

Becoming a Migrant at Home: Subjectivation Processes in Migrant-Sending Countries Prior to Departure

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ABSTRACT

Labour emigration is not merely the business of states and governmental policies, but comes with a range of wider societal practices. This includes the production of – and contestation over – the ‘ideal migrant subject’. This paper examines the complex interplay of actors and practices involved in migrant subject-making processes paying close attention to the pre-employment temporary labour migration process step by step from screening, recruitment, pre-departure training up to employment-matching. It asks how prospective migrants are transformed into ‘ideal’ migrant subjects. This contribution primarily draws from data from the Philippines and India. It is argued that migrants actually become migrants before they ever leave their home country: Labour-sending states set the regulatory frameworks and co-produce ‘ideal migrant subjects’ from which other social actors draw or contest. In contrast to most studies on the governance of labour migration, the authors highlight the role of subject formation as an important element of modern migration management. To the scholarship that actually takes into account subjectivation processes, this paper adds material both on the labour-sending state as well as on non-state actors. The paper, moreover, draws out subject-making from previous studies where it is less central and more implicit. Copyright © 2013 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

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INTRODUCTION

Migration as development has (re)emerged in recent decades in different policy circles despite previous scepticism (Faist, 2007; see also Geiger and Pécoud, 2013). Labour-sending countries are creating institutional environments that favour the emigration of certain groups of people with specific skills and personal characteristics. Further, these countries establish frameworks to sustain ties with their citizens abroad (Coutin, 2007; Fitzgerald, 2008). One important motivation is to ensure that migrants' earnings abroad are remitted back home (see also Delgado Wise *et al.*, 2013). To achieve this, governmental techniques such as eliciting emotional bonds with the nation and creating new subject positions such as ‘absent compatriots’ or ‘responsible mothers’ supporting their children's education are produced. Also, labour-importing states have taken a keen interest in expanding temporary labour migration programmes in partnership with labour-sending states, as can currently be seen at deliberations taking place in arenas such as the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) or regional fora such as the Abu Dhabi Dialogue (2012). Employers and recruitment agencies have their own, business-oriented interests in supporting migration as development initiatives and migrant workers themselves have interests in migration including realising aspirations beyond merely employment such as pursuing entrepreneurial endeavours.

Labour emigration requires the bilateral (or even multilateral) assent of states, but is not merely the result of governmental policies. It comes with

a range of wider societal practices. This includes the production – and contestation – of the ‘ideal migrant’. It is not assumed here that there is one single actor that ‘manufactures’ ideal migrants, but it is a complex interplay of actors. The production of migrant subjects is multidirectional and diffuse. Private business actors such as recruiters, employers or money lenders, state agencies, non-governmental organisations, and, last but not least, the migrants themselves engage in a wide array of disciplinary and regulatory techniques of forming ideal migrants for different ends. These subject positions are gendered, both in terms of masculinities as well as femininities, and racialized. They speak to local conditions as well as to global expectations about ‘good migrants’. However, the processes of migrant subject-making also come with public and hidden transcripts of interaction (Scott, 1990), that means they come with open and covert resistances that point to the ways that there is overall contestation of the rise in temporary labour migration programmes.

In this contribution, the pre-employment temporary labour migration process is tracked step by step from screening, recruitment, pre-departure training up to matching to actual employment. The key question that this article asks is how citizens practically become migrants before they even leave home. Of course, subjectivation processes are not completed once the employment is taken up. In the following, the focus on the pre-employment is chosen for two reasons: first, most literature has so far focused on disciplinary and regulatory effects of the migration experience on migrants’ identity and subject positions in receiving countries. Second, policy frameworks and practical manuals for more effective ‘migration management’ recommend governmental interventions at the ‘various stages of the contract worker mobility cycle’ (Abu Dhabi Dialogue, 2012: 1).

The following analysis aims at contributing to a critical analysis of (temporary) labour migration programmes and the migration development nexus by introducing the level of subject formation – in general and in countries of origin in particular – into the literature on migration governance. It will be argued that migrants actually become migrants before they have ever left their home country. Labour-sending states set the regulatory frameworks and co-produce ‘ideal migrant

subjects’ from which other social actors draw or contest. In contrast to most studies on the governance of labour migration, the role of subject formation is highlighted as an important element of migration governance. This adds to the scholarship that actually takes into account subjectivation processes. Our focus both on the state as well as non-state actors and subject-making is something that is less central and more implicit in previous studies. In the empirical part of the paper, the migration process is followed step by step in order to identify the strategic moments when migrant subjectivities are shaped in the countries of emigration. The Philippines and India, two major emigration countries, serve as the empirical cases for this analysis. The paper concludes by discussing the key findings in light of broader debates on migration and development and the role of migrants.

THE CASES OF INDIA AND THE PHILIPPINES

The Philippines and India are two major emigration countries that share similarities, but also have clear differences: The Philippines has a very high percentage of its population living (temporarily) abroad. India is the world’s number one country in terms of remittance influx (The Economic Times, 2012), although percentage-wise emigration concentrates on certain regions and sectors (Osella and Osella, 2008; Irudaya and Kumar, 2010: 20). Both countries have a strong record in the emigration of health professionals: India is the world’s number one sending state for doctors and second for nurses; and the Philippines is number one for nurses and second for doctors (OECD, 2007: 175; for the issue of care migration see also Gabriel, 2013). Further, in both countries, many citizens emigrate as domestic workers (for India: Irudaya and Sukendran, 2010; for the Philippines: Parreñas, 2001) and, in particular, from certain regions of India (Biao, 2007), information technology (IT) specialists. Therefore, besides taking a general look at migration patterns, we focus in our analysis on the sectors of health, domestic work, and IT. In both countries, a ‘migration industrial complex’ (Yeates, 2009b: 178) has developed and is key in shaping emigration. This complex consists of small and huge recruitment agencies, both private and state-run, travel and visa facilitation agencies, government authorities, non-governmental infrastructure

for emigrants and their families, as well as all other actors involved in the emigration process.

One major difference between India and the Philippines, however, lies in the degree to which each government and society considers itself an 'emigration country' and also the extent to which the government sets up specific bodies for the promotion and regulation of emigration. The Philippines has become the most paradigmatic labour export country in the region and maybe in the world. The Philippines has set up elaborate state institutions to actively promote and govern temporary labour emigration and to sustain contact with their population abroad (Rodriguez, 2010) – India stands in clear contrast to this, less in terms of numbers, but more concerning its overall *laissez-faire* approach to emigration, in particular given its huge population size. New institutions to facilitate migration and to protect migrant workers abroad have been installed only in the past 10 years. Although a number of instruments are designed according to the Filipino model (Irudaya and Mishra, 2007; fieldwork Helen Schwenken), the level of embeddedness and institutional support is much lower compared with the Philippines. The two countries thus share the high numbers of emigrants and the intensity of organised labour emigration in certain sectors but differ in terms of the official relevance the topic of emigration has been assigned by politicians and the media.

Analysing the modes of subjectivation in these two countries, therefore, allows for an overview of such practices in different types of labour emigration countries and at the same time in similar employment sectors. Theoretically interesting is the question of whether market forces or state policies trigger certain processes of subjectivation. In the case of the Philippines, one could expect government institutions to have a greater significance in shaping subjectivities, whereas in India, the private sector (i.e. recruitment agencies and specialised educational institutions in the fields of IT and health) could assume a stronger role. We therefore propose the hypothesis that subjectivation processes in labour emigration countries are neither structurally determined nor a matter of individual country's dispositions, but a consequence of multiple, sometimes contradictory aims. A broad range of social actors that include but are not limited to the private sector and the state have investments in

producing the 'ideal' migrant. Interestingly, despite the fact that these various actors' aims may be contradictory, certain points of convergence can be found in the ways the 'ideal' migrant is produced by them.

The following analysis draws on secondary and primary data. Both authors have conducted fieldwork in the Philippines (Robyn Rodriguez) between 2000 and 2008 and India (Helen Schwenken) between 2009 and 2012. The Philippines research is based on extensive ethnographic fieldwork and subsequent research primarily focused on resistance to the Philippine model of labour export by migrants. In the case of India, the research included the realisation of more than 40 expert interviews, the observation of state-diaspora relations, and documentary analysis. As secondary sources, empirical studies on the labour emigration practices from the Philippines and India as well as selected other emigration countries are discussed (e.g. Biao, 2007; Coutin, 2007; Fitzgerald, 2008; Yeates, 2009a; Guevarra, 2010; Kunz, 2011; Liang, 2011; Ness, 2011; Lindio-McGovern, 2012; Valiani, 2012). These studies are re-read through our analytical focus on the role of subject formation in labour migration processes.

The analysis of these data is organised according to a section of the idealised migration cycle tracking the pre-departure phases in temporary labour migration processes step by step from screening, recruitment, pre-departure training to matching with employers. We are aware of the fact that this scheme simplifies actual migration practices. Nonetheless, we use the migration cycle as a heuristic to identify key technologies of the making of migrants as well as identifying entry points for resistance. Moreover, in each section, we are considering the role of both state and non-state actors because together they are implicated in the production of ideal migrants.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the literature on the migration development nexus, the role of migrant subjectivities has not been paid explicit attention to. However, implicitly, the different theoretical schools come with specific takes on it: The role that migrants are thought to embody has changed in parallel to the cycles in the relationship between migration and development (Faist, 2007; Castles, 2009;

De Haas, 2010). In times when the relationship between migration and development is seen as a negative one, i.e. that 'underdevelopment' leads to migration or migration is not a remedy against low economic and social development, migrants tend to be portrayed in a more passive manner and they are portrayed without agency. An indication for this is the 'push and pull model' of migration. When a positive-sum relation between migration and development is proclaimed, such as migration contributing to the economic and social 'development' of the regions of origin through migration, migrants are seen in a different light. They are considered 'transnational development agents' (Faist, 2008). Such a characterization comes with an associated set of identity features, such as intentionality, agency, and a higher degree of autonomy. Petra Dannecker (2009) makes an important contribution by showing that migrants themselves have very different – gender-, class-, and education-specific – understandings of what 'development' is or ought to be. Her analysis for example shows that 'remittances and economic development are for the Bangladeshi government, the communities and the migrant families of major importance [...], but become increasingly less important for temporary labour migrants' (Dannecker, 2009: 122). The international debate in which temporary labour migration is promoted, however, does not distinguish between different groups of migrants' perspectives on such questions, but homogenises them. An analytical view on subjectivation processes and migrants' positionality can contribute to a more differentiated understanding of migration and development.

The political science dominated analysis of global migration governance (e.g. Betts, 2011; Omelaniuk, 2012) generally has a technocratic and government-centred take on migration. Migrants are usually not considered agents that are part of the policy process. The moment migrants come into the migration governance debate is for example when the role of 'diaspora for development' is discussed (Khadria, 2007). This is where international relations and development studies meet. However, there is an underlying utilitarian perspective on the 'natural' responsibility of the migrants to contribute to the development of 'their homelands' (Gamlen, 2008). This view on global migration governance analytically obscures

some of the specific modes of governance in this policy field.

When we turn to studies that take a similar direction as ours, namely those studies that take into account questions of identity ascription and subjectivation through migration processes, we find important contributions upon which we build our work. Susan Coutin for example shows that migration systems create the kind of personalities and life practices that are characteristic for the specific system (Coutin, 2007). In the case of a country such as El Salvador that is characterised by both high emigration rates as well as (forced) returns, the paradigmatic figures of 'the returnees' are created. These figures are created through the often violent experience of being deported as young (purportedly) delinquent men or gang members from the United States of America (Coutin, 2007: 18). Susan Coutin reasons that to 'downplay the stigmatising nature of this pull 'back' [...], immigrant advocates in El Salvador coined the term *retornados* or 'returnees' to refer to deportees' (Coutin, 2007: 18). The Salvadorian young returnees represent, however, not the ideal type of successful return migrants. This shows that the social construction of migrant subjectivities can be positive and negative. Pauline Gardiner Barber points out that through the practice of migration and state policies in sending and receiving countries 'ideal immigrant[s]' with specific 'class identities and subjectivities' are constituted (Gardiner Barber, 2008: 1268). Migrants make themselves fit into a labour market niche and therefore highlight qualifications and characteristics that are desirable for this niche, while hiding less desirable ones. As in other paradigmatic emigration countries, migration has become 'culturally normative, initially for men, but now particularly so for women' (Gardiner Barber, 2008: 1271). Emigration has also shaped 'Filipino economic subjectivities' (Gardiner Barber, 2008: 1272) in the country of origin, in particular of household and family members 'left behind' who rely significantly on remittances.

The analysis in the following builds upon these works. However, what we think is necessary is a closer look at the multiple modes by which migrant subject positions are created or performed. Although Susan Coutin examines migrant citizen-subjects and Pauline Gardiner Barber examines migrant (gendered) class-subjects, the aim here is to examine nation-state, market-based,

and other types of subjectivities as they are constructed by a range of wide social actors including private recruitment agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the media, and migrants themselves; the research interest is focused on the pre-employment stages of migration to track the ways that migrants are 'made' even before stepping foot outside of their countries. Understanding such processes of subject-making better is not only an academic exercise but also relevant for evaluating policy implications.

THEORISING THE ASCRIPTION OF IDENTITIES IN GOVERNMENTAL REGIMES

Mitchell Dean in one of his seminal works on governmentality proposes four levels of inquiry to understand how regimes work: (a) the field of visibility, (b) the technical aspects of government, (c) the epistemic level of underlying knowledge formations, and (d) the formation of identities (Dean, 2007 [1999]: 30–33). This contribution focuses on the latter – the level of identity formation – but also relates it to the other levels of examination as each level can only be understood in conjuncture with the others. In particular, the level of identity formation has to be related to the one of technologies, because the production of the migrant subject happens through specific techniques. Identities can be individual and collective. The carriers of identities are those who exercise authority as well as those to be governed (Dean, 2007 [1999]: 32). The ascription of an identity contains certain duties, rights, and expected conduct. Identities do not simply exist, but certain individuals or groups of persons feel attached to them; they become active representatives and promoters of these identities (Dean, 2007 [1999]: 32). However, instead of speaking of 'identities' in the following article, the term 'subject position' is used, because it is not assumed that these 'ideal-type' subject positions are congruent with people's actual identities.

The analysis carried out is informed by a Foucauldian approach to governmentality and subject formation. As Nicholas Kiersey argues, '[F]or Foucault, power is not the unilateral 'creation' of the subject but, rather, a solicitation of the self' (Kiersey, 2009, 377) who subsequently transforms into a specific subject. Hence, we are attentive to the way that a multiplicity of social actors, migrants included, 'solicit' and enjoin

migrants' to take on particular kinds of idealised subject positions. In other words, the production of subjects is performed less through overt coercion, but through invitation. Foucault's contribution in understanding the mechanics of power is the idea that power works through 'freedom'.

There has been a tendency in governmentality studies to assume that identity formation within the context of neoliberal policies always results in neoliberal subjects. This is, as we would like to point out, not the case. The point can be made that current temporary labour migration policies come with the production of 'ideal migrant' subject positions, and that the 'ideal migrant' subject is often a neoliberal subject. Attention should be, nonetheless, paid to contradictions, counter-movements, and frictions. Mitchell Dean cautions that the identities 'promoted and pre-supposed by various practices and programmes of government should not be confused with a real subject, subjectivity or subject position' (Dean, 2007 [1999]: 32). This is important to take into account, because too many governmentality studies draw a direct link between what is written in programmatic texts and what they then assume becomes reality. In order not to fall into this trap, we stress the importance of two aspects of analysis: first, we do not limit our analysis to programmatic texts, but ethnographic observations and qualitative interviews, and, second, in our analysis we are attentive to contradictions, resistance to identity-making, and the existence of complex identities. What we will see happening in labour migration recruitment and employment practices is also 'less one of identity than one of 'identification'' (Dean, 2007 [1999]: 32), of the ascription and training of migrants to appear as ideal migrants.

EXPLICIT AND IMPLICIT SUBJECTIVATION PRACTICES IN CONTEXTS OF LABOUR EMIGRATION

Subject formation and the ascription of identity features can work in several directions. In the two examples selected (India and the Philippines) the production of the 'ideal and productive migrant worker' is constituted against the 'problematic migrant subject'. Identity features that are considered problematic can refer to undesirable behaviour, unemployment

or vulnerability and exploitability which causes trouble for the emigration state.

Historical Trajectories for the Making of Ideal Migrants

The making of 'ideal migrants' has historical roots often linked to colonial practices (which often led to regional variation). In the case of India, states such as Kerala, Punjab or Gujarat are 'emigration pockets'. VJ Varghese shows how Kerala became an emigration state in which citizenship, economic development and service to the nation were closely intertwined, and during some phases even congruent, with migration (Varghese, 2011). Under the British colonisers, development in Kerala was considered as a project in turning 'wild', 'unused', or 'empty' forests into agrarian land (Varghese, 2011: 258). Syrian Christians and internal migrants were the ones who 'made the land productive'. The positive association of migration, productivity and development was historically carried on. The 'development discourse around migration, reclamation and hard work' was a model introduced by the colonial planters, but has also 'internalized by the local people through a process of translation' (Varghese, 2011: 260–261). In the process of post-colonial nation-building, some of these elements were taken up, in particular the notions of hard-working, sacrifice and migration as aspects of citizenship (Varghese, 2011: 261 and 263). Although most of the narratives Varghese analysed refer to the colonisation of land and internal migration, the high valuation of migration and sacrifice has become the basis for normalising international migration of Keralites today and in the past 30 years. Such internalised and normalised narratives ease current processes of 'ideal migrant' subject formation.

In the Philippines, labour migration was part and parcel of the production of US colonial subjects. American colonial subjectivity, however, was distinctive from that of its imperial counterparts. The US colonial project, while characterised by violence, was equally characterised by 'benevolence' and the production of ultimately 'self-governing' subjects. Rather than establishing an extensive US-staffed colonial apparatus, the US selected native elites (inherited from the US' colonial predecessors, the Spanish) to be educated in the United States as part of its policy

of 'benevolent assimilation' (Ablett, 2004). The so-called 'pensionados' were educated in elite US institutions in American democratic ideals and many returned to the Philippines to assume positions in the colonial administration. However, many became 'accidental' immigrants who chose to settle in the USA (either out of desire or need, or both). This early form of migration, coupled with active recruitment by employers for labour in the agricultural industries in the USA created a culture and infrastructure of out-migration from the Philippines. Early Philippine emigration therefore has a history that was intertwined with the aim of self-making and nationalism just as much as it was about the securing of livelihoods.

These historical glimpses are necessarily incomplete, but are important to understanding today's making of 'good labour migrants'. In both countries we can trace historically-shaped predispositions of collective identity. As will be outlined later in more detail, in the case of India, colonial out-migration regulations are also informing today's Indian labour emigration categories and the emigration bureaucracy. Emigrants are considered to be poor and non-formally educated individuals in need of benevolent protection. Meanwhile, for the Philippines, e/migration as the accomplishment of idealised citizenship for the nation continues to shape different narratives.

Looking for Potential 'Good Migrants'

Today, there are directed interventions by state and private actors to identify potential 'good migrants'. These identifications are part of broader migration as development strategies and moral economies of migration. In 'labour brokerage' states (Rodriguez, 2010), such as the Philippines or at a subnational level certain regions in India, being a migrant is an everyday subject position; it might even be expected to become a migrant at least once in one's life. Labour brokerage is a neoliberal strategy aimed at containing the failures of 'development'. It is also a set of neoliberal technologies aimed at producing new kinds of neoliberal citizen-subjects responsabilised to take on the task of 'development'. Anna Guevarra, furthermore, argues, that the 'gendered and racialized moral economy of the Filipino migrant underscores the cultural

logic that governs how overseas Filipino workers are supposed to behave, as model Filipinos who can embody an ethic of responsibility toward their families, nation and the representation of the Great Filipino Worker, while maintaining their commodification and submission to a neoliberal state' (Guevarra, 2010: 52). Perhaps not surprisingly, private recruitment agencies often echo the state's construction of emigrants. Anna Guevarra finds in the case of the Philippine for example 'labor brokers believe themselves to be not just employment providers by also 'makers' of the country's heroes' (Guevarra, 2010: 105).

One mechanism by which the state produces the migrant citizen-subject is actually through the expansion of citizenship. This includes more symbolic statuses such as the 'Non-Resident Indian' or real dual citizenship, but perhaps more importantly, new kinds of rights and benefits specifically for overseas populations. The Philippines for example introduced gender-sensitive programmes for women being deployed to 'vulnerable' occupations such as domestic work as well as extraterritorial interventions in contractual disputes workers may have with their employers. The extension of these rights serves to normalise out-migration because migrants are promised some degree of protection even when they are overseas.

From the labour-sending country perspective, women have come to be increasingly figured as the ideal migrant citizen subjects: Women are presumed to be more responsible and therefore are expected to remit their earnings on a regular basis (INSTRAW, 2008; Kunz, 2008; Yeates, 2009b: 183). It may be argued that the ideal neoliberal subject is the woman because neoliberal logics of responsabilisation and self-care are complementary with those characteristics women, especially mothers, are expected to fulfil within the context of the nuclear family. Women's migration, particularly those bound for so-called 'vulnerable' occupations such as domestic work or entertainment, though, also raise troubles for the state.

However, both for the Indian and the Philippine states, one job category that is considered amongst the most 'ideal' for women migrants is the nursing. Nicola Yeates argues that the promotion of nurse out-migration from countries such as India and the Philippines is partly because male migrants' employment around the world is much more

seasonal and precarious (Yeates, 2009b: 183). Nursing is characterised by a higher degree of stability and permanence than male-dominated jobs in sectors such as construction or agriculture. Nursing also represents a more respectable form of femininity, as it represents professionalism. It is a less unruly femininity as compared with domestic service or 'entertainment'. For the Philippine state, in particular, there has been some degree of ambivalence about particular forms of women's migration, as there is a (nationalist) shameful associated with the work of domestics and entertainers.

Some of the NGOs involved in labour emigration processes construe the 'ideal migrant' more implicitly than the state; indeed, given that NGOs typically play an advocacy role, it perhaps makes sense that they engage the problems of migration and thereby construct the 'problematic migrant'. As women's migration began to outpace men's migration in the 1990s, it raised concerns amongst numerous social actors about its potential consequences for Philippine society. Normative gendered understandings that women should be confined to the home and primarily responsible to their families were circulated as a critique of women's out migration. Outside employment, particularly employment abroad, was represented as selfish and even immoral. Hence, the 'ideal (gendered) migrant' that is implicitly constructed here is a single woman who has no familial responsibilities (see Beltran and Rodriguez, 1996).

The 'ideal migrant', for some NGOs are women migrants who do not work in 'demeaning' categories, which may imply that they would find the e/migration of nurses more acceptable. Indeed, although Indian and Filipino women e/migrate as nurses in large numbers, most NGOs typically do not concern themselves with them; they are considered educated enough to care for themselves. For these particular NGOs, the ideal migrant is 'empowered'; one who is knowledgeable about both the possibilities and limits of her rights when abroad before making the decision to migrate. In some ways, then, the ideal migrant here is a citizen/cosmopolitan subject. Yet, this is still a form of neoliberal subjectivity, as the ideal migrant is one who is responsible enough to acquire proper knowledge. In general, there are of course a wide range of NGOs (and social movements) advocating for migrants rights, and many figure the 'ideal

migrant' in rather different ways (in some cases, 'ideal migration' is no migration); however, it is against the sorts of critiques articulated by these kinds of NGOs that for example the Philippine state would (re)configure its migration policy especially with respect to migrant women. This becomes more clear in a following section on pre-deployment training.

The Formal Recruitment Process

The formal recruitment and contracting processes are organised differently in different types of sending states. In India, only few state-run 'Overseas Manpower Corporations' exist, whereas most of the business is performed by private actors that are accredited by government agencies. The Philippines, however, has a vast, transnational migration bureaucracy through which it facilitates out-migration.¹ These agencies perform four key functions: (i) authorization (by processing i.e. visas and passports of migrants), (ii) pre-departure skills training, (iii) marketing (advertising migrants to prospective employers), and (iv) conducting 'marketing missions' (bilateral negotiations with labour-receiving countries). It is in the recruitment process where many of the ideas of the 'ideal migrant' are (re)produced. Robyn Rodriguez (2010) describes for example how this is manifested in the posters and decorations that adorn government agencies. Some government officials in India envy how the system is organised in the Philippines (interviews by Helen Schwenken), because the government possesses much more control, whereas the recruitment sector in India is notorious for fraud activities and systematic cheating to the expense of the emigrant workers (Irudaya *et al.*, 2011).

The formal recruitment process by definition can only be completed successfully by those who manage the administrative procedure and that can bring or produce the requested documents. 'Good migrants' are thus bureaucracy-savvy individuals who potentially cause less trouble for their employers than undocumented or 'under'-documented migrants. Passing the recruitment phase is a test for passing the coming administrative procedures. At the same time, those who are less bureaucracy-savvy turn to labour recruiters for assistance, often at a very hefty cost.

In India, the state-regulated recruitment process is characterised by a specificity that divides all potential emigrants into two groups and contributes to the creation of correspondent subject positions – 'post-colonial migrant workers' and the so-called 'Global Indians'. The second group can go and return freely, whereas the first one cannot and is tied to a system that officially protects them but, in reality, creates a class of modern indentured labourers. The latter group possesses passports with a stamp that says that they do not have to ask for emigration clearance [emigration clearance not required (ECNR)], because they fulfil other requirements such as having graduated from grade 10 (Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, 2012: 51). The first group with emigration clearance required (ECR) stamps, however, are emigrants with less education. These emigrants have to go through a process of emigration clearance at one of the eight regional offices of the Protector of Emigrants when they intend to work abroad in a number of countries that include the most popular destinations for temporary migrant workers.² This system as well as the institution of the Protector of Emigrants was originally introduced under British colonial rule to manage indentured labour emigration and to protect colonial emigrant workers by checking that the required documents were in order (Irudaya *et al.*, 2011: 159). After independence, the system was carried on to protect potentially vulnerable Indian citizens from going abroad for work. Its current regulations are stated in the Emigration Act from 1983 (Government of India and Ministry of Labour, 1983). The idea is protection. However, in reality, it created even greater vulnerabilities and is an extremely costly process for the migrants because of the administrative requirements to be fulfilled (Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, 2009). To cope with administrative hurdles, many potential emigrants turn to private recruitment agencies that charge for their services often above government-set fees and also engage in fabricating the necessary documents. Men and women are treated differently: women below the age of 30 under the ECR category are not allowed to emigrate for example as domestic workers. Because the ECR system sets certain standards that cannot be kept by all applicants, it automatically creates ways of circumvention, such as collaboration with corrupt immigration authorities at airports. The system's logic has been coined

'protection by exception' (Irudaya *et al.*, 2011: 158). It discriminates against less educated Indian citizens and in particular against women. Although calling for protection, the system is not rights-based but relies on the presentation of (potentially fabricated) documents that created a huge market for private recruitment agents and related service providers. The ECR/ECNR system bifurcates the status of citizenship in that there are citizens who can leave the country freely and those who cannot. It 'reinvented the colonial logic of denying passports to certain categories of persons who were not thought fit to emigrate to white settlers' colonies' (Irudaya *et al.*, 2011: 159). This system is inherently contradictory, because it makes it, on the one hand, difficult for huge numbers of persons to emigrate and ascribes them the subject position of today's indentured labourers; on the other hand, it is exactly this group of Indians that is recruited enthusiastically abroad and has an excellent reputation as hardworking – and less demanding than most Filipinas and Filipinos – people. Indeed, Rodriguez finds that Philippine migration officials concern themselves with ensuring that the recruitment process is such that Filipinos and Filipinas can effectively 'compete' with Indians who are figured as potentially threatening the Philippines' status as a top labour-sending country for certain categories of workers, including nurses (Rodriguez, 2010: 61).

Open and public mobilisation against labour recruiters and recruitment practices are reported (e.g. on the case of temporary Indian workers in the USA, see Ness, 2011; on the Philippines, see Rodriguez, 2002). Migrants have raised concerns in particular about the exorbitant fees recruitment agencies demand from them to facilitate bureaucratic processes. A recruitment agency in India for example was destroyed by angry cheated return migrants, friends, and family members (Irudaya *et al.* 2011: 154). Hidden resistance is perhaps exercised through the evasion of the bureaucratic process (and those who might assist them in that process) altogether. Indeed, Nicholas De Genova suggests that migrants' attempts to physically cross borders in clandestine ways is a resistive act, 'The subjectivity of migrant labour is quite material and practical, indeed corporeal. It remains an unsettling presence that persistently disrupts the larger stakes of securing the regime of capital accumulation' (De Genova, 2009: 461).

Pre-Departure Training

In emigration countries, state institutions and private actors – businesses as well as migrants' rights organisations – have created pre-deployment programmes with a variety of aims attached. These aims include improving employability, facilitating adjustment to expected work and life in a foreign country, providing emigrants with awareness of their rights, and accommodating governments' nationalism by only sending 'good workers' abroad. Despite the variety of such pre-departure trainings and their intentions, we find commonalities in their actual practices. The most important similarity is that despite the call for more pre-departure trainings in the arenas of global migration governance (e.g. OSCE, 2009), the trainings – with only very few exceptions (in India in the state of Tamil Nadu – fieldwork observation in January 2012, Helen Schwenken) – do not provide to-be migrants with an awareness of their labour and human rights but are conducive in contributing to producing 'ideal migrant' subjects that are marketable and are able to adjust to (often harsh) working conditions instead of claiming their improvement.

Whether to-be migrant workers go through employment/skills-specific trainings, depends on the regulations in the countries of origin, the recruitment agency, the skills the to-be migrants come with, the expectations of their future employers, and other factors. Therefore, the technologies we describe for manufacturing ideal migrants through training need to be seen in context. In the Philippines, for example, many more training facilities for domestic workers, seafarers and entertainers exist than compared with India. Only certain regions of India are well-known for their specialised schools for nurses and IT specialists where education and training are also oriented towards employment abroad.

In the Philippines, we find a high density of programmes aimed at enhancing migrants' skills and providing them with better information about their countries of destination. These programmes are aimed at addressing moral panics (panics that NGOs, media, and the Catholic Church have played a role producing) about what is generally referred to as the 'social costs of migration'. As stated in Republic Act (RA) 8042, the law governing overseas migration that was passed in the wake of controversies over migrant domestic

workers' vulnerabilities, 'The State recognizes that the ultimate protection to all migrant workers is the possession of skills. Pursuant to this and as soon as practicable, the government shall deploy and/or allow the deployment only to skilled Filipino workers' (POEA, 1996). This focus on skills and information acquisition is informed by neoliberal logics of 'responsibilization' as the state averts accountability for playing a role in exporting women into risky kinds of employment overseas.

Indeed, although pre-departure programmes mandated for 'vulnerable' workers are supposed to address migrants' rights, they ultimately attempt to regulate women's dispositions at work (to embody 'natural' Philippine cultural traits of self-sacrifice, hard-work, and religiosity) as well as regulate their sexuality (i.e. to curb the potential for them to possibly engage in relationships with local men in their countries of destination and thereby possibly settle, have children and make claims in their newly adopted homes) (Rodriguez, 2010: 63).

Pre-departure employment training is often oriented to the employer and guaranteeing 'workers' quality' (Liang, 2011: 1822). Training centres can take the form of 'total institutions' where full control over the lives of the prospective migrants is exercised (Liang, 2011: 1825). First is the upgrading of their skills, second is the acquiring of adequate attitude, and third is the needed ethics that is considered appropriate by the employers for, for example, 'live-in maids'. The concrete techniques that were applied in these trainings include a rigorous daily schedule with no days off and training from very early in the morning until late at night, obeying to strict hierarchies, living collective lives in often difficult sanitary and cramped spaces, the performance of docility and working under high pressure. Li-Fang Liang concludes that docile bodies are produced through these daily practices in the pre-departure trainings that qualify the women for their future jobs (Liang, 2011: 1823). Migrants themselves elect to participate in skills training even if it is not necessarily prescribed by governments or employers. They believe that the ideal subject is a skilled worker, a professional of sorts. Skills trainings or professionalization, for migrants, guarantees them better earnings, they think. They also believe it earns them respect and status when they are overseas. Skills training

is also linked to responsabilisation. These are investments in the self; those who do not invest in themselves, it is implied, are responsible for their own failures.

In the case of Indian IT specialists looking for overseas employment, Xiang Biao has shown how the upgrading of skills, in this case post-graduate training in private institutions on new software versions, actually does not convert into finding a job or higher wages. The prime aim is to 'manage the queue' (Biao, 2007), that means to 'shelve' unemployed highly qualified IT workers, who do not immediately find a job abroad because of the 'overproduction' of IT workers. At the same time, these training programmes are an essential source of income for India-based business, because they charge high fees. They are thus a constituent part of the migration industry. Xiang Biao also observed the less obvious meaning of these trainings, they 'made their earnings not so much by selling bodies (workers) to clients overseas, but by selling jobs or life opportunities abroad to workers' (Biao, 2007: 44). In the case of Filipina domestic workers, Anna Guevarra points to a similar mechanism, the commodification and marketing of dreams (Guevarra, 2010). Commercial pre-departure trainings and labour brokers thus actively address feelings of self-responsibility and dreams to make the to-be migrants buy into training that shall uplift their employability abroad.

But not all pre-departure programmes work this way, nationalism and governments' awareness of sending good representatives of their country abroad are also reflected in some of these programmes. In the case of domestic workers, the Indian government mimics the Filipino model of skill-upgrading certificates – the 'Supermaid' programme (Network Opposed to Violence Against Women Migrants *et al.*, n.a.) – that try to amend the reputation of Indian domestic workers (who often are only second choice after Filipinas) and make them less exploitable by increasing their value for the employers through education (interview with domestic worker organisation in India by Helen Schwenken).

Matching with Employers

The matching of employees and employers works either online, on paper, or by bringing together employers with potential employees.

The matching can take place before departure, while in transit or upon arrival at the destination. Private labour recruiters play a crucial role in matching and in further constructing the 'ideal migrant worker'. James Tyner examines how private recruitment agencies utilise the internet in this process. He argues that agencies 'promote their worker-applicants as reliable, docile, hardworking and subservient' (Tyner, 2004: 200).

The matching criteria engaged in by recruiters do not necessarily correspond with the needed skills. In the case of the matching of Indonesian, Vietnamese, and Filipina women with Taiwanese employers, work attitudes and skills seemed to be less important, whereas the information that potential employers most prioritized were skin tone, habits, and physical appearance (Liang, 2011: 1824–1829). The criterion therefore seems to be to match employers with the type of migrant subject they expect to be a 'good migrant' on the basis of national and racialized stereotypes.

Hiring a Filipina as a caregiver or domestic worker prompts two contradicting stereotypes: Filipinas are associated as the 'Mercedes Benz' among domestic workers, as a brand name; they are supposed to be hardworking, compliant, and able to fulfill all other criteria of a desired migrant. On the other hand, they have a reputation as demanding too high wages, being unruly, having too much knowledge about their rights, and being prone to changing jobs when a better one comes across their way (fieldwork Robyn Rodriguez and Helen Schwenken; Gardiner Barber, 2008: 1276; Liang, 2011). In fact, this negative reputation is a consequence of migrants' actually leveraging their Philippine citizenship to demand that the Philippine government protects them as the nation's heroes by negotiating with labour-importing governments to improve Filipino migrants' conditions of employment.

Sometimes workers experience the matching with employers as being sold. In their study on recruitment practices in India, Irudaya *et al.* recall the experiences of Deepthi who left her home state of Kerala irregularly for Kuwait. She was first brought by the recruitment agency to Colombo where the matching with the Gulf-based employers took place: '[I]t was a kind of sale in which the agent takes a sum of money from the employer and gives women workers' (Irudaya *et al.*, 2011: 153). After arrival

in Kuwait, she again felt as if she was sold, because she was initially promised to work as a cleaner in a school, but then found herself 'sold' by a local recruitment agency, which was linked through family bonds to her initial agency in Kerala, to a Kuwaiti household for domestic work (Irudaya *et al.*, 2011: 154). Such threatening experiences contribute to making migrants feel helpless and commodified.

Pauline Gardiner Barber makes the argument that Filipinas attempting to leave as caregivers for Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan were found to 'downplay their skills, sexualities and class identities' (Gardiner Barber, 2008: 1274) to perform subordination, which is the expected subject position. One extreme case is the downskilling of doctors to emigrate as nurses or caregivers (Gardiner Barber, 2008: 1279); whereas those Filipinas planning to go to Canada under the Live-In Caregiver Programme have to prove and perform health-related education and ability. These examples show that Filipinas seem to embody both agendas of desirability – the skilled caregiver as well as the 'docile' and 'not well-skilled'. The common denominator is the imagination of Filipinas as 'adaptive' and 'hard-working'. A country such as India that has less of a track record in labour brokerage, tries to copy some of the instruments of the Filipino model, not only because it is lauded in international arenas as the best one, but also to increase competitiveness. Part of this competitiveness is the ideal 'personnel' – migrant workers.

CONCLUSION

The central argument is that (ideal) migrants are 'made' even before they have actually left their respective countries. We are currently in a moment where temporary labour migration regimes are being promoted more and more actively by different peripheral countries as a developmental intervention. The Philippines has been lauded as a model of migration management and countries such as India are following suit to some degree. These countries have reaped the economic, political, and social benefits of remittances and see the promotion of e/migration (and therefore, the prospects of even greater remittances) as increasingly vital. Meanwhile, labour-importing countries and the various actors that constitute the migration industry

(private labour recruitment agencies, travel agencies, etc.) have their own investments in e/migration as their profits derive from the expansion of state-supported e/migration. Migration is welcomed by many people as representing the hope for better livelihoods; others contest it for its negative social impact. Hence, a wide range of social actors, although sometimes for different and even competing ends, are engaging in the construction of migrants and migration in the source society – even before a person has left the country.

In this paper, we carved out how subjectivation processes in labour emigration countries are neither structurally determined nor a matter of individuals' dispositions, but a consequence of multiple, sometimes contradictory forces. A broad range of social actors that include but are not limited to the private sector and the state have investments in producing the 'ideal' migrant. Interestingly, despite the fact that these various actors' aims may be at cross purposes, in some cases to promote migration and in other cases to prevent migration (and this can be performed in either overt or subtle, hidden ways), we also find points of convergence in the ways the 'ideal' migrant is produced by them.

We find that the migrant subjectivities that exist in the contemporary emigration states of the Philippines and India have roots in the colonial period. For both states, emigration was figured as a mode by which colonial subjects could be 'modernized'. This resonates with the subjectification of migrants as 'agents of development' in the present moment. Amongst the range of subjectivities that are produced in the contemporary period are the idealised mother, the productive worker, the development/citizen-subject, the returnee, and so on. These subjectivities are counterposed to the vulnerable or even 'bad' migrant: non-productive (i.e. not sending remittances), unable to cope with the hardships of migration, and so on. Although the two countries have very different self-conceptualizations about whether they are labour exporting and emigration states, one of the key findings is that both countries draw on similar technologies in producing migrant subjects. In the Philippines, state institutions as well as private actors, such as training centres, play a major role. In India, the state is also involved in setting the regulatory framework, which draws

on its colonial legacies; but given the much smaller emigration bureaucracy and the regional concentration of emigration, the state plays a minor, though increasingly important role. We find too that migrants, although sometimes identifying with the subject positions ascribed to them by states, private business, and NGOs, can form a basis for critiquing systems of labour emigration.

ENDNOTES

- (1) The key government agency is the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration that is based in the Philippines. This agency, however, works closely with the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority and the Department of Labor and Employment. Furthermore, the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration works with the government's consular and embassy staff managed by the Department of Foreign Affairs outside of the Philippines.
- (2) Emigration clearance is required for emigrants to 17 countries (Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, 2007): United Arab Emirates, The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain, Malaysia, Libya, Jordan, Yemen, Sudan, Brunei, Afghanistan, Indonesia, Syria, Lebanon, and Thailand. Emigration to Iraq is completely banned because of security concerns.

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