



IS 'REGULAR' MIGRATION A SAFER FORM OF MIGRATION? THE CASE OF ASIA

¿ES LA MIGRACIÓN "REGULAR" UNA FORMA DE MIGRACIÓN MÁS SEGURA? EL CASO DE ASIA

Laura Foley
Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the School of Law
at Queen Mary
laura.foley@ucd.ie

Nicola Piper
Professor of International Migration and Founding
Director of the Sydney Asia Pacific Migration
Centre at the University of Sydney
N.piper@qmul.ac.uk

Fecha recepción artículo: 08/10/2021 • Fecha aprobación artículo: 29/11/2021

ABSTRACT:

This paper examines one key feature of intra-regional migration in Asia: irregularity, and it does so beyond the typical focus on irregular *entry* by highlighting 'irregularity in regularity', that is irregularity as the result of extremely rigidly designed legal pathways for migration. Our analysis, thus, focuses on the wider policy infrastructure that centres upon securitisation and managerialism, with the result of a high incidence of irregularity. We illustrate these dynamics in relation to labour migration, i.e. the hiring and working conditions of migrant workers. In doing so, this paper seeks to challenge the conventional discourse about irregular migration by showing how the line between regular and irregular migration is blurred and often the result of irregular practices by other actors and, thus, beyond the direct control of migrants. In particular, we analyse how the



temporary labour migration schemes deployed in Asia and the decent work deficits facing migrant workers employed via these schemes, are the key source of irregularity. We end by suggesting that more attention should be paid to regulating abusive practices by employers and recruiters instead of criminalising migrants.

Keywords: Intra-regional Migration, Asia, Irregular Migration, Labour Migration, Migration Governance, Decent Work Deficit.

RESUMEN:

Este artículo examina una de las características clave de la migración intrarregional en Asia: la irregularidad, y lo hace más allá del enfoque típico sobre la entrada irregular al destacar la “irregularidad en la regularidad”, es decir, la irregularidad como resultado de vías legales de migración extremadamente rígidas. Nuestro análisis, por lo tanto, se enfoca en la infraestructura política más amplia que se centra en la securitización y el gerencialismo, con el resultado de una alta incidencia de irregularidades. Ilustramos estas dinámicas en relación con la migración laboral, es decir, la contratación y las condiciones de trabajo de los trabajadores migrantes. Al hacerlo, este documento busca desafiar el discurso convencional sobre la migración irregular al mostrar cómo la línea entre la migración regular y la irregular es borrosa y, a menudo, el resultado de prácticas irregulares de otros actores y, por lo tanto, más allá del control directo de los migrantes. En particular, analizamos cómo los esquemas de migración laboral temporal implementados en Asia, y los déficits de trabajo decente que enfrentan los trabajadores migrantes empleados a través de estos esquemas, son la principal fuente de irregularidad. Terminamos sugiriendo que se debe prestar más atención a la regulación de las prácticas abusivas por parte de empleadores y reclutadores en lugar de criminalizar a los migrantes.

Palabras clave: Migración Intrarregional, Asia, Migración Irregular, Migración Laboral, Gobernanza de la Migración, Déficit de Trabajo Decente.

Laura Foley is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow working on a project entitled “Unpacking the Global Governance of Migration: the Role of Global Processes and Institutions in the Realisation of Decent Work for Migrants” (PI: Professor Nicola Piper) based in the School of Law at Queen Mary, University of London. Laura completed her PhD in the Department of Politics at the University of Sheffield (2016-2020) as part of the Prospects for International Migration Governance (MIGPROSP) project which was funded by the European Research Council. Her doctoral thesis analysed the governance of labour migration in Malaysia, and investigated how a gendered governance system has developed for migrant domestic workers. Prior to her PhD, Laura worked with migrants and refugees in the UK and Ireland in a variety of civil society and research organisations. laura.foley@ucd.ie

Nicola Piper is Professor of International Migration and Founding Director of the Sydney Asia Pacific Migration Centre at the University of Sydney. The British Academy awarded her a Global Professor Fellowship hosted by Queen Mary University of London where she has been since January 2019 conducting research on global governance of labour migration and the role of the International Labour Organisation in the promotion of decent work for migrant workers. This project is a sequence to her research on advocacy politics in relation to a rights-based and gender-sensitive approaches to global and regional migration governance, with particular relevance to Asia. She has published widely on development, gender, transnationalism and rights-based governance in relation to intra-regional migration in East, Southeast, South and West Asia. She is co-chief editor of the Journal *Global Social Policy* and co-editor of the Routledge book series “Asian Migration” and Advisory Board member of the Arnold Bergstraesser Institute at Freiburg University, Germany. N.piper@qmul.ac.uk



1. INTRODUCTION

The Asia-Pacific is a vast and highly heterogeneous region, which contains 60 per cent of the global population within its territory (UNESCAP, 2020a). In 2019, the region had 65 million cross-border migrants, which comprises a quarter of the global migration stock of 272 million (IOM, 2021a). The majority of migration in Asia-Pacific is intra-regional with almost 46 million migrants from Asia-Pacific countries having moved to other countries in the region in 2019 (ibid). These intra-regional migratory flows are often concentrated within sub-regions, for example along the Greater Mekong corridor, between specific countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia or across sub-regions such as West (Gulf region) and South Asia (UNESCAP, 2020a; IOM 2021b). However, as a significant proportion of migration within the region is irregular (UNESCAP, 2018), by which we mean that it occurs *outside of* authorised channels, many migratory movements will not be captured by the official data.

Historically, migration within the region has been driven by colonial interventions (e.g. the British shifting Indian labour to Malaysia) or the result of armed conflict (e.g. the Korean War or the war in Vietnam etc.). However, as labour migration has become recognised as one of the key tools to boost economic development, the more recent large-scale migratory movements have been driven by demand for work, with migrant *workers* now constituting the majority of documented *and* undocumented migrants within the region. Outside of the realm of work, people also move for family-related reasons (notably ‘marriage migration’), educational opportunities, or in order to leave difficult circumstances such as land grabbing, statelessness, political unrest, and persecution (UNESCAP, 2020a). Furthermore, as Asia-Pacific is the region that is most susceptible to natural disasters, environmental factors also drive intra-regional migration flows (UNESCAP, 2020b).

This paper analyses one of the main challenges that cuts across the region’s migration dynamics: challenges posed by the high incidence of irregularity in Asia¹. Our examination of irregularity focuses on the wider policy infrastructure that drives irregularity applied to the specific case of labour migrants, i.e. their hiring and working conditions. Our analysis seeks to demonstrate how the dichotomy between ‘regular’ and ‘irregular’ migration², as per the conventional discourse on ‘unauthorised’ entry, is complicated in Asia; and we do this by discussing how a range of factors, alongside key characteristics of labour migration in Asia, lead to irregularity in unique ways.

The particular border situation of neighbouring countries in Asia contributes to a focus on irregular entry as porous land and sea borders offer routes through which people can move relatively undetected (often facilitated by smuggling networks, see UNODC, 2018). Yet, an exclusive focus on unauthorised entry only scratches the surface on the complexity of how irregularity manifests in the region. The emphasis on unauthorised border crossings often drives policy responses that centre upon securitisation³ and the need for states to enhance their border controls and law enforcement operations, but in doing so, the array of complex routes into irregularity that go beyond being irregular at the point of entry is overlooked. For the purpose of our paper which focuses on labour migration, an irregular migrant can also be someone who entered with a valid visa but overstayed the visa period (thus becoming ‘irregular’), or someone who engaged

¹ Due to the limited space, our analysis does not encompass the wider Asia-Pacific region so excludes Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands.

² ‘Regular migration’ can be understood as ‘migration that occurs through recognised, authorised channels’ (IOM, 2017, p. 1) whereas ‘irregular migration’ has been defined as the ‘movement of persons that takes place outside the laws, regulation or international agreements governing the entry into or exit from the State of origin, transit, or destination’ (IOM, 2019, p. 116).

³ For example, the agenda of the Bali Process is overly security-driven (see e.g. Moretti, 2021).



in activities within the country which contravened those permitted under their visa status and therefore lost their legal status (McAuliffe et al., 2019). If a migrant has an irregular status in Asia, there are limited avenues for regularisation in countries of destination⁴.

The data are inherently hard to come by but it is estimated that one-third of migrant workers in the region have an irregular migration status (ILO, 2013), compared to around 15 per cent of international migrant workers (Crépeau & Itak, 2016)⁵. UNESCAP (2018, p. 5) note that irregular migration “puts the lives and human rights of migrants at risk”, not only through the conditions they face during the journey itself (i.e. via an illicit route), but also due to the conditions that irregular migrants face while in countries of transit and destination. Irregular migrant workers in Asia are more vulnerable to exploitation as they more likely to earn less, face poorer working conditions, have limited labour rights and limited bargaining power⁶. An irregular migration status also puts them beyond the reach of public services such as social welfare provisions and healthcare, and places them at risk of fines, arrest, immigration detention and/or deportation. Furthermore, if an irregular migrant is exploited, they are less likely to be able to access justice, for example in incidences where they have not received their wages for work that they have carried out⁷. Yet, despite the risks that irregularity imposes, many migrants within the region still opt to enter and/or stay in a country of destination in an irregular capacity and, as we will show, some migrants even trade in their legal status for better working conditions and freedoms.

2. MULTIPLE ROUTES TO IRREGULARITY

Labour migration in Asia is characterised by a number of key features that contribute to irregularity. In institutional and policy terms, migration governance in the region operates on the basis of a weak legal framework and by an array of initiatives that are often ad hoc, voluntary, and the product of non-binding declarations (Wickramasekara, 2006; Grugel & Piper, 2011). The key characteristic of the region’s migration governance landscape that has been a core factor leading to irregularity is the rigidity of the legal routes available for moving overseas⁸. The majority of the formalised ‘regular’ migration pathways in the region consist of migration schemes that have been specifically designed for the purpose of strictly *temporary* employment, mainly in low-skilled and semi-skilled jobs⁹. These schemes are often facilitated by bilateral labour agreements between countries, most often via Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs), which are informal and non-binding. They offer temporary contracts for a limited range of labour market sectors including domestic work,

⁴ While some countries have occasionally instituted regularisation programmes (e.g. Malaysia), these are ad hoc and there are often barriers to participation.

⁵ The high levels of irregularity in Asia have driven regional actions, processes, and workshops (e.g. those coordinated by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM)) centred on deterring irregular migration across the region. The regional processes include the Bangkok Declaration on Irregular Migration, the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime (Bali Process), and the Jakarta Declaration on Addressing Irregular Movements of Persons.

⁶ The issues faced by irregular migrants have been amplified during the COVID-19 pandemic (see e.g. Foley & Piper, 2020).

⁷ For example, in Malaysia, the country’s Labour Court ruled that an undocumented migrant domestic worker in Malaysia has no right to claim their unpaid wages as their work was invalid as they had not held a valid work permit. This was eventually overturned (see The Straits Times, 2019, July 30).

⁸ For example, within the region, there are limited routes for seeking asylum. The region has the smallest percentage of States who are party to the 1951 Refugee Convention (and the 1967 Protocol) and there are limited possibilities to access refugee status determination procedures. As a result, an alternative pathway for refugees and for those seeking asylum is via more formalised labour migration routes.

⁹ Intra-regional migration of highly skilled workers is comparatively much smaller than the number of migrants who move for low-skilled, low-wage work.



construction, agriculture, manufacturing, and an array of service sectors. The contracts on offer last two to four years and workers receive low wages, no security and no pathway to permanent residency¹⁰. Moreover, in the sectors that offer employment via these temporary schemes, migrants are commonly exposed to “un-decent” working conditions, discriminatory practices, and rampant violations of human and labour rights without access to complaint mechanisms¹¹. What is also problematic is that workers are hired under highly rigid circumstances as they are ‘tied’ to a specific employer and location, which poses barriers to their ability to change jobs and thus provides their employers with significant control over them. Since labour standards for migrant workers are severely impacted by the conditions imposed upon them, the question needs to be raised as to whether the regular migration pathways on offer actually provide avenues for ‘safe’ migration by which we mean migration that provides protection and rights to migrants.

These formal migration schemes determine hiring and employment practices. The hiring and deployment of migrant workers is facilitated by a complex system of migration intermediaries¹² (recruitment agencies, labour brokers, so-called “middle-men”) which is a system that contributes to irregularity. This is because these intermediaries often charge prospective migrants exorbitant fees for arranging a job, visa and transportation for them¹³. This fees’ system drives irregular migration as the financial cost for people to migrate via the available regular migration pathways has become too onerous, so many migrants opt to use irregular channels. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) surveyed migrant workers in Thailand in 2018 and found that 64 per cent had entered irregularly as opposed to using the legal channel that was available (ILO, 2020)¹⁴. Migrating via an irregular channel will still involve paying recruitment costs, but less so than if workers had used the legal pathway (see e.g. *ibid*; UNESCAP, 2018; 2020a). The system of recruitment fees also encourages overstaying (and thus irregularity) as the worker will want to avoid having to re-engage with the expensive recruitment system should they wish to re-enter the destination country. This complex, privatised recruitment system also gives rise to an industry of unscrupulous actors and deceptive recruitment practices whereby migrants can be *unknowingly* irregular, for example in instances where they paid money to a migration intermediary to secure a valid work permit but they are provided with false paperwork so end up working in an irregular capacity unwittingly¹⁵.

Given the significant power that employers have over their temporarily hired employees and the little to no options that migrant workers have to seek recourse in the event of abusive and exploitative practices, these workers sometimes choose to abscond. In doing so, the workers relinquish their ‘regular’ legal status as they have invalidated the terms of their visa and contract (and thus lose their right to stay)¹⁶. Although there is no way of quantifying the exact extent of this phenomenon, trading legal regularity for greater freedom on the labour market is one key method by which migrants seek better working conditions and higher wages¹⁷.

¹⁰ One or two extensions are possible, but the contracts cannot be extended for indefinite periods. Yet some migrants become ‘permanently temporary’ in their country of destination as they often re-migrate repeatedly over decades (see e.g. Withers, 2019).

¹¹ See e.g. Napier-Moore and Sheill (2016) and Harkins and Åhlberg (2017).

¹² See Jones and Sha (2020) for a discussion of migration intermediaries.

¹³ These agencies also charge fees to employers.

¹⁴ The ILO’s survey took place in 2018 and comprised of 1,200 migrant workers from Cambodia, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, and Myanmar. Thailand has MoUs with each of these countries.

¹⁵ Migrant workers can also become unknowingly irregular when their employer has not renewed their visa.

¹⁶ In some countries, migrants may have a future opportunity to regain their legal status, for example via a regularisation scheme. An in-depth study of migrants in Malaysia found that over 60 per cent of migrants had moved between documented and undocumented status at least once, with some shifting between statuses up to six times (Franck *et al.*, 2018).

¹⁷ There are studies on this in relation to domestic workers where absconding tends to occur in the case of those who have previous work experience and skills as they can bargain for better wages and conditions (Zhang, 2020). This is also an observation made by one of the authors during their PhD fieldwork in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in March 2018. There are also studies on this in relation to specific migration corridors such as the one between Vietnam and Korea (Nguyen, 2017).



A further key marker of intra-regional migration in Asia is its feminisation. Women make up 49 per cent of the region's migrants (UNESCAP, 2020a), and constitute a significant proportion of many countries' health, services, and domestic work sectors, where the conditions of work are often exploitative¹⁸. While some women migrant workers opt for irregularity due to the onerous and costly nature of formal recruitment procedures (as noted above), others are pushed into irregular migratory experiences due to specific emigration policies enacted by sending states. Such policies come in the form of age restrictions or complete bans on women migrating either to specific destinations or to work in specific jobs (typically domestic work) (Shivakoti et al., 2021). Policies that severely restrict women's migration are depicted as being driven by the need for protection but they instead have the perverse effect of placing women into more harmful situations: by reducing (or completely closing) the legal migration routes, women workers are then pushed to migrate via unauthorised channels using unlicensed agencies (see e.g. Rajan & Joseph, 2015; Napier-Moore, 2017). For example, states such as Cambodia, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and Sri Lanka restrict the out-migration of its female citizens, with some states (e.g. Sri Lanka) curtailing the migration of women with children¹⁹. The feminisation of migration in Asia is also characterised by the dominance of one type of employment: domestic work. Migrant women have therefore little other employment options. Where such alternative options exist (e.g. manufacturing in Malaysia), there is relatively little research about those, nor has much policy attention been paid to those other sectors²⁰.

3. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The governance of labour migration in Asia has, so far, focused more on regulating migration (i.e. the cross-border movements of people) by controlling exit and entry, without giving sufficient attention to the governance of workplaces (i.e. the regulation of hiring and employment conditions) within destination countries. As it currently stands, there is a decent work deficit for migrant workers in Asia which regional bodies such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) have been largely absent in addressing (Kneebone, 2010). This inactivity by regional bodies (and states) has led to the development of a strong regional migrant rights' movement in the region which is centred on the vibrant activism of networks of civil society organisations (CSOs), such as Migrant Forum in Asia and CARAM Asia (Piper, 2015). These regional networks engage with the issue of labour migration by gathering evidence of violations of migrant workers' rights, lobbying for the institution of redress mechanisms and, importantly, campaigning for better hiring and working conditions. This includes the need for higher wages, increased choice, greater freedom of movement on the labour market and for workplace exploitation to be addressed. Furthermore, the need for decent wages is a key part of CSOs' advocacy for decent work opportunities for migrants, as evident from the *Justice for Wage Theft* campaign launched in 2020 (see Foley & Piper, 2021).

For too long, governments in Asia have overlooked how hiring processes and employment practices spur irregularity. If the region is serious about tackling irregularity and making labour migration safe for migrants themselves, states must shift away from deploying deterrents (e.g. punitive measures like immigration detention), towards expanding the available (affordable) pathways for regular migration, and improving the conditions under which migrant workers are employed.

¹⁸ See e.g. ILO (2017).

¹⁹ Sri Lanka has banned the migration with children under the age of five and required women whose children are aged five to 18 to obtain spousal consent in order to migrate.

²⁰ This has partly to do with the significant political opportunity offered by the ILO Convention no. 189 that was adopted in 2011 after several earlier – and unsuccessful – attempts in the history of the ILO (Fish, 2017).



REFERENCIAS BIBLIOGRÁFICAS

- Crépeau, F., & Atak, I. (2016). Global Migration Governance: Avoiding Commitments on Human Rights, Yet Tracing a Course for Cooperation. *Netherlands Quarterly of Human Rights*, 34(2), 113-146. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F016934411603400203>
- Fish, J. (2017). *Domestic Workers of the World Unite! A Global Movement for Dignity and Human Rights*. New York: New York University Press.
- Foley, L., & Piper, N. (2020). COVID-19 and Women Migrant Workers: Impacts and Implications. IOM Geneva: International Organization for Migration. <https://publications.iom.int/fr/system/files/pdf/the-gender-dimensions-of-the-labour-migration.pdf>
- Foley, L., & Piper, N. (2021). Returning home empty handed: Examining how COVID-19 exacerbates the non-payment of temporary migrant workers' wages. *Global Social Policy*, May 2021. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14680181211012958>
- Franck, A. K., Brandström Arellano, E., & Anderson, J. T. (2018). Navigating Migrant Trajectories through Private Actors. *European Journal of East Asian Studies*, 17(1), 55-82. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15700615-01701003>
- Grugel, J., & Piper, N. (2007). *Critical Perspective on Global Governance: Rights and Regulation in Governing Regimes*. London: Routledge.
- Harkins, B., & Åhlberg, M. (2017). *Access to justice for migrant workers in South-East Asia* / Benjamin Harkins and Meri Åhlberg; International Labour Organization. Bangkok, Thailand: International Labour Organisation.
- International Labour Organisation. (2013). *Migration, irregular status and deportation: an outline of international standards, regional trends and good practices. Migration in South-East Asia*. Bangkok, Thailand: ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/documents/genericdocument/wcms_322652.pdf
- International Labour Organisation. (2017). *Towards achieving decent work for domestic workers in ASEAN. 10th ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour (AFML) – Thematic background paper. 25-26 October 2017, Manila, The Philippines*. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms_631089.pdf
- International Labour Organisation. (2020). *Recruitment fees and related costs: What migrant workers from Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, and Myanmar pay to work in Thailand*. Bangkok, Thailand: ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---robangkok/documents/publication/wcms_740400.pdf
- International Organisation for Migration (IOM). (2019). *Glossary on Migration*. International Migration Law. No. 34. Geneva, Switzerland: International Organisation for Migration. [impl_34_glossary.pdf](https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl486/files/impl_34_glossary.pdf) (iom.int)
- International Organisation for Migration (IOM). (2017). *Facilitation of Safe, Regular and Orderly Migration. Global Compact Thematic Paper*. Geneva, Switzerland: International Organisation for Migration IOM-Thematic-Paper-Facilitation-of-Safe-Orderly-and-Regular-Migration.pdf
- International Organisation for Migration (IOM). (2021a). *IOM in Asia and the Pacific: Info Sheet*. Bangkok, Thailand: IOM Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. <https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl486/files/country/AP/roap-info-sheet-final.pdf>
- International Organisation for Migration (IOM). (2021b). *Asia-Pacific Migration Data Report 2020*. IOM Asia-Pacific Regional Data Hub. Bangkok, Thailand: IOM Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. <https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/Asia-Pacific-Migration-%20Data-Report-2020.pdf>



- Jones, K., & Sha, H. (2020). Mediated migration: A literature review of migration intermediaries. Working Paper for MIDEQ: Migration for Development & Equality. August 2020. Retrieved from: https://www.mideq.org/documents/18/MIDEQ_Jones_Sha_2020_Mediated_migration_v2.pdf
- Kneebone, S. (2010). The Governance of Labour Migration in Southeast Asia. *Global Governance*, 16(3), 383-396. <https://doi.org/10.1163/19426720-01603007>
- McAuliffe, M., Kitimbo, A., & Khadria, B. (2019). World Migration Report 2020. Geneva, Switzerland: International Organisation for Migration. https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr_2020.pdf
- Moretti, S. 2021. Contested Regionalism in the Asia-Pacific: The Case of the Bali Process and the Protection of Refugees. *Journal of Ethnic & Migration Studies*, Special Issue on “Regions in Global Migration Governance”.
- Napier-Moore, R., & Sheill, K. (2016). High rise, low pay: Experiences of migrant women in the Thai construction sector. Geneva, Switzerland: International Labour Organisation. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2021.1972565>
- Napier-Moore, R. (2017). Protected or put in harm's way? Bans and restrictions on women's labour migration in ASEAN countries. International Labour Organisation and UN Women. Bangkok, Thailand: ILO and UN Women. https://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20eseasia/docs/publications/2017/06/wcms_555974-compressed.pdf?la=en&vs=4604
- Nguyen, N. N. A. (2017). Social Networks along the Migration Cycle between Vietnam and Korea: Opportunities or Obstacles for Temporary Labour Migrants. PhD Thesis, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, the University of Sydney.
- Piper, N. (2015). Democratising Migration from the Bottom Up: the rise of the global migrant rights movement. *Globalizations*, 12(5), 788-802. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2015.1024454>
- Rajan, S. I., & Joseph, J. (2015). Migrant women at the discourse-policy nexus: Indian domestic workers in Saudi Arabia. In: S. Irudaya Rajan (Ed.) *India Migration Report 2015: Gender and Migration*. (pp. 33-49). India: Routledge.
- Shivakoti, R., Henderson, S., & Withers, M. (2021). The migration ban policy cycle: a comparative analysis of restrictions on the emigration of women domestic workers. *Comparative Migration Studies*, 9(36). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-021-00250-4>
- The Straits Times. (2019, July 30). Malaysian court sides with forced labour victims over unpaid wages. The Straits Times: Retrieved from: <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/malaysian-court-sides-with-forced-labour-victims-over-unpaid-wages>
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). (2018). Migrant Smuggling in Asia and the Pacific: Current Trends and Challenges. Volume II. July 2018. Bangkok, Thailand: UNODC. Retrieved from: https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/Migrant-Smuggling/2018-2019/SOM_in_Asia_and_the_Pacific_II_July_2018.pdf
- United Nations, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). (2018). Towards Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in the Asia-Pacific Region: Challenges and Opportunities. Report from the Asia-Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. Bangkok, 6-8 November 2017. Bangkok, Thailand: UNESCAP. Retrieved from: <https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/publications/Migration%20report.pdf>



- United Nations, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). (2020a). Asia-Pacific Migration Report 2020: Assessing Implementation of the Global Compact for Migration (ST/ESCAP/2801). Bangkok, Thailand: UNESCAP.
- United Nations, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). (2020b). Summary of the Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2019. 2 July 2019. UN ECOSOC. ESCAP/CDR/2019/1. Retrieved from: https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/Summary%20of%20the%20Asia-Pacific%20Disaster%20Report%202019_English.pdf
- Wickramasekara, P. (2006). Rights of migrant workers in Asia: Any light at the end of the tunnel? International Migration Papers 75. Social Protection Sector, International Migration Programme. Geneva, Switzerland: International Labour Office. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---migrant/documents/publication/wcms_201441.pdf
- Withers, M. (2019). Decent Care for Migrant Households: Policy Alternatives to Sri Lanka's Family Background Report. *Social Politics*, 26(3), 325-347. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sp/jxz024>
- Zhang, Y. (2020). Rethinking the Global Governance of Migrant Domestic Workers: The Heterodox Case of Informal Filipina Workers in China (May 31, 2020). Harvard John M. Olin Center Fellows' Discussion Papers Series No.91, Georgetown Immigration Law Review, Forthcoming: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3750241>

