agencies were chosen based on their history, networks, influence and legitimacy within the migration industry. During this ethnographic work, 140 semi-structured interviews were conducted with migrants (80), trainers (20), independent brokers (2), staff of recruitment agencies (20), and government employers (18).⁴

In order to understand how meso-level organizations are involved in the recruitment process, interviews were conducted with recruiters and head managers of recruitment agencies. They were selected on the basis of their professional experience in this migration industry, the history and the influence of their agency, but also on the basis of the destination countries targeted by their agency. One of the characteristics of the Philippine migration industry is the strong networks among actors involved in different institutions (family ties, friendships) and the multi-positioning of the actors. Actors have often been involved in different institutions: for example, recruiters who were formerly trainers, governmental employees who become agency managers. Snowball sampling therefore appeared to be an effective way to be introduced in different institutions. Thus, navigating through different networks was a crucial ethnographic resource to have access to different institutions within this migration industry.⁵ Access to these

³The “backing out” issue refers to when migrants ask the agencies after a couple of weeks/months abroad to be sent back to the Philippines because of “homesickness”, “hard work”, or “rude employers”.

⁴More detailed information on the data is available at the author upon reasonable request. For ethical reasons, this excludes full interviews and transcriptions.

⁵It’s however crucial to underline here that privileges relating to gender, class, nationality and race played a strong role in mediating access to networks, but more broadly to the fieldwork and to data gathering.

networks was often facilitated through my own professional or personal ties (e.g. colleagues from the University of the Philippines, friends).

Migration industry: a theoretical perspective on a meso-level actor

When the academic literature addresses issues related to the intensification of migration flows and the associated economic challenges, the concept of “migration industry” often appears. This concept, which emerged in the late 1990s, has been progressively mobilizing (Castles and Miller 2003; Garapich 2008; Hernández-León 2005; Lindquist 2010; Salt and Stein 1997) in order to shed light on an often-neglected aspect of this activity [migration]: the commercialization of human mobility (Hernández-León 2013). Until the early 2010s, the migration industry and its infrastructure – such as “institutions, networks and people that move migrants from one point to another” – remained something of a “black box” in the literature (Lindquist et al. 2012, p.9). Nevertheless, nearly a decade later, an increase in case-studies has led to the migration industry being considered as a specific field of research (Cranston et al. 2018). With the proliferation of research devoted to the migration industry and its actors, it has become difficult to consider a unique definition of the “migration industry”. While researchers have generally agreed on the general functions of this industry, which involve “managing, facilitating and controlling migration” (Cranston et al. 2018, p. 544), and also shaping mobility patterns and mobile identities (Cranston 2016), a tension usually remains regarding the actors involved - especially when it comes to non-profit social networks or State actors - and the legal/illegal dimension of the migration industry (Garapich 2008). Indeed, research on the migration industry has very often focused on mostly private actors (such as brokers) deploying illegal practices in order to manage migration and make profit (Hernández-León 2008; Nyberg-Sørensen and Gammeltoft-Hansen 2013).

Consequently, Hernández-León defined the migration industry as “the ensemble of entrepreneurs who, motivated by the pursuit of financial gain, provide a variety of services facilitating human mobility across international borders” (Hernández-León 2008, p.154). Following this idea of the commercialization of migration, scholars have frequently worked on the issue of “informal”/“illegal” migration and “human trafficking”, thus neglecting the “formal” and “legal” dimensions of this industry (Salt and Stein 1997). As McCollum and Findlay have underlined, the concept of migration industry, with some exceptions, “has usually been equated with systems designed to facilitate irregular and quasi-legal migration across international borders” (McCollum and Findlay 2018, p.559). However, these authors show that “in practice the migration industry is much more engaged in legal migration flows, [and] yet this dimension of the industry remains somewhat neglected” (McCollum and Findlay 2018, p.559). Salt and Stein furthermore underlined the highly institutionalized nature of this type of industry (Salt and Stein 1997, p.567). Consequently, the migration industry rather refers to a “set of specialized social actors and commercial institutions that profit directly not only from human mobility but also from effective adaptation into the new environment” (Garapich 2008, p.736).

Focusing on the Philippine migration industry – which is strongly regulated by the State, highly institutionalized and often depicted by international organizations as a “model” of good governance in migration (Rodriguez 2010) - thus appears to be relevant in order to challenge social representations of the migration industry (in academic

and political debate) that often reduce this industry to its informal dimensions and its smuggling and trafficking networks (Spaan and van Naerssen 2018, p.683). The migration industry should consequently not be reduced to an illegal business (Cranston et al. 2018), and must be understood as “a global business, encompassing professional private and public entities, but also intermediaries, with varying degrees of professionalism, emanating from social networks, be it friends, relatives or other community members” (Cranston et al. 2018, p.547). Likewise, it is important to mention that its structure is not fixed and is more malleable than may at first appear (Cranston et al. 2018; Schapendonk 2018), enabling certain forms of agency to be exercised by migrants, even though it remains a structure of power and a mode of a *governmentality* (Foucault 2001) that produces, normalizes, and controls “migrant subjects” (Awumbila et al. 2019; Deshingkar 2019; Guevarra 2010; Ray 2019; Rodriguez 2010). In this regard, Chang emphasizes how this ‘liberal governmentality’ is based on a victim’s narrative in order to legitimate paternalistic protection for migrants, especially for domestic workers (Chang 2018, p.701).

Following McCollum and Findlay (McCollum and Findlay 2018), as well as Garapich (2008), who included State actors and formal/legal dimensions into their studies of the migration industry, this paper will challenge the conventional analytical division between “State actors oriented towards the welfare of migrants” on the one hand, and “profit oriented brokers” on the other. It will highlight how the rationalities of different organizations overlap and are embedded within the migration industry. By doing so, this paper will underline the need to conceptualize migration at the meso-level (Findlay 1990; Goss and Lindquist 1995). Moreover, the migration industry operates on the “meso-structure, mediating between the micro-level social networks and the state level and international institutions shaping migration flows, through policy and political economy” (Cranston et al. 2018, p.546). By looking at the rationalities of organizations that make up part of the Philippine migration industry, and by analyzing the ways in which they shape mobility patterns and mobile identities, this article will highlight the need to consider the meso-level to analyze migration.

Migration industry in the Philippines: between economic profit and protecting migrants

When it comes to the “good governance”, “good practices” and “success stories” of migration industries, the Philippines are often highlighted. The archipelago has become a “model” for countries that are setting up a labor brokering system (Guevarra 2010; Parreñas 2001; Rodriguez 2010; Shinozaki 2015). As framed by Guevarra, the aim of the labor brokering system is about “labor securing job orders for Filipinos but also about disciplining and governing Filipinos’ conduct in order to stress their comparative advantage and meet the agencies’ financial bottom line” (Guevarra, 2010, p.154). Due to the so-called “success” of the country in exporting its population, the International Labor Organization has designated the POEA, “as a model for other labor-exporting countries” (Guevarra 2010, p.22). In order to understand this “success” of the Philippine migration industry, it is necessary to identify the different rationalities of this system and how they interact. The specificity of this industry can be found in its so-called “legal aspect”, the strong implication of the State, the high degree of formalization of the migratory flows, but also from the interconnection of economic logic and the idea

of reducing the migrant's vulnerability. These two approaches have contributed throughout the twentieth century to the institutionalization of the Philippine migration industry through the implementation of regulation, protection and liberalization practices of the migration flows. This institutionalization process results from historical movements: the American colonial period (1910–30); the neoliberal shift (1970–80); and the fight against vulnerability (1995–2005).

While migratory flows were mostly dominated by Philippines intellectual elites (*ilustrados*) during the Spanish colonial period (1565–1898), the US colonial period (1898–1946) witnessed a diversification and an increase of the migrations between the Philippines and its occupier. It is no longer students, but sailors, farm workers and medical staff, including nurses, who migrate to the land of the colonial occupier. The number of migrants to the United States increased until 1934, because of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907 that banned immigration from China and Japan to the United States. This ban would indirectly promote Philippine emigration to the United States for a short period of time and “use Filipino human resources in response to its labor shortages” (Guevarra 2010, p.27). The growing demand was justified by the idea of a so-called “docile” and “cheap” labor force coming from the Philippines and would lead to the formalization of these migration flows based on laws and institutionalized recruitment and training practices (Choy 2003; Rodriguez 2010). This period saw the emergence of training centers, travel and recruitment agencies, governmental and private organizations devoted to migration (Rodriguez 2010). US colonization represents in this sense the “backbone” of the contemporary Philippine migration industry (Rodriguez 2010, p.9), whether in the institutionalization of a mode of migration governance or in the nature of the migration flows.

During the 1970s and 1980s, the Philippine migration industry took on a new dimension regarding its institutionalization with the ratification of the new Philippine Labor Code of 1974 (see articles 17.1 and 17.2 of that Code). During this period, the country was ruled by the regime of President Marcos who, in order to solve the country's economic problems, continued to promote migration and a “docile and cheap” labor force in the context of martial law (1972–1981) (Tyner 2004, p.30). For President Marcos, as well as for his successors, labor force export became a political and economical tool for reducing unemployment and national debt, increasing human capital, but also as a way of balancing the country's balance of payments through mandatory remittances (Executive Order 857) (Rodriguez 2010; Tyner 2000). This migration industry became crucial for the Philippine State and led the country to pursue its institutionalization. As part of neoliberal reforms pushed by international organizations such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, the country developed discursive and organizational practices in order to become a migration industry (Guevarra 2010; Rodriguez 2010). Guevarra pointed out how “the labor-brokering practices of the state, working together with employment agencies, acts as a unique form of labor control and a mechanism of neoliberal capitalist discipline that informs the country's state-led transnationalism” (Guevarra 2010, p.7). Since this period, the income based on the remittances have slowly reached 10% of the GDP of the country and have become a major concern for the Philippine government who decided to extend its labor diplomacy to prospect new markets. The Philippine State, through its diplomatic corps, have

therefore contributed “to market research by identifying labor market trends and ultimately initiating discussions with host countries to help facilitate Philippine workers’ entry into specific labor markets” (Rodriguez 2010, p.24). Thus, the Philippine State has invested in, and has helped to develop and enhance a migration brokering system. During this period, economic rationality were the main driving forces of this industry and recruitment agencies were therefore very few regulated by the state. Meanwhile, the government started a rhetoric around the status of *bagong bayani* (modern-day hero) in order to increase the value of Overseas Filipino Workers. As a result, the Philippine migration has become highly valued, economically and socially since this period.

Finally, the years 1995–2005 represent the last key moment regarding the process of institutionalization of the Philippine migration industry. This period witnessed a paradigm shift in terms of migration governance. The Philippine State aimed to improve the protection of OFWs and to reduce the vulnerability linked to migration. In 1995, following the death of Flor Contemplacion, a Filipina woman hired as a domestic worker in Singapore and accused of murder, the government of the archipelago adopted Republic Act No. 8042, also known as the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995. As Guevarra mentioned, this case led to a paradigm change in the history of the Philippine migration industry: “Flor Contemplacion’s plight was a pivotal moment in Philippine labor history in humanizing the country’s labor export policy and punctuating its ethos of labor migration and dependence on workers’ remittances for national economic survival. It provided an important mobilization tool for NGOs and workers globally by putting the state in a precarious position to listen to what was becoming a deafening cry for protective measures against unscrupulous recruiters and abusive employers and for implementing social support services for migrant workers” (Guevarra 2010, p.379). This new law, which recognizes the significant contribution of remittances to the Philippine economy, aims to improve the protection and the well-being of OFWs, and to regulate the migration sector by redefining the role of the state (Guevarra 2010). It also highlights the specific vulnerability of migrant women and proposes the adoption of gender-sensitive protection criteria, particularly in the case of the migration of domestic workers. This law also implies better control and certification of recruitment agencies in order to fight human trafficking and illegal recruitment (part II, section II paragraph d.). In the 2000s, the Philippine government keep formalizing the conditions of the departure of migrants by emphasizing the importance of the pre-departure training. Training and skills acquisition become, according to the State, central tools to protect OFWs and reduce their vulnerabilities: “The State recognizes that the ultimate protection for all migrant workers is the possession of skills and familiarity with the country and language of their employers and host governments”.⁶ This period, driven by the idea of reducing the vulnerability of OFWs and maintaining the economic sustainability of the migration industry, thus represents a form of achievement in the process of institutionalization of migration through the formalization of recruiting, training and placement practices.

Thus, these three periods reveal the ambivalent attitude and impact of the Philippine state towards migration (Fresnoza-Flot 2012; Acacio 2008; Alipio 2019). Despite reported cases of violence against Filipino migrants, “the Philippine state continues to

⁶Governing Board Resolution No.8, Series of 2006.

promote labor migration while trying to preserve the national honor embodied in its women population – two preoccupations that may appear contradictory” (Fresnoza-Flot 2012, p.100). In this sense, these periods highlight how the formalization and institutionalization of the migration industry, led by the Philippine State, are embedded in particular modes of governance driven by an inherent tension between economic, political and protection rationalities in order to produce profit and reduce migrants’ vulnerability.

Following Xiang and Lindquist (2014), this diachronic process refers to an “infrastructural involution “and thus reveals “an increasing level of mobility due to the extension of market forces and the enhancement of state regulatory capacity “(Xiang and Lindquist 2014, p.125). In the case of the Philippines, this infrastructural involution, what the authors also refer to as a “double-edge sword”, affects - aside of the State - the role of private actors such as recruitment agencies and the way they govern migration and tailor migrants. More broadly, this “infrastructuralization” of the migration shows how “migration infrastructure becomes more expansive in scope, complicated in operation, and deeply penetrating in migrants’ lives” (Xiang and Lindquist 2018, p.761). In other words, the “migration infrastructure” (Xiang and Lindquist 2014) does not only affect how brokers manage the roles of protection and profit, but also how migrants’ identity is shaped.

While state governance in the Philippine migration industry has witnessed various and overlapping rationalities, the roles of brokers in this industry also show how these rationalities intersect after migrants are deployed overseas. As Lindquist et al. (2012) pointed out, brokers such as recruitment agencies have often been demonized and stereotyped as “streetwise thug [s] who work[...] outside the law, luring innocent migrants into exploitative situations” (Lindquist et al. 2012, p.14). Certain researchers, however, have highlighted the difficulty of distinguishing “help/facilitation” from “exploitation/exhortation” in labor brokering practices (Deshingkar 2019; Gammeltoft-Hansen and Nyberg-Sørensen 2013; Garapich 2008; Killias 2018; Lindquist et al. 2012; McCollum and Findlay 2018). As Lindquist et al. underline, “the enduring distinction between altruistic social networks and profit-oriented brokers is problematized. In fact, profit, trust and empathy run hand-in-hand in the relationships between brokers and migrants, and distinctions between them are often impossible to sustain in practice” (Lindquist et al. 2012, p.9).

Moreover, at the micro-level, migrants depicting brokers and their concern for their welfare “may perceive brokerage as a moral act where there is no conflict between profit-making and social trust” (Deshingkar 2019, p.2647). When analyzing the brokering practices of recruitment agencies at the empirical level, ethnographic observations show how brokers employ several strategies such as money loans; transfer of employers; psychological (encouragement, reassurance) and family support, in order to ensure the welfare of the workers and their own economic profit. As Killias has shown in her study of brokering practicing in Indonesia, “recruitment agents often frame their activities as recruiters in terms of helping poor, rural women become independent, by turning them into transnational breadwinners. [...] By framing their activities in the familiar jargon of national development, Indonesian recruitment agents seek to morally legitimise their businesses “(Killias 2018, p. 129).

In practical terms, brokers often remain available for migrants, giving them their private phone number and inviting them to call anytime. They also press the workers to contact them when they encounter common issues relating to the employer's behavior, their contract, homesickness, or food. Recruitment agencies mainly want to avoid workers "backing out", "breaking their contract" or "going to complain to POEA" (Fieldnotes, 2014). These kinds of decision could directly affect the reputation of the agency and generate new costs for the agencies as Germain (a 53-year-old recruiter for *International Placement Agency*, created in 1998 by former OFWs which has specialized in the deployment of workers in South-East Asia) and Robert (a 35-year-old recruiter for *Dong Ho Agency* which has specialized in the deployment of workers in South-East Asia since the early 1990s) underline here:⁷

"Number one problem is homesickness. [...] So, if there's a problem with the applicant, [...] I will just talk to her. Tell her, "If you're going back here, what will be your life here? You don't have work here. So instead of going back here in the Philippines, just stay positive as you can." And then, "If you don't like your employer, you can transfer to another, just ask the agency." As I know, if the DH [Domestic helper] is transferred to the Philippines, the employer will get another from us or get their money back. For me, it's a waste of money." (Germain, interview, April 2013)

"I encourage the workers and tell them: 'Please give more time. Study the character, the attitude of your employer. You know, if you go home, you have *utang* [debt]. So how do you pay that if you're going back to the home?' [...] Sometimes we also call the mother of the worker and let her talk to the worker. And, of course, before we give the microphone to the mother, we tell her first, 'Ma'am, don't just tell her 'Okay, go home.' Encourage her to stay and work in Hong Kong. Because if the worker is coming home that's a demerit to Dong Ho Agency.'" (Robert, interview, April 2013)

These interviews reveal how brokers' concerns for the welfare of the migrants, and for their own economic profit and reputation, go hand-in-hand. The ambivalent role of the brokers implies the simultaneous upholding of the reputation of the agency and protection of the workers. As Killias emphasizes in her study of the Indonesian migration industry, "since reputation is a crucial aspect of their business, brokers take care to protect it. As a result, they also seek to know what people say about overseas labour migration, and especially what return migrants relate about their experience abroad" (Killias 2018, p.101). In other words, "brokers who have caused harm to a recruited migrant in any way, even if indirectly, may encounter great difficulties in their further endeavors to recruit workers" (Killias 2018, p.100). In this sense, profit, protection and responsibility appear to be interdependent. The role of brokers should therefore not be considered as "traditional patron-client networks" (Rudnyckyj 2004).

The overlap of these economic and protection rationalities is strongly visible in the ambivalent narrative of agencies aiming to "support" and/or "convince" workers to stay abroad. The interview with Liliana (44 years old, former OFW, in charge of the briefing

⁷All names of person and organization are pseudonyms.

of migrant domestic workers at *International Placement Agency*) also reveals this ambivalence regarding the ways in which agencies should either support, encourage and convince workers of staying overseas, or help them to return to the Philippines:

“The homesickness problem is tolerable. During the briefing, I tell the workers: ‘If you text us: ‘Ma’am, the work is like this. It’s not easy’ and you start complaining about the work, I will not answer because, all works are very hard. It’s up to you to make it easier. It’s only a question of time management. [...] Another example. If the worker says: “Ma’am, I want to go home.” I tell her: ‘Please try to adjust yourself. Give a little time. It’s just homesickness’. [...] The only reason for backing out or reject the employer is related to the employer’s attitude like if they hurt them or don’t give them food. [...] But if the workers complain is related to the hard work and the employers are very good, it’s only homesickness. And we are successful on that. Because after the communication, they do not call you again. So, we have to see if they complain for good reason and if it is reasonable to help them” (Interview, 10 April 2013)

To conclude, it appears that economic profit and reputation go hand-in-hand. Moreover, the distinction between these concerns are impossible to sustain in practice. Studying legal recruitment agencies and the State in the Philippines invites therefore one to go beyond the duality between an “innocent and moral State and Non-Governmental Organizations oriented towards migrant welfare” and “immoral private recruitment agencies that are profit oriented”. It also implies that “broker is not a fixed identity and must be considered in relation to location, time and power” (Lindquist et al. 2012, p.8). More broadly, it shows that migration organizations’ rationalities often overlap and are embedded within the migration industry.

Migration industry: the making of directionality and temporality

The question of “decision-making” has always been central in the field of migration studies, underlining how the “choice” to migrate is rooted in the micro, meso and macro levels. The literature has widely highlighted the role of economic, political, and social factors at the micro, meso, and macro levels, even if the meso-level factors have often been reduced to the transnational social networks of migrants. However, as Findlay and McCollum (2013) have pointed out, the migration industry, in the shape of meso-level actors, works to structure labor migration patterns. More precisely, migration industry actors such as recruitment agencies and governmental agencies “manoeuvre and create space to capitalise on the changing market for migration services: providing information, documentation, travel and financial services needed for migration; they also offer strategies for circumventing formal administrative requirements and regulations, to make migration more rapid and efficient” (Spaan and van Naerssen 2018, p.683). Therefore, looking at meso-level actors allowed us to look at how the migration industry shapes mobility when it comes to “where, when and how to migrate”. Indeed, migration industry actors “equally take on a control function by constraining migration and determining temporality and directionality of migration if that fits their interests and profits” (Spaan and van Naerssen 2018, p.683). This section

will therefore focus on two major components shaped by the migration industry in the case of the Philippines: directionality and temporality.

Among the governmental organizations involved in the migration industry, the POEA is the one playing a dominant role within this labor brokering system. Established since 1982, this state administration is in charge of the regulation of the labor brokering practices, the coordination, the promotion and the monitoring of the migration between the Philippines and the destination countries. Its mission, (re) defined - by the 1995 Republic Act No. 8042 - is to “regulate private sector participation in the recruitment and overseas placement of workers by setting up a licensing and registration system. It shall also formulate and implement, in coordination with appropriate entities concerned, when necessity, a system for promoting and monitoring the overseas employment of Filipino workers taking into consideration their welfare and the domestic manpower requirements”.⁸ During the last decade, the mission of POEA has gradually been oriented to the welfare of the migrants and the regulation of the recruitment agencies (Fieldnotes, 2013). More broadly, the State, through POEA and OWWA has oriented its policies on the juridical regulation, the welfare of the migrants and bilateral agreements with the destination countries in order to prospect for new markets, meanwhile private agencies have been taking care of the recruitment, the matching and the placement of the workers (Acacio 2009, p.28). By prospecting new markets and signing bilateral agreement with destination countries in order to deploy OFWs, the labor diplomacy of the Philippine government affects migrants’ opportunities and structures the Philippine migration flows.⁹ If the government provide new market opportunities, recruitment agencies are the ones who will exploit these new markets as Acacio highlighted: “while public policy creates opportunities for exit and entry, migrant agencies provide the practical means for actualizing and exploiting those opportunities” (Acacio 2009, p.4). This outsourcing of labor exporting functions such as recruitment, training and placement to the private sector allows the Philippine state to pursue an efficient migration policy by focusing “its efforts on instituting the promotion of Filipino manpower” (Acacio 2008, p.113). From the Philippine state perspective, this reform is “making the recruitment of Filipino workers a more transparent pursuit”, but also “centralizing processing procedures in one government agency [POEA]” (Acacio 2008, p.113). This complex relationship between the Philippine state and private actors reveals how public and private actors work hand in hand within the migration industry.

The recruitment/placement agencies represent the other major actors within this industry. In September 2019, there were approximately 3700 agencies listed and licensed by POEA.¹⁰ For POEA, recruitment agencies refer “to any person, partnership or corporation engaged in the recruitment and placement of workers for a fee, which is charged, directly or indirectly, from the workers or employers or both”.¹¹ The roles and responsibilities of the agencies have evolved during recent decades. Today, the mission

⁸<http://www.poea.gov.ph/laws&rules/files/Revised%20POEA%20Rules%20And%20Regulations.pdf>, consulted on September 26th 2019.

⁹During the fieldwork, the Philippines government had signed bilateral agreements to deploy Filipina domestic workers with Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, Cyprus, Israel, Italy, and Canada.

¹⁰<http://www.poea.gov.ph/cgi-bin/agList.asp?mode=all>, consulted on October 4th 2019.

¹¹[http://www.poea.gov.ph/laws&rules/files/Labor%20Code%20of%20the%20Philippines%20Provisions%20on%20Overseas%20Employment\).html](http://www.poea.gov.ph/laws&rules/files/Labor%20Code%20of%20the%20Philippines%20Provisions%20on%20Overseas%20Employment).html), consulted on October 4th 2019.

of the agencies is “not just simple brokerage arrangements in domestic labor markets, but also work contracts, staff leasing arrangements as well as more complex services such as job training and skills upgrading across different regions around the world. Intermediary agencies take on many labels and specific forms including job-matching firms, headhunters, overseas employment agencies, staff leasing and temporary employment agencies to name a few “(Acacio 2009, pp.14–15). Among these agencies, some have specialized in the deployment of migrant domestic workers which represents a lucrative market according to the agency managers interviewed (Fieldnotes, 2013). The managers interviewed mentioned that they could receive between 300 and 4000 USD “per head” from their foreign partner (partner agency or employer in the destination countries).¹² The other income generating by the agencies is related to the various taxes received from the OFWs. While agencies have the right to charge placement fees (usually deducted from the first salaries) for most OFWs, POEA has, in the case of migrant domestic workers, prohibited these fees since the early 2000s as they constitute one of the most vulnerable migrant populations. Although placement fees are officially prohibited by POEA when it comes to domestic workers, whether as “salary deduction” (for instance when the salary of the first six months is directly given to the agency) or placement fees, some agencies have introduced what they called “processing fees”, justified by the different costs and expenses related to the migration (visa, plane tickets, training, pictures, materials, accommodation in Manila, food, etc.). The amount of these costs - directly charged to domestic workers - differs regarding the destination country, the region of origin of the migrants (province, urban), administrative costs (visa, employment contract, birth certificates, etc.), the number of intermediaries, the training and health costs, airline tickets, accommodation and food costs in Manila, the costs charged to employers and the marge of profit (Fieldnotes, 2013). Based on the data gathered during the fieldwork, it appears that, often, Filipina migrant domestic workers do not pay any fees to be deployed in the Middle East. For Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore, the amount is between 50,000 to 90,000 pesos (about 1200 to 2150 USD). And finally, for Cyprus, Israel, Italy and Canada, fees reach between 100,000 and 120,000 pesos (about 2300 to 2860 USD), or in some extreme cases up to 180,000 pesos (about 4300 USD). If these figures are examined carefully regarding the various practices within the migration industry in the Philippines, it still appears that the mobility represents a lucrative market for the agencies. At the same time, the fees have a direct impact on the migration flow. They structure the access to the migration and dissociate those who can “afford” or “invest” in the migration with those who cannot afford the fees. It becomes a major factor in the process of migrants’ “inclusion/exclusion”. Enrolment in the migration process and the “choice” of the destination countries is therefore directly affected by this bilateral agreement and the fees involved. In this sense, the migration industry is involved in the construction of the directionality.

This fee system reveals therefore a structural tension within this migration industry between generating income and protecting migrants. This tension has impacted migration flows themselves in particular when the government introduced new reforms in order to improve the protection of migrants as has increasingly been the case since the

¹²Although this data is very sensitive and often unrevealed publicly by recruitment agencies, the interviews conducted with various recruitment agency managers and OFWs have nevertheless made it possible to describe the money involved in this recruitment process.

2000s as Ana (56 years old, head manager from *Ahmed Agency* which specialized in the deployment of workers in the Middle-East since the early 1990's) explains here:

“Since way back 1993 we started this business with my husband. We were so happy and we enjoyed doing this job, so we decided to apply for our own agency. Way back 1993 to present, so it has been 20 years, so far, we're doing well even if it's more difficult now because POEA changed the rules and regulations. We're facing a lot of problems, with the government, the employer and the workers. So now it's a matter of patience.” (Interview, April 2013)

These new regulations directly affect the migration flows, especially regarding the temporality of the migration process resulting in particular from the OWWA governmental training imposed by POEA since 2006, as Ana underlined:

“We just follow the rules even though we're facing a lot of problems on that. I don't know what it will be the next time, what will be the plan of OWWA because I'm sure they are also facing a lot of problems. First, giving the schedule to us. Once we applied for the schedule, we will get the schedule after two, three, or even sometimes four weeks. [...] it's too much for us. [...] The problem not only for us, for all, it's the contracts with the employers. The contract implies deploying the workers in less than 90 days. Once the applicant applied to us and get the medical report, we are sure they are fit to work, this is the time we'll request the contract from the Philippine embassy in Riyadh for instance. After we got it, we receive the contract from the Philippine embassy, this is the time we will request the schedule from OWWA. So, between the Philippine embassy to our office in Riyadh, it takes us three weeks to release the contract. It's very tight! The preparation of the documentation is too long. Our employer doesn't understand what is going on. Once we get the contract, we will request the schedule from OWWA. So OWWA will take three to four weeks. So, waiting for four weeks, it's difficult to explain to the worker also. Even though we already have the contract, the workers could easily say: 'I don't want to go anymore because I've been waiting for so long.' OWWA doesn't not understand that. And sometimes the employer can cancel the visa because they might think we're lying.” (Interview, April 2013)

Thus, the formalization and institutionalization of the labor brokering system directly affect how, where and when the migrants are deployed. The temporality of the deployment appears to be a major issue because agencies have to deal with the government expectations, the placement agencies overseas, the employers and, to a certain extent, the migrants. Ana's experience also allowed us to understand how this labor brokering system implies local and transnational governance at the same time. Agencies have to face overseas placement agencies and employers' expectations, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, to deal with local challenges such as scheduling training and bureaucratic norms. These requirements structure therefore the timeline of the deployment process as Lilly (40 years old), head manager of the *International Placement Agency*), also expressed:

“For UAE [United Arab Emirates], it’s very easy because we don’t need to stamp visas like the Saudi embassy. In UAE, in two weeks’ time, we can deploy the worker. So, once the worker is selected, we have to prepare everything. Like the medical test, the training, the NC II Certificate from the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority and the OWWA seminar. The OWWA seminar is the major problem because it delays the deployment. Because at OWWA, they have to accommodate all the migrants from all the agencies. We don’t have any choice, we have to follow their schedule. If they give you a schedule in one week, two, three or four weeks ahead, this is your problem. You need to deploy your worker one and a half months after.” (Interview, April 2013)

Looking at how this labor brokering system is ruled by the Philippine government, allows us to understand how meso-level actors such as governmental organizations and recruitment agencies structure migration trajectories, in particular regarding the “choice” of destination countries (resulting from bilateral agreement and fees) and the temporality of the migration (resulting from the regulation of deployment process).

Migration industry: from marketing labor to tailoring migrants

While the migration industry and its actors – in particular recruitment agencies – are well known for shaping mobility patterns, they are also known for constructing migrant identities and shaping ‘ideal’ representations of mobile workers often based on gendered and racialized stereotypes related to bodies, attitudes and subjective attributes, as has been widely highlighted in the literature (Cranston et al. 2018; Deshingkar 2019; Findlay et al. 2013; Findlay and McCollum 2013; Loveband 2004; Shubin 2014;). Researchers have indeed shown how “recruitment and employment practices are influenced by normative understandings of what is understood to be the ‘ideal’ worker” (Findlay et al. 2013, p.147), especially when it comes to shaping workers in terms of gender, class and racial representations (Barber 2008; Ray 2019; Rodriguez 2010). In this sense, the stereotyping of migrant domestic workers resulting from labor brokering practices of recruitment agencies has been widely studied (see Awumbila et al. 2019; Bakan and Stasiulis 1995; Constable 1997; Guevarra 2010; Rodriguez and Schwenken 2013) pointing out how attitudes such as being docile, hardworking, loyal and respectful are framed as essential for this professional activity (Debonneville 2014; Tyner 2004). In this regard, Barber’s studies on global service work concludes that these state policies “enable capital to be mobilized in migration to serve the interests of sending and receiving countries [...] [and] produce deeper class cleavages between migrants” (Barber 2008, p.1268).

In order to illustrate how recruitment agencies shape migrant identities through brokering practices, this section will describe, how this image of the “Filipina domestic worker” is shaped by these organizations as professional, hardworking and docile based on specific sociodemographic data such as age, religion, marital status.¹³

¹³Other sociodemographic data (such as the region of origin), but also skills and attitude (politeness, hardworking, etc.), physical characteristics (smile, hairs, skin color, beauty spot, etc.) are often used in order to categorize and classify the workers (see Debonneville 2019). This article focused on those three because they are less studied in the literature and at the meantime, they emphasize the role of meso-social actors.

In order to remain competitive in the global market of domestic labor, recruitment agencies in the Philippines mobilized data - resignified as skills - in order to frame a certain idea of “the good Filipina domestic worker” and promote this workforce. By doing so, agencies tend to adjust to the employer’s expectations in order to satisfy them and to ensure their profit. Expectations of the employers are mobilized by agencies in order to advertise, market, but also select and recruit workers. Based on the employer expectations, the agencies recruit specific profiles and then advertise these profiles in order to remain competitive in this international labor market and target new clients. In practical terms, employers request certain profiles such as being hardworking, docile and flexible and agencies will therefore look for specific profiles and justified these skills and attitudes based on sociodemographic data as Ana from *Ahmed Agency* explains here:

“The employers can request from us a specific profile. They can tell us, ‘I need this qualification. I need a hardworking DH [Domestic helper]. I want to make sure my worker adjusts properly’. So that’s it. Then I will just tell them: ‘Okay, I look for this’. Then, I give them the name of the applicant and her qualifications.”
(Interview, April 2013)

Socio-demographic data therefore becomes central in the recruitment process and the match making between the employers and the employee because it objectifies these skills. This selection process has, in addition, a performative effect. By meeting employers’ expectations (very often the same), the agencies (re) produce a certain narrative on what is supposed to be “Filipina domestic workers”. When agencies pleased their clients, they participate, at the same time, in shaping a certain image of what is supposed to be “Filipina domestic workers”. In this sense, they shape migration flows by targeting and selecting and categorizing migrant workers.

Among this sociodemographic data, age appears to be a dominant criterion in this process of marketing Filipina domestic workers. Agencies use it to express certain attitudes such as docility and hardworking. A “young” worker (often below 30 years old) is perceived as being in good shape and ready to sacrifice. She is also pictured as a motivated, hardworking and docile worker, who wants to work for a long period of time as Robert (35-year-old), recruiter for *Dong Ho Agency* (specialized in the deployment of workers in South-East Asia since the early 1990’s) explains here:

“We are concentrating on the working experience and the age because 38 years old and above, not all employers want them. The employers want workers younger than 38 years old. Most probably around 28 to 30, because the employers usually say: ‘If you are already 40 years old and I won’t be able to be hired again for another contract ... and when you finish the contract for two years, how old you now? Forty-two years old. Then who will hire you again up to the age of 44.’ So, the employers want young workers because they can hire them for 10 years.”
(Interview, April 2013)

The perception of the age by employers represents in this case a central criterion in the recruitment process. “Young workers” means docile workers for the employers that

will adjust easily and won't complain. They will supposedly follow the expectations of the employers and the way the employers want the job to be done unlike "older workers" with several years of professional experiences who are perceived as less "obedient", "less motivated" and "stubborn" as Germain (53), recruiter for *International Placement Agency*, underlines:

"Sometimes, it's hard for the 40+ years old ... the employer thinks if the worker is too old, they can't work. The employers told me they just bring trouble or, they are not very good for the work. Although 23 years old is the valid age, sometimes, this age is the one who makes problem. Based on my experience, the young ones are the one the employers want to have. Because they know that the applicant is young, she can do all their jobs, she is a first timer, she doesn't have any complaint. So, they are choosing the young rather than the old one." (Interview, April 2013)

However, a "too young" worker – often called "first timer" - could be an issue and means a lack of professional experience and therefore "more work" for the employers who must teach them "everything" (Filednote, 2013) as Robert mentions here: "The employers could be very picky regarding the working experience and the educational background. Employers really wanted at least two years' experience as a household worker or a nanny taking care of children "(Interview, April 2013). Based on the expectations of the employers, the agencies will therefore adjust their recruitment practices in order to satisfy their demands and make sure they find a worker "young enough" to work for several years with the same employer and who will be compliant. We understand here that when employers (and agencies) want to recruit a hardworking and docile worker, they often focus on the age in order to ensure that the worker possesses the "proper" attitude. At the same time, agencies tend to recruit migrant workers below 30–35 five years old, in order to emphasize and promote this image of the supposedly "docile and hardworking Filipina domestic worker".

The challenge thus remains in the balance between "lack of experience" and "too much experience" of the workers, in the words between an employee "too young" or "too old". The usual expectation of the agencies and employers is to recruit a "young worker" with 2 to 4 years' experience, meaning that she will be motivated, hardworking and docile, but she won't need to be retrained and at the same time she won't "back out" because of homesickness after a couple of weeks abroad as employers and agencies mainly fear (Fieldnotes, 2013). Based on the expectations of the employers regarding work experience, the agencies will therefore adjust their recruitment practices and ensure a proper matching between the expectation of the employers and the profile of the employee, as Germain (recruiter for *International Placement Agency*) underlines:

"In that situation, the employer will ask to his agency, 'I want domestic helpers who know Arabic culture – Arabic food, Arabic language.' Or must have experienced here, in Arabic countries. And then the placement agency will tell me: 'I need a DH that has experience in Arab countries and knows how to do the job here.' Then I'll search for this DH and give it to my client." (Interview, April 2013)

Germain highlights here how recruitment practices are framed into the idea of a “good matching” based on a certain idea of age and work experience in order to satisfy the employer. Age, as a social construct, reveals here how social uses of sociodemographic data by organizations structure recruitment practices. Moreover, by recruiting workers based on the age and experience profile defined by the employers, recruitment agencies shape migration flows.

Another socio-demographic data relevant during the recruitment and matching process is religion. Certain employers tend to recruit their employee based on their religious affiliation. Agencies mentioned during the fieldwork that employers from the Middle East often request Muslim employees, assuming they will be fluent in Arabic, adjust easily to the so-called “Arabic culture”, and also for spatial mobility reasons as explained here by Ana: “When the employers are very religious, they prefer to get a Muslim one, because they are Muslim also and like that they can talk in Arabic. So, they can mingle or talk to them easily. But also, because Saudi people are very religious. They are going to the Mecca or Medina where Christians are not allowed. So, on that issue, they rather prefer Muslim applicants than Christian. So, they can take them anywhere they want to go” (Interview, April 2013). Therefore, some recruitment agencies will localize their recruitment in Muslim regions in order to enroll Muslim workers that will be sent afterwards to the Middle East. Satisfying the employer implies therefore to adjust recruitment practices and target specific regions and therefore produce specific migration flows by organizations such as recruitment agencies.

Finally, I would like to highlight one last socio-demographic data frequently selected by agencies to express certain professional skills and therefore please employers: the marital and the parenthood status of the workers. From the employer perspective, recruiting a domestic worker married and with children rimes with skilled and experienced workers. Employers request therefore domestic workers “married with children”, as Robert explains:

“They also want married woman. Many Filipinas nowadays are separated, but we declared them as married not separated. Because employers say if you are a married woman, you have experience in taking care of children and baby, and handle all household chores as a married woman. Once there was a migrant who was single but we put married. Sorry. It was only for her to be selected by the employer. This employer wanted that worker so we put married instead of single. Because if we would have put single, the employer wouldn’t have selected her.” (Interview, April 2013)

Marital and parenthood status take a specific meaning in this context of recruitment. It turns workers into skilled workers. Having children upgrades the skills of domestic workers. In addition, this gendered expectation of the employers sheds a light on how gender stereotypes are produced and reproduced by organizational actors during the transitional recruitment process. By doing so, the care economy becomes institutionalized as a gendered labor brokering system.

In brief, we understand that sociodemographic data is not a “neutral” or “objective” characteristic of this system, but rather a social construct that defines, categorizes and hierarchizes workers. Looking at the matching process between the expectation of the

employer and the employee highlights the key role played by organizations by selecting, recruiting, but also marketing the labor force. Sociodemographic profiling appears to be crucial for selecting, normalizing and governing migrants. This process of selection highlights agency practices deployed in order to recruit, normalize and “export” workers overseas, with the aim to please the employers and ensure economical profit for the agencies.

Conclusion

This paper has revealed the key role played by organizational actors in the migration process. It focused on the ways in which organizational actors within the migration industry, such as recruitment agencies and governmental organizations, shape migrant trajectories and identities. More precisely, by looking at the Philippine migration industry, this article has highlighted how recruitment agencies shape migration flows in terms of temporality, directionality, but also by marketing migrants in the case of domestic workers. By comparing different organizations involved in the Philippine migration industry, it has shown how migration flows have become institutionalized and ruled by organizations based on economic and protection rationalities in order to remain competitive in the global domestic labor market. In this regard, this article points out the necessity to go beyond the usual distinction between “welfare oriented State organizations” and “profit oriented agencies” and to consider how these rationalities overlaps depending on the historical context and the migration context. Thus, it shows how the economic logic of profit and the political moral logic of protection, which may appear contradiction in terms at first sight, go indeed hand-in-hand and the distinction between them is impossible to maintain in practice. Moreover, this article highlights how recruitment agencies remain a central organization in the making of migration by ensuring a “proper” matching between employers and employees. This matching process aims to respond to the employers’ expectations, and to a less extent, the migrants’ expectations. In doing so, agencies proceed to a “translation” by marketing sociodemographic data and skills expected by employers such as docility, hardworking and flexibility. In this case, age, religion and marital status become key information mobilized by these agencies in order to market migrants, meet employers’ expectations, and remain competitive in the global market of domestic labor.

Organizational perspectives in the field of migration studies allowed us to look beyond individual perspectives which are mostly focused on the motivations and aspirations to migrate, but avoid at the same time the pitfall of a macro-structural approach that tends to hide the social practices central in the making of migration. Thus, an organizational perspective helps us to go beyond these limits and give us tools to understand migration as a process ruled by different organizational actors interconnected at a transnational scale. This paper therefore contributes to the literature by showing how organizations’ rationalities intersect and shape migration practices and migrants’ representations.

Abbreviations

OFWs: Overseas Filipino workers; OWWA: Overseas Worker Welfare Administration; POEA: Philippine Overseas Employment Administration

Acknowledgements

The author would like to express his very great appreciation to the guest editors of the volume Christine Lang, Kyoko Shinozaki and Andreas Pott for their valuable and constructive comments regarding this paper.

Author's contributions

The author(s) read and approved the final manuscript.

Funding

Not applicable.

Availability of data and materials

More detailed information on the data is available at the author upon reasonable request. For ethical reasons, this excludes full interviews and transcriptions.

Competing interests

The author declares no competing interests.

Received: 16 June 2020 Accepted: 10 December 2020

Published online: 29 March 2021

References

- Acacio, K. (2008). Managing labor migration: Philippine state policy and international migration flows, 1969–2000. *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, 17(2), 103–132. <https://doi.org/10.1177/011719680801700201>.
- Acacio, K. (2009). *Recruitment agencies in nurse migration: Constructing vital pipelines through profitable business* (Working paper). Berkeley: Center for Culture, Organizations and Politics.
- Alipio, C. (2019). Lives lived in "someone else's hands": Precarity and profit-making of migrants and left-behind children in the Philippines. *TRANS -Regional and -National Studies of Southeast Asia*, 7(1), 135–158. <https://doi.org/10.1017/trn.2019.6>.
- Awumbila, M., Deshingkar, P., Kandilige, L., Teye, J., & Setrana, M. (2019). Please, thank you and sorry – Brokering migration and constructing identities for domestic work in Ghana. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 45(14), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2018.1528097>.
- Bakan, A., & Stasiulis, D. (1995). Making the match: Domestic placement agencies and the racialization of Women's household work. *Signs*, 20(2), 303–335. <https://doi.org/10.1086/494976>.
- Barber, P. (2008). The ideal immigrant? Gendered class subjects in Philippine–Canada migration. *Third World Quarterly*, 29(7), 1265–1285. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436590802386385>.
- Castles, S., & Miller, M. (2003). *The age of migration*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Chang, A. (2018). Producing the self-regulating subject: Liberal protection in Indonesia's migration infrastructure. *Pacific Affairs*, 91(4), 695–716. <https://doi.org/10.5509/2018914695>.
- Choy, C. C. (2003). *Empire of care: Nursing and migration in Filipino American history*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Constable, N. (1997). *Maid to Order in Hong Kong: Stories of Filipino Workers*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Cranston, S. (2016). Producing migrant encounter: Learning to be a British expatriate in Singapore through the global mobility industry. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 34(4), 655–671. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263775816630311>.
- Cranston, S., Schapendonk, J., & Spaan, E. (2018). New directions in exploring the migration industries: Introduction to special issue. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 44(4), 543–557. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2017.1315504>.
- Debonneville, J. (2014). Les écoles du care aux Philippines. Le devenir travailleuse domestique au prisme de l'Altérité [Schooling for Care The "Othering" of Filipina Domestic Workers]. *Revue Tiers Monde [Third World Journal]*, 217, 61–78. <https://doi.org/10.3917/rtm.217.0061>.
- Debonneville, J. (2019). "Always wear a smile on your face!" La mise au travail des corps dans les formations d'employée de maison en partance des Philippines ["Always wear a smile on your face!" Embodying domestic labor in Philippine migration training centers]. *Journal des Anthropologues [Journal of Anthropologists]*, 158-159, 51–77. <https://doi.org/10.4000/jda.8606>.
- Deshingkar, P. (2019). The making and unmaking of precarious, ideal subjects – Migration brokerage in the global south. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 45(14), 2638–2654. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2018.1528094>.
- Findlay, A. (1990). A migration channels approach to the study of high level manpower movements: A theoretical perspective. *International Migration*, 28(1), 15–23. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2435.1990.tb00132.x>.
- Findlay, A., & McCollum, D. (2013). Recruitment and employment regimes: Migrant labour channels in the UK's rural agribusiness sector, from accession to recession. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 30, 10–19. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2012.11.006>.
- Findlay, A., McCollum, D., Shubinm, S., Apsite, E., & Krisjane, Z. (2013). The role of recruitment agencies in imagining and producing the 'good' migrant. *Social and Cultural Geography*, 14(3), 145–167. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2012.737008>.
- Foucault, M. (2001). *Dits et Écrits [Commentary and Writing], Tome 2: 1976 - 1988*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Fresnoza-Flot, A. (2012). Security in labor migration in the Philippines: National honor, family solidarity, and migrants' protection. In B. T. C. Guan (Ed.), *Human security: Securing East Asia's future* (pp. 97–115). London & New York: Springer.
- Gammeltoft-Hansen, T., & Nyberg-Sørensen, N. (2013). *The migration industry and the commercialization of international migration*. London: Routledge.
- Garapich, M. P. (2008). The migration industry and civil society: Polish immigrants in the United Kingdom before and after EU enlargement. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 34(5), 735–752. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13691830802105970>.
- Goss, J., & Lindquist, B. (1995). Conceptualizing international labor migration: A structuration perspective. *The International Migration Review*, 29(2), 317–351. <https://doi.org/10.1177/019791839502900201>.
- Guevarra, A. (2010). *Marketing dreams, manufacturing heroes. The transnational labor brokering of Filipino workers*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

- Hernández-León, R. (2005). *The migration industry in the Mexico–U.S. migratory system* (Online working paper series). Los Angeles: UCLA: California Center of Population Research.
- Hernández-León, R. (2008). *The migration of urban Mexicans to the United States*. Jackson: University of California Press.
- Hernández-León, R. (2013). Conceptualising the migration industry. In T. Gammeltoft-Hansen, & N. Nyberg-Sørensen (Eds.), *The migration industry and the commercialisation of international migration* (pp. 24–44). London: Routledge.
- Killias, O. (2018). *Follow the maid: Domestic worker migration in and from Indonesia*. Copenhagen: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies.
- Lindquist, J. (2010). Labor recruitment, circuits of capital and gendered mobility: Reconceptualising the Indonesian migration industry. *Pacific Affairs*, 83(1), 115–132. <https://doi.org/10.5509/2010831115>.
- Lindquist, J., Xing, B., & Yeoh, B. (2012). Introduction: Opening the black box of migration. *Asia Pacific Affairs*, 85(1), 7–19.
- Loveband, A. (2004). Positioning the product: Indonesian migrant women Workers in Taiwan. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 34(3), 336–348. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00472330480000141>.
- McCollum, D., & Findlay, A. (2018). Oiling the wheels? Flexible labor markets and the migration industry. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 44(4), 558–574. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2017.1315505>.
- Meyer, J. W., & Rowan, B. (1977). Institutional organizations: Formal structure as myth and ceremony. *American Journal of Sociology*, 83, 340–363.
- Nyberg-Sørensen, N., & Gammeltoft-Hansen, T. (2013). Introduction. In T. Gammeltoft-Hansen, & N. Nyberg-Sørensen (Eds.), *The migration industry and the commercialization of international migration* (pp. 1–24). London: Routledge.
- Parreñas, R. S. (2001). *Servants of globalization: Women, migration and domestic work*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Ray, V. (2019). A theory of racialized organizations. *American Sociological Review*, 84(1), 26–53. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122418822335>.
- Rodriguez, R. M. (2010). *Migrants for export — How the Philippine state brokers labor to the world*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Rodriguez, R. M., & Schwenken, H. (2013). Becoming a migrant at home: Subjectivation processes in migrant-sending countries prior to departure. *Population, Space and Place*, 19(4), 375–388. <https://doi.org/10.1002/psp.1779>.
- Rudnycky, D. (2004). Technologies of servitude: Governmentality and Indonesian transnational labor migration. *Anthropological Quarterly*, 77(3), 407–434.
- Salt, J., & Stein, J. (1997). Migration as a business: The case of trafficking. *International Migration*, 35, 467–494. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2435.00023>.
- Schapendonk, J. (2018). Navigating the migration industry: Migrants moving through an African-European web of facilitation/control. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 4(4), 663–679. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2017.1315522>.
- Shinozaki, K. (2015). *Migrant citizenship from below: Family, domestic work and social activism in irregular migration*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Shubin, S. (2014). Imaginaries of the ideal migrant worker: A Lacanian interpretation. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 32, 466–483. <https://doi.org/10.1068/d22212>.
- Spaan, E., & Van Naerssen, T. (2018). Migration decision-making and migration industry in the Indonesia-Malaysia corridor. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 44(4), 680–695. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2017.1315523>.
- Tyner, J. A. (2000). Global cities and circuits of global labor: The case of Manila, Philippines. *The Professional Geographer*, 52(1), 61–74. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0033-0124.00205>.
- Tyner, J. A. (2004). *Made in the Philippines. Gendered discourses and the making of migrants*. London: Routledge Curzon.
- Xiang, B., & Lindquist, J. (2014). Migration infrastructure. *International Migration Review*, 48(S1), 122–148. <https://doi.org/10.1111/imre.12141>.
- Xiang, B., & Lindquist, J. (2018). Postscript: Infrastructuralization: Evolving sociopolitical dynamics in labour migration from Asia. *Pacific Affairs*, 91(4), 759–773. <https://doi.org/10.5509/2018914759>.

Publisher's Note

Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

Submit your manuscript to a SpringerOpen® journal and benefit from:

- Convenient online submission
- Rigorous peer review
- Open access: articles freely available online
- High visibility within the field
- Retaining the copyright to your article

Submit your next manuscript at ► [springeropen.com](https://www.springeropen.com)
