

AN INTERNATIONAL LABOUR MIGRATION TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN ASIA: A CASE STUDY OF KOREA

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International labour migration has been an essential feature of capitalist development throughout the world. In the past ten to fifteen years, the newly industrializing economies in Asia underwent a historical change from labour exporter to labour importer status. While structural changes have provided the context for such unprecedented reversal in labour migration, the flow of international labour migration (ILM) is directly mediated by contradictory and flexible state policies. Unlike the past labour migration from underdeveloped to developed regions of the world, the recent labour migration to developing countries in Asia reveals that the illegalization of foreign labourers is an integral part of their temporary labour importation schemes. Based on a survey research in Korea, this paper points out the inadequacies of existing labour migration theories in explaining labour migration to developing countries in Asia, identifies unique features of labour migration to developing countries, and brings to light specific state strategies for maintaining control over both legal and illegal labourers.

INTRODUCTION

According to a report released by the Ministry of Justice in Korea, there were 81,824 foreign workers, representing over thirty countries as of December 31, 1994.¹ The phenomenon of workers migrating into “developed” countries is not new. However, such a movement of migrant workers into rapidly “developing” countries in the last ten to fifteen years reveals one of the historical paradoxes; whereas in the 1960s and 1970s a massive number of Korean skilled and non-skilled workers has traversed overseas in search of better economic opportunities and political freedom, now, Korea is becoming a magnet for migrant workers from countries like China, the Philippines, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Pakistan. Relatedly, three other “Asian tigers”—Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore—have experienced similar changes in migration flows and the

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¹Minister of Labor held a press conference, where this figure was obtained, on February 13, 1995 to address the government’s position on the emerging issue of foreign workers in Korea.

ethnic make-up of their labour force as they began to develop economically and politically.

Although some contemporary literature on international labour migration (hereupon ILM) have attempted to delineate various types of migration (Appleyard 1992), many of them fell into the trap of creating competing "meta-theories" which, in one way or other, purport to explain the complexities of ILM across time and contexts. The two predominant theories of labour migration in the past have emphasized either a rational actor² or conflict,³ rooted in materialist, approach. Recently, however, the "systems" analysis entered the debate on ILM. Kritz, Lim, and Zlotnik et al., representing the systems approach, for instance, attempted to integrate various factors of migration and pursued somewhat satisfactorily to explain the complex nature of ILM. The basic premise of the systems thesis rests on the argument that (1) international population movements complement the flows and exchanges between countries, (2) these exchanges are historical (colonial and political), economic (trade/investments), and cultural in origin, and (3) migration flows are further mediated by and depend on a number of contexts, i.e. political (policies regarding exit, entry, and settlement), economic (wage and price differentials), social (welfare differentials and migrant networks-both individual/family/ clandestine), and demographic (fertility differentials and short-term travel links).

Despite its sensitivity to contexts in which ILM occurs, a number of questions and unsolved issues remain when one tries to apply the systems thesis to the developing countries in Asia. A principal inadequacy of this model is rooted in its primary focus on migration flows from "underdeveloped" to "developed" nations, especially to the U.S., New Zealand, Canada, and Australia. In order to comprehend a more recent phenomenon of labor flows into developing countries, however, one must specify the degree to which such contextual factors contribute to the migratory systems and how specifically rational choice, structural and systems approaches interact in ILM to developing countries. For instance, what is the relationship between temporary and clandestine migration and

²The rational man theory assumes that potential workers seek out alternative places to maximize their earning potential by weighing the costs and benefits of migration in terms of one's social and economic positions between one's home and host countries. A critical shortcoming of this thesis is its failure to explain institutional and structural factors that mediate the flow of migrant labourers.

³Although there is some validity in this school of thought, it also fails to recognize that not all migrations can be attributed to structural factors such as class conflict deriving from uneven development and uneven exchanges between core and periphery countries.

government policies in developing countries? To what extent does the individual characteristics of migrants affect and shape networks of ILM in the countries of origin and destination? What is the role of developing countries in terms of facilitating the needs of international migrants who no longer perceive one country as the ultimate choice of their destination? What role does the government in developing countries play in terms of criminalization of international laborers whose incorporation into their economies are not only necessary, but increasingly becoming vital to their continued development? The response to these questions will invariably dictate the necessity of separating ILM to developing countries from a much more general model of ILM into developed countries.

This paper, then, attempts to tease out specific issues related to ILM into developing countries in Asia by focusing on a case study conducted in Korea and makes comparative efforts to formulate a general theory of ILM into developing countries in Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan with specific emphasis on the interaction between the state and migrant workers.

METHODOLOGY: ISSUES OF SAMPLING AND INTERVIEW STRATEGIES

Although the population under study was limited to temporary migrant workers from less developed countries, there were many challenging issues in terms of obtaining a representative sample from a diverse population. To begin with, migrant workers came from close to thirty different countries representing Southeast Asia, Asia Pacific, Central and South Asia, and Africa. Consequently, communication with the respondents was in many ways limited to English or Korean, sometimes in combination. In numerous occasions, I had to rely on translators who spoke one of the two languages. Nonetheless, I knew from the beginning of the project that obtaining data from all the countries was, to say the least, a formidable task. For this reason, I purposely limited the number of countries which would eventually represent the total migrant population by selecting the largest sub-population groups in the country. Even though the data obtained by the Ministry of Justice did not accurately reflect the migrant population, I had to rely on this source to come up with a stratified sample which would best represent the top six countries with the largest migrant workers in Korea.

Secondly, in an effort to obtain a random sample of each sub-population, I utilized various methods and contacts to reach out to as many and as diverse group of people as possible. First, I secured a position as a volunteer at The Association for Foreign Workers' Human Rights, located at the center

of capital city, Seoul, where I assisted migrant workers in matters dealing with conflicts with the companies for which they worked, ranging from passport confiscation and physical abuses to delayed and/or non-payment of wages and job related accidents and illnesses. Since most of the workers who visited the center had a certain degree of confidence and trust, I was able to develop immediate rapport with them. Second, I also taught Korean language at a church in Shindorim, one of the central areas of Seoul where thousands of migrant workers reside. In addition, I visited a number of other churches, mosques and temples throughout the Seoul capital region and gained cooperation from respective religious leaders to conduct interviews and complete questionnaires. Third, having established networks through NGOs and religious organizations, I came in contact with literally thousands of workers over a period of ten months. In this process, I came to know several migrant workers who were quite active in their respective groups extremely well and was introduced to their friends. As a consequence, I visited their place of residence, which in most cases turned out to be company boarding houses inside the factories.

Finally, in order to maximize the response rate among the respondents, I began the task of translating the questionnaire into their national languages by requesting a favor from the embassies. Due to the enthusiastic response from most of the embassies, the survey was translated from English into Urdu, Bengali, Chinese, Indonesian, and Sri Lankan languages. The survey questionnaire, consisting of 114 questions, was divided into six sections: basic background information, methods of recruitment, employment history, living conditions and situations, leisure and mobility, and general attitudes on being in Korea. The ethnic breakdown of 431 respondents is as follows: Pakistan (105); Philippines (77); Sri Lanka (71); Bangladesh (67); Indonesia (40); Myanmar (26); China (22); Nepal (16); Iran (2); Kazakhstan (2); Malaysia (1); Vietnam (1); and Ghana (1). The survey period started from mid-October in 1995 to mid-March in 1996.

CHARACTERISTICS OF MIGRANT WORKERS IN KOREA

The number of foreigners entering Korea has increased manifold particularly within the last five years. The uneven development of capitalism in the world has mobilized adventurous workers from all corners of the world to this tiny divided peninsula, whose existence had been unrecognized by most of the world until only a decade ago. This sudden "Korean dream" phenomenon is inextricably intertwined with both Korea's phenomenal economic growth in the global markets and its growing

demand for labourers in small to mid-size manufacturing firms. Demand for foreign workers was especially increased as native Koreans enjoy a higher standard of living and are turning away from difficult labor. Although capitalists may argue that workers inevitably follow the lead of capital, the fact that Korea opened its iron gates inwardly to foreigners marks a significant change in Korea's history. Timing is another notable factor. The entrance of foreigners who do not share similar cultures, histories, and politics is occurring at a time when reform minded president Kim is emphasizing the crucial need for globalization. In economic theory, the fluid movement of capital and labor across national boundaries is of paramount importance if countries are to progressively develop economies. In real life, however, the movement of laborers not only affects economic aspect of growth, but also impacts the social, political and cultural dynamics of a country as well.

As the label, "developing" country, suggests, Korea is constantly changing at a rate surpassing those of "advanced" nations. In many ways, the influx of foreigners from South East Asia and the Pacific Islands places Korea at a crossroads between further economic development on the one hand, and an inevitable transformation towards multicultural society, on the other. As of today, it is estimated that well over 130,000 foreigners, representing more than 30 nations, are working and living in Korea. They are not only heterogeneous in terms of national representations, but also quite diverse in terms of religious beliefs, marital status, economic and educational backgrounds. As the table 1 and 2 below show, the method of entry to Korea differs greatly as well. Broadly, there are foreigners whose status is either legal or illegal according to a law stipulated by the Immigration Bureau, which is an arm of the Ministry of Justice, where the former includes 29 categories and the latter consists of people who overstayed their visas, who left their proper worksites as trainees, and who entered Korea without visas. Of primary importance in the legal category in terms of where industrial laborers are concerned is the foreign industrial trainees. It is estimated that a little less than 35% of total foreigners in Korea are initially trainees working in primarily small to mid-size companies, but the actual percentage of trainees completing one or two year contract period has declined significantly as a result of trainees leaving the companies before the expiration of their contracts. Their reasons for flight include lower pay compared to other workers employed illegally, inhospitable living conditions, forced overtime work, and lack of freedom. The specific problems related to foreign industrial trainee system will be treated separately below.

TABLE 1. THE NUMBER OF FOREIGN WORKERS IN KOREA BY COUNTRY (AS OF DECEMBER 31, 1995)

	China	Philippines	Vietnam	Bangladesh	Nepal	Pakistan	Sri Lanka	Indonesia	Thailand	Other	Total
Trainees '94	7,528	2,639	N/A	1,521	767	617	935	930	0	3,560	18,497
Trainees '95	12,663	5,050	2,523	N/A	N/A	N/A	1,310	1,585	403	4,794	28,328
Trainees '96	15,070	5,761	4,369	2,087	N/A	N/A	1,447	2,213	329	3,655	34,931
Overstayers (12/94)	18,676	7,538	N/A	5,256	2,087	2,277	N/A	N/A	N/A	11,701	47,535
Overstayers (7/95)	25,970	8,476	N/A	5,533	2,222	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	19,271	61,472
Overstayers (12/95)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	81,866
Total	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	128,906

Source: Park, Seok-Woon. 1996. "The Situation of Migrant Workers in Korea." Unpublished paper. Data originally obtained from the Ministry of Justice, Korea.

TABLE 2. THE NUMBER OF FOREIGN WORKERS IN KOREA BY LEGAL CATEGORIES

	Legally Residing in Korea				Subtotal	Illegally Residing in Korea	Total
	Investment Abroad (Trainees)	Invitation by KFSB (Trainees)	Other Legally Employed in Korea				
July 31, 1994	N/A	N/A	4,321		13,378	54,187	71,886
Dec. 31, 1994	9,512	18,816	5,265		33,593	48,231	81,824
July 31, 1995	N/A	N/A	6,475		34,931	61,472	102,878
Dec. 31, 1995	1,739 (1.35%)	37,073 (28.76%)	8,228 (6.38%)		38,812 (30.11%)	81,866 (63.50%)	128,906 (100.0%)

Source: Park, Seok-Woon. 1996. "The Situation of Migrant Workers in Korea." Unpublished paper. Data originally obtained from the Ministry of Justice, Korea.

As indicated in the table 1, people from China, including Chinese nationals and ethnic Koreans born in China, represent about forty-three percent of all trainees admitted thus far. Filipinos make up the next largest group of trainees and the rest are more or less evenly distributed among the South and Southeast Asians. Recently, however, an increasing number of trainees from the former Central Asian USSR countries such as Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan have joined automobile and other manufacturing firms in Korea. In addition, the table 2 shows that about one-third of all trainees were recruited by Korean companies under the "investment abroad" program, while the remaining two-thirds of trainees arrived in Korea through the invitation by the Korean Federation of Small Business (KFSB). Although the percentage of trainees and other legally employed foreigners ranges from 40 to 50 percent, the number of people residing and/or working illegally in Korea has been increasing steadily each year. The official figure of foreigners who maintain legal status as of March 1996 stands at about 38,812 (30.11%), while the number of foreigners whose visa expired and of trainees who left their assigned companies reached 81,866 (63.50%).

Based on a random sampling of 431 foreigners in Korea, the findings indicate that the average age ranges from 26 to 32 representing relatively young workforce. It is important to note that almost 70% of them are still unmarried and that an extremely high percentage of foreigners is males. Filipinos, however, tend to be older, much more balanced in terms of both gender representation (44% women) and marital status (48% married). On the other hand, 69% of Sri Lankans fall below the age of 30 and only 18% are married, and even greater percentage of Indonesians is registered between the ages of 19 and 29 (90%) and unmarried (90%). This wide disparity in the characteristics of foreign workers in Korea is also reflected in the level of education. Whereas 47% of foreign workers received post-high school education in their country of origin, the figures for Pakistan(59%), Bangladesh(66%) and the Philippines(68%) registered significantly higher level of education than both Sri Lankans (21%) and Indonesians (15%) (see table 3B). In terms of religion, a significant degree of diversity exists as well. Moslems are typically concentrated among the Bengalis, Pakistanis, and Indonesians; Christians among the Filipinos; and Buddhists among Sri Lankans.

Finally, a common conception about foreign workers in Korea is that they come from economically poor countries. In fact, the majority (69.6%) of the workers' household income in their home countries makes less than US\$450 per month (see table 3C). This amounts to less than one half of what an

TABLE 3A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF FOREIGN WORKERS IN KOREA

	Mean Age	Age Distribution (%)					N	% Male	N	% Married	N
		19-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-up					
Bangladesh	29.34	20.9	35.8	28.4	9.0	6.0	67	98.5	67	33	66
Pakistan	29.15	24.8	38.1	19.0	9.5	8.6	105	100	105	34	104
Philippines	32.16	16.0	26.7	22.7	18.7	16.0	75	55.8	77	48	77
Indonesia	24.83	45.0	45.0	10.0	0	0	40	82.5	40	10	40
Sri Lanka	27.80	21.1	47.9	28.2	2.8	0	71	88.7	71	18	71
Other	28.45	31.9	24.6	30.4	7.2	5.8	69	95.8	71	30	70
Total	28.97	25.1	35.8	23.7	8.7	6.8	427	87.7	431	30.8	428

TABLE 3B. BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF FOREIGN WORKERS IN KOREA

	Education (%)*					Religion (%)**					N
	H.S.	Jr.Col.	Col.	MA	N	a	b	c	d	e	
Bangladesh	34.3	32.8	25.4	7.5	67	4.5	7.5	88.1	0	0	67
Pakistan	35.6	23.1	29.8	5.8	104	0	0	98.1	1.9	0	105
Philippines	32.4	29.7	35.1	2.7	74	0	0	0	100	0	77
Indonesia	75.0	12.5	2.5	0	40	0	0	100.0	0	0	40
Sri Lanka	69.1	19.1	1.5	0	68	0	94.2	0	4.4	1.5	69
Other	62.0	19.7	16.9	1.4	71	12.1	30.3	9.1	34.8	13.6	66
Total	52.4	23.6	20.8	3.3	424	2.6	21.2	49.1	24.8	2.4	424

* "H.S." denotes the percentage of interviewees who graduated from High Schools (9-12 grades), "Jr. Col." and "Col." for people who obtained college degrees in two year and four year colleges respectively, and "MA" signifies those who earned Master's degree or higher.

** "a" denotes Hinduism; "b" (Buddhism); "c" (Islam); "d" (Christianity); "e" (Other)

average Korean makes. Since most of the foreign workers come from extended families with an average of six to eight persons per household (see table 3C), individual income and earning power is naturally lowered. This general picture alone, however, hides variations within the foreign worker population. Indonesians and Sri Lankans, for instance, have particularly lower household income than Pakistanis and Filipinos. At the same time, the latter two groups of foreigners, especially Pakistanis, come from somewhat larger families. Given the fact that most, if not all, of the countries represented in this survey are suffering from poor economic conditions and rising social problems, people caught between the well-to-do and the poor segments of the population tend to seek opportunities outside the country. Nonetheless, the important fact remains that there is a close relationship between their ability to finance rather exorbitant costs to go to

TABLE 3C. BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF FOREIGN WORKERS IN KOREA

	HSHD Size*	N	Monthly Family Income in the Country of Origin (\$)							N
			0 to 100	101 to 200	201 to 450	451 to 600	601 to 800	801 to 1,200	1,201 and up	
			Bangladesh	7.2	62	15.4	46.2	27.7	10.8	
Pakistan	9.8	100	5.3	12.6	23.2	18.9	23.2	12.6	4.2	95
Philippines	7.3	73	14.3	34.3	17.1	24.3	5.7	1.4	2.9	70
Indonesia	6.6	39	36.1	41.7	19.4	2.8	0	0	0	36
Sri Lanka	6.7	69	59.0	8.2	18.0	4.9	6.6	3.3	0	61
Other	6.4	61	43.1	7.7	15.4	4.6	7.7	12.3	9.2	65
Total	7.6	404	26.0	23.2	20.4	12.5	8.9	5.9	3.1	392

*"HSHD size" denotes the number of family members in the household of the respondent.

countries like Korea and the method of entry.

Method of Entry and Choice of Destination

Broadly, there are four different routes through which potential foreign workers enter Korea. Again, these entry routes can be further broken down to legal and illegal methods; legally, foreigners can enter Korea with tourist or industrial trainee visas and for the purpose of conducting legitimate business;⁴ illegally, an increasing number of foreigners banks on clandestine organizations and/or individual brokers who smuggle them across national boundaries. In the former case, many tourists have overstayed their visas and have illegally employed in small to mid-size companies, while a sizable number of trainees broke contracts with host companies and found employment in other companies illegally. Since the number of foreign workers has been increasing dramatically each year, the demand for entrepreneurs who can provide ethnic foods, travel and other services and products has also increased.⁵ In terms of the illegal method of entry, several

⁴There is, of course, a diverse group of foreigners entering Korea, ranging from students and skilled workers to military and government personnel and entertainers.

⁵A number of small size ethnic foods shops has sprang up in areas where foreign workers are concentrated. For Moslems, Halal foods stores that are run by fellow countrymen became quite popular among Pakistanis, Bengalis, Indonesians, Iranians, and other Moslems from all over the world. These shops provide not only religiously acceptable meat, but also different kinds of spices, sweets, and other household items. Interestingly, some successful businessmen have broadened the choice of goods which include videotapes imported and/or smuggled directly from their native homeland, and clothes, leather jackets, and blankets. Due to the popularity of these convenience stores, they naturally became a meeting ground for many foreigners who frequently exchange information about their homeland, possible job opportunities both in Korea and other countries.

well organized groups actively engage in smuggling potential workers to the countries of their customers' choice. The costs incurred by foreigners desperate to leave their home country vary according to destination; for developing countries such as Korea, the total costs range from US\$3,000 to \$5,000, while it can cost twice as much for such developed countries as the U.S. and Japan. In exchange, brokers prepare necessary paper work and provide passports for these individuals. Since it has become a normal operational practice to use forged names on the passports for illegal entry, some foreigners quite easily cross national boundaries. In fact, some foreigners who worked in Korea for about a year decide to try their luck in places like Japan where average salary is significantly higher than Korea. The method of travel also depends greatly on the availability of opportunities presented to brokers who normally embark their customers either on fishing boats and commercial ships or on the airplanes. Even though traveling across oceans is known to be extremely dangerous, they do not find out how they will enter a country until the last minute. More importantly, many of the established brokers are internationally connected and have wide networks, often making deals with immigration officers in the receiving countries. As long as such a reciprocal relationship between brokers and immigration officers continues, it would be near impossible to stem the tide of foreigners entering countries illegally.

As noted earlier, survey respondents clearly come from countries that are "less developed" than Korea. As expected an overwhelming majority of foreigners whose primary goal in coming to Korea is to make money (see table 3D). This fact alone, however, neither explains concrete socio-

TABLE 3D. BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF FOREIGN WORKERS IN KOREA

	Reasons for being in Korea (%)*					Influence Factors (%)**					
	a	b	c	d	N	a	b	c	d	e	N
Bangladesh	94.0	0	12.0	0	67	43.8	20.8	18.8	2.1	14.6	65
Pakistan	91.3	4.9	11.7	1.9	103	20.6	53.9	6.9	21.6	0	102
Philippines	86.7	9.3	24.0	4.0	76	2.6	26.3	23.7	50.0	7.9	77
Indonesia	75.0	5.0	25.0	12.5	40	47.4	5.2	10.5	21.1	18.4	38
Sri Lanka	95.8	2.8	5.6	0	71	14.0	24.6	40.4	7.0	17.5	57
Other	85.9	15.6	21.8	1.6	70	12.5	28.1	10.9	40.6	10.9	70
Total	89.1	6.4	15.8	2.7	427	20.3	31.3	17.7	25.7	9.9	409

* Choices in the "Reasons for being in Korea": "a" (to earn money); "b" (to experience different culture); "c" (to learn specific skill); "d" (Other).

** Choices in the "Influence Factors" category: "a" (media-television, newspapers, magazines, etc.); "b" (friends); "c" (families/relatives); "d" (recruiters/brokers); "e" (other)

economic and political contexts in which migration of potential workers occurs, nor captures the interlocking relationship between potential migrants' desire to actualize their intended goals and specific circumstances and opportunities which make their trip possible. Similarly, it would be equally erroneous to assume that all foreign workers in Korea lack human capital or possess homogeneous characteristics because they come from countries that are less developed. Just as foreign workers in Korea have diverse educational, religious, and socioeconomic characteristics, the method of entry to Korea varied greatly as well. While 49% of all survey respondents said that they were influenced mostly by their friends and family members, a sizable number of foreigners claimed that recruiters(25.7%) played the most important role in terms of providing information about job opportunities in Korea. However, only 20.3% suggested that such information providers as television, newspapers and magazines affected their decision to come to Korea. This outcome supports the view that most foreigners who spend many years of savings to finance the trip do not make haste decisions to cross national boundaries, especially if one tries to enter a country illegally. In many cases, the potential migrants learn of job opportunities abroad through either their neighbors or close relatives.

Even though a great majority of foreigners in Korea voiced that the primary purpose in seeking job opportunities in Korea is closely related to earning money, the ways in which they chose to come to Korea differ widely. Whereas 44% of respondents arrived in Korea legally through

TABLE 3E. BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF FOREIGN WORKERS IN KOREA

	Method of Entry (%)*						Broker Fees		Overseas**	
	a	b	c	d	e	N	US \$	N	% Yes	N
Bangladesh	25.0	14.1	59.4	0	1.6	64	3,095	31	23.0	61
Pakistan	3.0	15.8	52.5	27.7	5.0	101	3,318	53	36.9	103
Philippines	0	18.4	68.4	19.7	2.6	77	1,866	61	13.5	74
Indonesia	0	82.1	0	17.9	0	39	1,372	37	10.3	39
Sri Lanka	71.4	11.4	2.9	10.0	4.3	70	1,097	27	16.2	68
Other	6.3	49.2	22.2	17.5	4.8	70	2,282	44	10.1	69
Total	17.1	27.1	39.9	17.2	3.6	421	2,239	253	20.3	414

* Under "Method of Entry" each category represents the following: "a" (through government sponsored program); "b" (through company sponsored program as a trainee); "c" (as a tourist); "d" (through a recruiter); "e" (Other).

** "Overseas" denotes the percentage of survey respondents who have experience working in another country aside from their own country and Korea.

government and company sponsored programs, close to 40% came to Korea with tourist visas and another 17% were assisted by brokers. Since 90% of respondents who hold tourist visas said that they are currently working, it clearly suggests that more than half of all foreigners left their country of origin with the intention of working illegally in Korea. More importantly, there appears to be a sharp division among the nationalities. While most of the Bengalis, Pakistanis and Filipinos came to Korea as tourists and/or through brokers, 82% of Indonesians and 83% of Sri Lankans chose to take much safer route under the government and company sponsorship.⁶ In the latter cases, potential trainees must pay brokerage fees to manpower agencies which administer the entire process from recruitment to placement into companies in Korea. In addition, Bengalis, Pakistanis and Filipinos paid significantly higher travel costs than both Indonesians and Sri Lankans; drawing from the table 3E, the former ethnic groups paid on average US\$2,660 while the latter group paid only US\$1,256. Incidentally, a significant number of foreign workers disguised as tourists and of people assisted by brokers has prior experience working abroad (see table 3E). As mentioned briefly earlier, an increasing number of migrant workers who either forge names on the passports or pay brokers to gain entry into a country illegally has grown rapidly as the network of clandestine brokers expanded. This suggests that potential migrant workers are able to enter a country quite easily under pseudonyms as long as they are able to afford

TABLE 3F. BROKER FEES, EDUCATION LEVEL, AND AGE BY METHOD OF ENTRY

	Unit	a Gov't	b Trainee	c Tourist	d Recruit	e Other	Total*
Broker fees	US\$/	\$1441	\$2007	\$2192	\$2781	\$1400	\$2206
	(N)	(40)	(83)	(62)	(54)	(4)	(243)
Education	%	11.70	12.63	14.29	12.71	13.92	13.20
	(N)	(70)	(111)	(151)	(55)	(13)	(400)
Age	%	26.96	26.02	31.65	29.27	30.92	28.99
	(N)	(72)	(109)	(152)	(56)	(13)	(402)
Married	%	19.7	15.5	38.8	45.6	30.8	30.4
	(N)	(71)	(110)	(152)	(57)	(13)	(403)

*"Total" includes the missing cases in the "method of entry" question; for instance, when the questions regarding "broker fees" and "method of entry" were crosstabulated, the average age turned out to be 29.07 among 392 respondents. This means that 11 people failed to respond to the "method" of entry question. Questions pertaining to "marital status," "educational level," and

⁶When comparing to the study done by the Ministry of Justice (see table 1), these figures appear to be quite representative of the total foreign worker population.

high price for such trips. Nonetheless, the important fact remains that people who use brokers to cross national boundaries must pay enormous amount of money.

Against this background, it should be mentioned that people who come from less developed countries and who pay a large sum of money to come to countries like Korea are not representative of the population in their respective countries. This survey clearly showed that many of these adventurous migrant workers tend to be more educated than the national averages in their home countries; in close examination, those who came to Korea through independent brokers and/or as tourists paid significantly higher fees than those who came through government and company sponsorship. As expected, the former group tends to be more educated and is likely to be older and married as compared to trainees (see table 3F). This fact reinforces the view that only a specific segment of the population from the less developed countries has the opportunity and available resources to go abroad.

Job placements and working situations

The problems associated with foreigners' employment opportunities and working conditions in Korea are diverse. First, irrespective of their socio-economic status in their country of origin, the access to secure jobs for foreigners in Korea is in fact quite limited. Despite their educational backgrounds, they begin to search for jobs indiscriminately as long as they are not compelled to cross their religious and personal-moral beliefs. For this reason, foreign workers take on jobs that native workers tend to avoid in a variety of areas, since these jobs are available more frequently than other jobs that might draw competition with native Koreans. Searching for these jobs, however, is not an easy task. Since most of their friends are already working in various industrial complexes in and around Seoul capital region, the majority of potential workers are being "recycled" in these areas. As such, despite relative invisibility of foreign workers, locating where they work is quite simple. Second, because many jobs opened to foreign workers are in small companies, a number of problems related to non-payment of and/or delayed wages and absence of industrial accident insurance reached an epidemic proportion. Compounding these problems, the differences in culture, language, and custom create difficulties between native Korean workers and foreigners. Finally, they have legitimate fears of being caught by the police or the immigration officers since the majority of foreigners are residing and working illegally. Nonetheless, a steady stream

of foreign workers cross national boundaries everyday in search of perceived opportunities abroad.

Upon arrival in Korea, foreigners have several avenues through which they can attain information about working and living conditions. On special occasions such as Ramadan, Christmas, and the New Years, foreign workers are given the rare opportunity to meet with a great number of people from their countries. Usually Islamic mosques, churches, and Buddhist temples become the primary meeting grounds for foreigners, since these places are exempt from raids by immigration officers.⁷ Hundreds and even thousands of foreigners show up at these events where they can pray and exchange information about their home countries, companies for which they work, and innumerable other personal and social matters. However, aside from industrial trainees who are recruited by manpower agencies, foreign workers' main information network concerning employment opportunities is their fellow countrymen. The growth of ethnic stores, particularly the Moslem centered Halal food shops, not only provides spice and food items to their fellow countrymen, but also offers invaluable public space for the newly arriving migrants to gather at any time of the week. For this reason, these outlets have become quite popular as the primary center for

TABLE 3G. FOREIGN WORKERS IN KOREA BY OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION

	Occupational Distribution* (%)											N	
	b	c	d	e	f	g	i	j	k	l	m		n
Bangladesh	0	9.1	0	1.8	3.6	18.2	29.1	5.5	0	27.3	0	5.5	55
Pakistan	9.5	0	11.9	0	2.4	13.1	28.6	2.4	3.6	19.0	1.2	8.3	84
Philippines	19.2	17.8	2.7	2.7	2.7	1.4	6.8	1.4	0	8.2	21.9	15.1	73
Indonesia	66.7	0	0	0	0	0	24.2	0	0	9.1	0	0	33
Sri Lanka	10.0	2.5	5.0	0	0	5.0	27.5	2.5	7.5	20.0	0	20.0	40
Other	4.4	6.7	0	0	2.2	11.1	8.9	0	0	44.4	0	22.2	45
Total	15.2	6.7	4.2	.9	2.1	8.8	20.6	2.1	1.8	20.6	5.2	11.8	330

* Under "Occupational Distribution" each column represents the following industries: "a" (foods); "b" (textile); "c" (apparel); "d" (lumber); "e" (furniture); "f" (paper); "g" (chemical); "h" (leather); "i" (metals); "j" (machinery); "k" (transportation equipment); "l" (plastic moulding); "m" (electronic parts); "n" (miscellaneous).

⁷The increasing number of foreigners in Korea greatly expanded the role and scope of religious activities. Since the majority of Koreans are either Christians or Buddhists, the influx of Moslems created a tremendous demand for Islamic mosques in Korea. Currently, there are two mosques where thousands of people gather on special religious holidays. For many "mission" oriented churches in Korea, church leaders provide various social services to foreigners in an effort to draw non-Christians to their sanctuaries.

exchanging important information among foreigners.

Of those who already found employment in Korea, a great majority of them work in industrial complexes in the Seoul capital region, which include about a dozen sizable satellite cities. As reflected in the table 3G, the occupational categories among foreigners are quite diverse. In general, they are concentrated in metal (20.6), plastic moulding (20.6%), textile (15.2%), and chemical (8.8%) companies. Among women workers, a sizable number is represented in textile and apparel industries (31% and 14.3%, respectively) as sewers and helpers and is also found in electronic parts assembly (26.2%) and plastic moulding (16.7%) jobs. In addition, the majority of foreign workers found employment in relatively smaller companies. The table 3H below shows that 67.4% of foreign workers are

TABLE 3H. THE TOTAL NUMBER OF WORKERS IN COMPANIES WHERE FOREIGNERS ARE EMPLOYED

Ethnicity	Number of Workers								Total %	N
	1 to 4	5 to 10	11 to 25	26 to 50	51 to 100	101 to 150	151 to 200	201 and up		
Bangladesh	6.2	43.1	35.4	10.8	4.6	0	0	0	100.1	65
Pakistan	5.8	22.1	36.5	22.1	6.7	3.8	0	2.9	99.9	104
Philippines	13.7	49.3	24.7	5.5	2.7	1.4	0	2.7	100	73
Indonesia	2.5	2.5	22.5	40.0	20.0	7.5	0	5.0	100	40
Sri Lanka	4.8	20.6	27.0	23.8	14.3	1.6	6.3	1.6	100	63
Other	10.3	27.6	34.5	8.6	10.3	5.2	1.7	1.7	99.9	58
Total	7.4	29.0	31.0	17.4	8.7	3.0	1.2	2.2	99.9	403

TABLE 3I. THE NUMBER OF DAILY WORK HOURS AND AVERAGE MONTHLY SALARY OF FOREIGN WORKERS IN KOREA*

Ethnicity	Daily Work Hours (N)	Average Monthly Salary	Average Monthly Salary by Range (\$)					Total %	N
			less than 400	401 to 600	601 to 800	801 to 1,000	more than 1,001		
Bangladesh	10.77 (64)	\$694	19.7	21.2	36.4	21.2	1.5	100.0	66
Pakistan	10.84 (96)	\$810	4.9	9.8	46.1	33.3	5.9	100.0	102
Philippines	10.91 (74)	\$750	2.8	31.9	45.8	15.3	4.2	100.0	72
Indonesia	10.63 (39)	\$460	54.1	21.6	24.3	0.0	0.0	100.0	37
Sri Lanka	10.49 (64)	\$573	34.4	21.3	32.8	11.5	0.0	100.0	61
Other	11.24 (67)	\$782	6.3	14.1	40.6	37.5	1.6	100.1	64
Total	10.83 (404)	\$708	16.2	19.2	39.6	22.4	2.7	100.1	402

*The figures on this table include people who are currently unemployed; the daily work hours and average salary for these people are based on their last work experience.

working in companies with less than 25 workers and almost 85% of them work in companies that employ less than 50 workers. In terms of ethnic representations, 32.5% of Indonesians and 23.8% of Sri Lankans work in mid-size companies with more than 51 workers, while Bengalis, Pakistanis, and Filipinos predominantly work in comparatively smaller companies. This difference stems from the fact that many of Indonesians and Sri Lankans are still working as industrial trainees in the companies that invited them; since companies must show some level of stability in order to bring trainees, they tend to have more workers than companies that do not have foreign industrial trainees. This, of course, does not mean that

TABLE 3J. SUFFICIENCY OF WAGES AMONG FOREIGN WORKERS

Ethnicity	Do you feel you are making sufficient amount of money in your job?				Total	N
	More than sufficient	Sufficient	Insufficient	Very Insufficient		
Bangladesh	0.0	46.9	36.4	16.7	100	66
Pakistan	0.0	42.9	49.5	7.6	100	105
Philippines	8.1	37.8	51.4	2.7	100	74
Indonesia	0.0	25.0	57.5	17.5	100	40
Sri Lanka	0.0	20.3	78.1	1.6	100	64
Other	16.4	37.3	38.8	7.5	100	67
Total	4.1	36.5	51.2	8.2	100	416

TABLE 3K. REASONS WHY FOREIGN WORKERS FEEL THEIR SALARY IS "INSUFFICIENT" OR "VERY INSUFFICIENT"

Ethnicity	Insufficient Reasons (%)*							N
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	
Bangladesh	0	76.0	38.0	81.0	10.0	5.0	0	21
Pakistan	2.8	59.2	35.2	80.3	45.1	31.0	5.6	71
Philippines	7.6	22.6	22.6	28.3	34.0	49.1	0	53
Indonesia	16.0	76.0	4.0	56.0	32.0	56.0	8.0	25
Sri Lanka	7.3	34.2	9.8	41.5	22.0	34.2	19.5	41
Other	6.3	31.3	34.4	43.8	28.1	31.3	9.4	32
Total	6.2	44.9	25.1	55.1	32.5	35.8	7.0	243

* Under the "insufficient reasons" category each choice represents the following: "a" (the money I make in this job pays less than the similar jobs in my country); "b" (the money I make in this job pays less than other similar jobs in Korea); "c" (sometimes the boss does not pay me on time); "d" (my Korean co-employees who perform the same tasks as I do get paid more than me); "e" (the money I make in this job can not support my basic necessities such as food, clothes, and housing); "f" (the money I make in this job is not enough to send any money home); "g" (other).

companies without trainees necessarily employs a smaller number of workers.

Regardless of the size of companies in which foreigners work, there appears to be a significant difference among foreigners in terms of wage. On an average, foreigners make \$708 per month and work 10.8 hours a day. Since the overwhelming majority of foreigners works six days a week, their hourly wage amounts to \$2.52. While the figures for Pakistanis (\$810) and Filipinos (\$750) appear to be slightly higher than the average, Indonesians (\$460) and Sri Lankans (\$573) earn significantly lower monthly wages. As expected, close to 60% of all foreign workers said that their monthly wage is either "insufficient" or "very insufficient" (see table 3J). Among Indonesians and Sri Lankans, the insufficiency index showed extremely high levels, 75% and 79.5% respectively. This outcome is closely related to their monthly wages in that both Indonesians and Sri Lankans earn significantly below the average for all foreign workers.

Of those who claimed their salaries are either "insufficient" or "very insufficient," the most number of foreign workers complained that "Korean co-employees who perform the same tasks get paid more than (them)" (55.1%-choice 'd'). Another 45% of people charged that "the money (they) make in this job pays less than the similar jobs in Korea" (choice 'b'). In addition, a sizable number of them asserted that "the money (they) make in this job can not support (their) basic necessities such as food, clothes, and housing" (32.5%-choice 'e') and "the money (they) make is not enough to send any money to (their) families" (35.8%-choice 'f'). The fact that a great number of people who had complaints about their wages chose the options b and d implies that they realize they are being used as "cheap" laborers. Moreover, people who were desperate enough to pick choices 'e' and 'f' may indicate that many people are struggling to sustain themselves in Korea, much less attain the so called "Korean dream." Relatedly, an increasing number of foreigners has visited foreign workers' counseling centers⁸ in order to deal with the non-payment or delayed wages problems. According to the annual report by the Foreign Workers' Counseling Center of the Catholic diocese in Incheon, 363 foreigners inquired this center about

⁸The foreign workers' counseling centers are located throughout the Seoul capital region. There are roughly 20 such non-government agencies which cater to the needs of foreigners whose main purpose in seeking counseling is related to the wage problem. However, these centers have become the primary organizations which assist a wide range of problems related to foreign workers, including industrial accidents, passport and plane tickets, physical abuse at their workplaces, forced labor, etc. The number of counseling centers that are run by either religious or citizen based organizations is roughly split in half.

TABLE 3L. REMITTANCE BY ETHNICITY

	Remittance % Yes	Remittance by Range				N
		below 30%	30% to 50%	50 to 70%	above 70%	
Bangladesh	95.5	14.3	14.3	69.8	1.6	67
Pakistan	95.1	9.0	28.0	45.0	18.0	103
Philippines	97.2	12.0	22.7	38.7	26.7	72
Indonesia	89.7	40.0	14.3	45.7	0	39
Sri Lanka	93.8	23.8	17.5	39.7	19.0	64
Other	85.1	6.5	11.3	48.4	33.9	67
Total	93.2	15.1	19.3	47.5	18.1	412

the non-payment of wages problems in 1994. Additionally 120 foreigners visited Bucheon Foreign Workers' House in the six month period from June 1, 1995 to December 31, 1995 for the same problem. Finally, 37.7% of the survey respondents for this study indicated that their wages have been either not paid or delayed frequently, again reflecting the seriousness of this problem among foreign workers.

Despite widespread wage problem among foreign workers, they have been quite diligent about sending their hard earned money back to their families. As shown in the table 3L, a great majority of foreign workers remit at least some of their income back to their home countries. Among those who do, 65.6% send more than 50% of their income to their families. Incidentally, the majority of Bengalis, Pakistanis, Filipinos, and Sri Lankans send more than 50% of their income and, particularly, Filipinos showed the highest percentage among foreigners who send more than 70% of their income to their countries. Because most of foreigners borrowed money from their families, relatives, and friends in order to finance the trip to Korea, a great portion of remittances is used to pay back the borrowed money. Also, people who have dependents in their home countries are more likely to send a large portion of their wages to their families. Nonetheless, the fact that a great majority of foreign workers send most of their salaries to their countries indicates the extent to which their families depend on family members who work abroad.

Aside from problems associated with wages, on-the-job accidents as well as work related illnesses have become quite common among foreign workers in Korea. Based on the survey results, close to 60% mentioned that there are "physical dangers in (their) work places" and one out of every four foreign workers has indicated that they were injured in workplaces. Among those who were injured, close to 70% went to the hospital and, on average, each spent 14 days at the hospital. Although there is a broad range

of injuries incurred by foreign workers, the most common injury occurs among those who work on the press machines and other cutting instruments whether they are wood or metal parts. When these visible injuries occur, company managers and employers usually respond immediately by taking them to hospitals.⁹ Unfortunately, numerous foreign workers also suffer from inhaling heavy chemical fumes. Even though they suffer from chronic headaches and internal pains, they usually do not go to hospitals to take care of their problems. When they decide to get examined by doctors, the medical costs are usually paid for out of their own pockets.

Although the problems of delayed wages and industrial accidents are probably the biggest stumbling blocks for most foreign workers, one can not dismiss the qualitative relationship between foreigners and native Koreans in workplaces. As hinted earlier, the exploitative treatments upon which their relations rest stem from a variety of reasons. The most salient reason is not that foreign workers are viewed as inferior to native workers in terms of work performance, but that they are foreigners. By virtue of being foreigners from less developed countries, they are subject to not only lower wages and longer working hours, but also varied types of mistreatments and abuses by native Korean employees and managers. Again, the survey respondents revealed that many Korean company bosses treat foreign workers differently from Korean employees: a number of small companies which experience financial difficulties pays Korean workers on time, while foreign workers' wages are often delayed; company managers frequently subject foreign workers to do the dirty and difficult tasks and pressure them to work overtime against their will. Even though the majority of survey respondents claimed that their "boss treat them with respect," many have become victims of physical and verbal abuses often making fun of their ethnic and religious backgrounds. Although one may argue that these problems emerge in other countries that have multicultural labor force, it does not lessen the violence against dignity of human beings. Moreover, the illegal resident status among foreigners in Korea also serves as a wedge for employers to exploit and abuse them.

The most fundamental concern among foreigners working illegally in Korea is the threat of deportation. Since the majority of foreign workers in Korea are residing and working illegally in Korea, their biggest fear is

⁹Companies that have more than 5 employees are required by Korea's Standard Labor Laws to have industrial accident insurance. In such cases, the majority of employers are quite good about taking them to the hospitals. In addition, the victims of on the job accidents, whether they are legally or illegally employed, are entitled to compensation from the Labor Welfare Corporation which is an arm of the Ministry of Labor.

TABLE 4A. THE NUMBER OF FOREIGNERS CAUGHT IN VIOLATION OF THE IMMIGRATION CONTROL ACT

1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
3,800	4,732	5,672	8,642	16,023	70,000*	58,605

* From June 1, 1992 to July 31, 1992 the Korean government granted amnesty to foreigners residing and working illegally in Korea. This figure includes 55,000 foreigners who registered with immigration officers during the amnesty period.

getting caught by either police or immigration officials. From time to time, the immigration officers go on factory raids in order to send messages to illegal foreign workers. These raids, however, are not designed to repatriate all illegal foreign workers to their countries since there is a tremendous shortage of manpower and facilities to handle such a large number of them. On the contrary, factory raids serve as an effective mechanism of control, thereby curtailing their mobility and visibility and limiting their rights as workers. Nonetheless, the number of foreigners caught in violation of the immigration control act has increased steadily each year. The table 4A above shows that while only 3,800 foreigners illegally working in Korea have been caught by the immigration authorities in 1987, the number surpassed 16,000 by 1992. The dramatic increase in the number of arrests, however, does not necessarily reflect the government's intention of repatriating all illegal workers. It merely suggests Korean government's position of formally punishing illegal workers, while implicitly utilizing illegal workers in companies that desperately require their labor. In this way, the government has created, whether intended or not, the "revolving door" system which selectively punishes and disciplines foreigners working illegally while attracting potential illegal workers. The existence of illegal foreign workers has not only expanded the "playing field" of immigration offices, but also brought in a significant amount of money through fines and penalties.

Living conditions and situations of foreign workers in Korea

Due to the steady flow of foreigners in Korea, one would think that they are readily found on streets and other public places. However, the frequent crackdown on foreigners illegally residing in Korea has kept them in their homes. In addition, industrial trainees are being strongly discouraged or even forced to stay inside the factories. This is simply because most factory owners fear that their trainees might look for better paying jobs elsewhere. Nonetheless, the factors both internal and external to foreign workers

severely limit their mobility, often confining them to the vicinity of their workplaces.

Regardless of their legal status, most of the employed foreigners are provided with housing by their employers. In fact, 95% of the survey respondents replied that their employers furnished homes for them. Among them close to 70% said that they are living in a factory house and 22% in a small house near the factories. In most cases, foreign workers live together with their own countrymen in small quarters with bare essentials such as a small closet space, a portable heater, and an outhouse. Some factory owners, however, only offer containers-made-into sleeping quarters and fail to even provide such basic features. When they were asked to assess their own living conditions, almost 38% noted that their living quarters are either "uncomfortable" or "very uncomfortable." Among many reasons for their uncomfortableness, the greatest number of people indicated that it is because they do not have "privacy" (46%) followed by "the room is overcrowded" (41%) and "there is too much noise and interruption at night" (38%). In fact, the average number of foreigners living in a single quarter is found to be between four and five.

Despite the fact that these factory housing are not designed for long term occupancy, the majority of foreign workers are packed into single rooms that, in most cases, do not have kitchen or sink. In some cases, foreign workers can not take showers especially in cold seasons since many places do not have properly functioning boilers or simply lack such facilities. In terms of managing meals, most of the Moslems buy spices and Halal foods in the ethnic food shops and prepare meals on a portable burner or range in

TABLE 4B. THE LIKELIHOOD OF FOREIGNERS ENJOY EATING KOREAN FOODS AND THE FREQUENCY OF EATING OUT BY LENGTH OF RESIDENCE

Length of Residence	Likes/Dislikes Korean Food*				N	Frequency of Eating Out**				N
	Likes		Dislikes			a	b	c	d	
	a	b	c	d						
Less than 1 yr	4.8	36.3	52.4	6.5	124	17.3	39.1	7.6	35.9	92
2-3yrs	10.7	42.1	38.8	8.3	121	17.8	40.6	7.3	34.4	96
3-5yrs	15.2	47.8	37.0	0	46	23.1	43.6	15.4	17.9	39
More than 5 yrs	12.2	60.8	25.7	1.4	74	36.1	38.9	9.7	15.3	72

* Under the "Likes/Dislikes Korean Food" question, each category represents the following: "a" (enjoys Korean food very much); "b" (likes eating Korean food); "c" (dislikes eating Korean food); "d" (hates eating Korean food).

** Under the "Frequency of Eating Out" question, each category represents the following: "a" (at least once a day); "b" (once or twice a week); "c" (3-5 times a week); "d" (other)

their living quarters. Since the Islamic teachings clearly indicate that they are forbidden to eat pork, which is incidentally the cheapest and the most popular meat among Koreans, Moslems prefer cooking by themselves rather than eating with other Koreans. People from non-Islamic countries also naturally prefer eating their own ethnic foods, but many people have acquired the taste for Korean foods. As the length of residence increases, however, foreigners tend to enjoy Korean food much more than those who recently arrived in Korea. For instance, the table 4B above shows that a little over 40% of the foreigners who stayed in Korea for less than one year either likes eating Korean food or enjoys it very much, while the figures for those who stayed between 2 and 3 years, between 3 and 5 years and more than 5 years progressively increased, respectively 53.8%, 63.0%, and 73.0%. Similarly, the table 4B clearly shows that the likelihood of foreigners eating out is much higher as they become more accustomed to Korean society.

Although most foreigners initially rely on their own ethnic communities for support and friendship, the passage of time and frequent contacts with native Koreans naturally speed up the process of acculturation. As time progresses, foreigners not only adapt to Korean culture and acquire the pace of Korean way of living, but also make friends with native Koreans and develop some degree of fondness to and/or dependence on Korea. In an attempt to ascertain the level of attraction for Korea among foreigners, this survey questionnaire asked a series of questions regarding their attitudes about Korea and its people (see table 4C and 4D). Because these questions are designed to draw general conceptions among foreigners about Korea(ns), the broad nature of questions can not possibly address complex personal and social factors which may influence their views considerably. Nonetheless, these questions can help us paint a general picture about their adaptability to Korean society given time and experience and even hint at the possibility of long term residence if conditions for their stay become favorable.

To begin with, when they were asked whether or not they "feel comfortable getting around in Korea," the majority of foreigners replied positively and its percentage increased progressively with the passage of time. The general correlation between their adaptability to Korean society and the length of residence appeared to be most evident in the question pertaining to making native Korean friends; whereas only 9.9% among foreigners who lived in Korea for less than six months "has Korean friends whom they call regularly," the results from the people who resided in Korea for six months to one year (19.4%), 1-2 years (29.3%), 2-3 years (41.7%), and 3-5 years (47.3%) clearly indicate the likelihood of overcoming cultural and

language barriers, specifically in making Korean friends, with the passage of time. Similarly, the longer the foreigners stay in Korea, it is likely that they will consider dating Koreans if opportunities were presented to them. However, when they were asked about their intention to marry a Korean person, the response was less convincing. This may imply that, due to various personal and social factors, foreigners in Korea are less inclined to answer hastily on an issue involving a serious level of commitment. In general, however, most of foreigners considered Koreans to be kind and "nice," though many people viewed some Koreans to be discourteous, even contemptuous, and opportunistic.

In terms of foreigners' general attitudes about staying in Korea in the future as tourists, as laborers, and as long term residents, their responses showed mixed results relative to the length of stay (see table 4D). The overall feeling among the majority is that they would come back to Korea to visit and the likelihood of foreigners responding positively to this question increases as they become more familiar with Korea. Similarly, the length of residence seems to affect their attitudes about possibly working again in Korea after returning to their countries. That is, the longer they reside and work in Korea, the chances of them wanting to come back with the intention of working increase. But, as for bringing their family members to work in Korea, their responses showed only a slight increase in favor of such an idea with the passage of time. In the question regarding the prospect for long term residence, about four out of every 10 respondents said that they would consider living in Korea irrespective of length of residence. The similar results in the question about whether or not Korea is a good place to raise their children support the view that the majority of foreigners would not want to live in Korea permanently, though a sizable number of them indicated the opposite. In general, however, over 70% of all workers feel that they did not make a mistake in coming to Korea and do not regret being in Korea.

The overall living conditions of foreign workers in Korea can be divided into quantitative (physical) and qualitative (psychological) attributes, though this division may seem somewhat crude at first. Nonetheless, such breakdown helps us clearly define the nature of the problems and better understand their plight as one draws a connection between the two. In terms of the quantitative issues, most foreign workers are able to overcome such problems as overcrowded living conditions, lack of adequate facilities in their homes, and long working hours. In many ways, of course, these "physical" conditions can indeed contribute to psychological stress. However, irrespective of their legal status, foreign workers tend to complain

TABLE 4C. FOREIGNERS' GENERAL ATTITUDES ABOUT KOREANS

	Length of Residence*				
	a	b	c	d	e
Do you feel comfortable getting around in Korea?	53.5 (71)	55.9 (59)	56.8 (125)	62.5 (48)	68.5 (73)
Do you have Korean friends whom you call regularly?	9.9 (71)	19.4 (62)	29.3 (116)	41.7 (48)	47.3 (74)
Would you date a Korean person?	26.5 (68)	29.3 (58)	25.4 (118)	40.4 (47)	37.7 (69)
If you are not married, would you marry a Korean person?	12.1 (66)	24.1 (54)	20.2 (114)	31.3 (48)	20.6 (68)
Do you think Koreans are generally nice?	60.6 (71)	47.4 (57)	53.3 (122)	63.8 (47)	59.2 (71)

* Under the "Length of Residence," each category represents the length of residence in Korea: "a" (less than six months); "b" (between six months and one year); "c" (between one and two years); "d" (between two and three years); "e" (between three and five years).

TABLE 4D. FOREIGNERS' GENERAL IMPRESSION OF KOREA

	Length of Residence*				
	a	b	c	d	e
If (or when) you go back to your country, would you ever come back to Korea to work?	28.6 (70)	32.2 (59)	42.3 (123)	33.3 (48)	48.6 (72)
Did you ever think about bringing any member of your family to work?	38.6 (70)	36.2 (58)	39.7 (131)	50.0 (50)	46.6 (73)
If (or when) you go back to your country, would you ever come back to Korea to visit?	50.0 (68)	57.6 (59)	45.5 (121)	54.2 (48)	73.2 (71)
If you had a choice, would you want to live in Korea?	41.1 (73)	43.1 (58)	40.2 (127)	32.7 (52)	45.8 (72)
Do you think Korea is a good place to raise your children (if you have or if you were to have children in the future)?	42.9 (70)	40.0 (55)	38.6 (127)	47.9 (48)	39.4 (66)
Do you regret being in Korea?	25.4 (71)	28.8 (59)	24.6 (122)	19.6 (51)	24.6 (69)

Note: the figures in the tables 4B and 4C reflect the affirmative responses to the questions listed in percentages; the numbers in parenthesis indicate the total number of respondents who chose to answer these questions.

less about these problems as compared to such qualitative issues as physical confinement in their factories, non-payment of and/or delayed wages, physical and verbal abuses by Korean co-employees and bosses, and serious bodily injuries deriving from on-the-job accidents. The psychological pressure is sometimes too much for one person to bear especially among

foreign workers residing and working illegally. Namely, the ongoing threat of deportation, the enormous financial responsibility towards their families in their home countries, and the burden of paying fines upon leaving Korea weigh heavily on their minds.

The obvious question at this point may be why so many foreigners embark on a costly journey across national boundaries and subject themselves to perilous and risky adventure. This question, however, is a one-sided issue and begs only a single-sided explanation. That is, if they are in fact pushed by socio-economic and political pressures within their countries, then the conditions of host countries must also be favorable for their arrival in order for the migratory circuit to be complete. In other words, the flow of workers from less developed to developing and developed countries could not occur at a rate it has in countries like Korea if receiving countries are adamant about curtailing the number of foreigners entering the country. This necessarily beckons a careful explanation and analysis of host countries' decision to accept people from less familiar cultures and customs.

ILM FROM PERIPHERY TO CORE ECONOMIES

The increasing presence of international migrants in developing countries of Asia has spurred on lively debates among migration scholars, economists, sociologists, and policy makers. As a consequence, a number of journal articles and books has focused on the causes of ILM, the developmental impacts on the countries as well as on workers, and the problems of relying on foreign workers in their respective countries. Interestingly, most of the recent literature on this topic tend to be heavily influenced by the structuralist school of thought: emphasizing the transition from labour export to labour import; describing the structural transformations in terms of production output, rural-urban migration, steady decline in both unemployment and fertility rates, and wage differentials between sending and receiving countries.¹⁰ Although the fundamental pre-conditions of migration are intimately related to such

¹⁰Fields, for instance, argues that migration transition in newly industrializing economies of Asia was possible through export led growth of a labor intensive character which, increasing the demand for labor, improved labor market conditions by consequent increase in employment and wages. In their respond to wage increases, many firms have chosen to do one or more of the following: increase productivity of labor, relocate firms overseas, and import labor. Labor shortages in non-tradable sectors such as domestic services and construction had no other choice but to import labor from overseas.

structural changes, these variables are necessary but not sufficient factors of labor import. More importantly, they have unwittingly followed the traditional paradigm of ILM which fails to explain specific features of ILM into developing countries such as temporary nature of ILM into countries that have a very short history of immigration, the process by which international migrant workers become illegal workers, a tacit acceptance and tolerance of clandestine migration and illegal workers leading to greater dependence on such workers in order to sustain both declining and emerging sectors and to legitimate greater control over them, and the flexibility of government control in terms of importing and expatriating foreign workers essentially denies the possibility of long term stay in one country. Before turning to these specific features of ILM into developing countries, let us examine how ILM from underdeveloped to developed countries was explained.

As one of the leading scholars in migration literature, Bohning utilizes the structural theory of labor migration to explain what he calls the “self-feeding process” of migration. This theory basically suggests that countries come to depend increasingly on the foreign workforce by their inability to cure the ills of structural maladjustment in their economy. Essentially, he suggests, there are two choices left up to the employers when they are faced with labor shortages in certain sectors: one, they can pay social-historical wages for undesirable jobs to native workers; two, they can opt to import labor but adopt a “konjunkturpuffer” approach, meaning “use’em when needed and dismiss’em when not.” The latter option inevitably leads to a

TABLE 5. A MATURATION PROCESS OF MIGRATION STREAM

Stage One	Stage Two
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young single male workers migrate from developed regions of sending country • Possess a higher level of skills • Tend to be sojourners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primarily males; more married men • Length of stay increases • Low return migration rate • Shares their experience abroad with their families and friends; induces additional migration
Stage Three	Stage Four
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in sex composition • Length of stay increases • Finds a new set of deprivations • Savings rate declines • Not enough money to return home • Sends for his wife and children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases duration of stay • Reunification of families • Immigrant population increases • Ethnic institutions emerge • Subject to social unrest & political intervention

greater dependence on foreign workers, increases the period of their stay, and makes them even more difficult to leave as they acquire a new set of deprivations. A brief summary of how initial dependence on foreign workers matures through four stages can help to illustrate his point.

The schema presented above as well as other "structure" based theories do, in part, explain salient features of labor migration from underdeveloped to developed countries. Examining Asian labor migration to Hawaiian plantations in the mid-1850s, Cheng and Bonacich locate the processes of emigration in the context of world capitalist system. Similarly, numerous Marxist sociologists have in various ways to make explicit claims about the interlocking relationship between ILM and the contradictions of capitalism, fostering global scale capitalism and imperialism between developed and underdeveloped countries (e.g. Castells 1975; Burawoy 1976; Portes 1978). Cheng and Bonacich describe ILM as a product of the internal logic of capitalism in this way:

... Labor immigration grows out of the logic of capitalist development, which creates a tendency for the profit rate to fall and a cyclical tendency toward crises. This leads to an effort to solve these problems by seeking to increase the rate of exploitation by absorbing new and cheaper sources of labor power.

Furthermore, a number of "advanced" countries has dealt with the cyclical crisis under capitalist development through imperialist expansion, which contributed to unequal exchanges and treaties between the countries and ultimately led to the forced and quasi-coerced migration of laborers from the colonized countries as exemplified in the African slave, Chinese "coolie" trades, and Indian indenture system (Cheng and Bonacich 1984).

Other instances of labor migration have not only indicated the degree to which migrant workers bear the brunt of cyclical crisis of capitalism (i.e., first to be fired in times of economic contraction and last to be hired in times of economic expansion), but also articulated the manner in which migrant workers become the perennial site of surveillance, discipline, and control by the state. Cockcroft, for instance, delineates the specific ways in which U.S. governmental apparatuses regulate and discipline Mexican workers in order to aid in capital accumulation of U.S. companies and to provide a flexible pool of agri-industrial reserve army of labor. The prime examples of such measures include: guest worker card program, the flexibility of border control, employer sanctions, amnesty, 'voluntary deportation,' and invidious labor and immigration laws. The guest worker card, Cockcroft argues, introduced in mid-1981, is tantamount to the identification card

used by South Africa against blacks; the paramilitary style of border control and deportation process and flexible labor laws are two sides of the same coin in that one without the other can further deepen the structural crisis, on the one hand, and lead to uncontrollable immigration problems on the other. Moreover, the employer sanctions not only discriminate against people of color in hiring, but also establish a legitimate cause to issue search warrants for raids on the premises.

Although most of the leading labor import countries of OECD including the U.S., Canada, and Australia have come to depend greatly on the foreign workforce as a consequence of crisis in capitalist accumulation, the traditional structuralist model of ILM fails to explain migrations that take place in a time of high unemployment in host countries and expanding opportunities in labor sending countries. Sassen, in *The Mobility of Labor and Capital*, however, attempts to explain recent migration from rapidly industrializing countries of Southeast Asia into the U.S. by drawing attention to the neglected variable, the direct foreign investment (DFI). First, Sassen argues that DFI into industrializing economies not only disrupts traditional work structures and creates a pool of unemployed workers, but also leads to feminization of workforce which enables particularly single males to go abroad for jobs. Second, DFI creates what she calls the 'cultural-ideological' and 'objective' links between countries. As a consequence, DFI creates structural conditions for emigration through the process of economic restructuring in both sending and receiving countries. In this way, Sassen has partially 'defended' the structuralist thesis on ILM, but kept silent about the most recent labor migration from underdeveloped to developing countries. The truth of the matter is that there is no clear cut answer to the complex web of issues entwined in ILM under the increasingly integrated labor and capital markets. The mobility of labor has become much more fluid and dynamic in the history of labor migration due to technological innovations and integrated networks of information. We not only see capital in search of cheaper labor across national boundaries, but also cannot ignore the degree to which labor has become extremely mobile. The DFI does contribute to labor migration but is not a driving force behind labor migration into developing countries. Bohning's notion of "self-feeding process" of labour migration has failed to be realized in developing countries, especially when we apply this model to unskilled workers. The only consistent theme articulated by the structuralists, however, is that each state in developing countries moderates and controls unskilled migrant workers on a rotating basis, thereby creating a permanent pool of 'floating' workers from one country to the next, whose mobility and adaptability to

various working environments make them temporary workers in developing countries where immigration laws are outright hostile to them.

The recent mobility of labor from relatively underdeveloped to developing countries of Asia provides the context to examine why and how their movement is mediated not simply by economic forces but by the explicit policies of those countries. The volatility of these movements into developing countries, then, cannot be strictly explained by crisis in capitalist development. Against this background, we turn to specific features of ILM into developing countries of Asia.

THE SALIENCE OF ILM INTO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES OF ASIA

One of the common features of the four rapidly developing countries of Asia, i.e., Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore is that each had been exporters of labor in varying degrees upto the last quartile of this century. The remarkable economic growth, followed by equally abrupt changes from military to civil society, led the countries through the transition from labor exporter to labor importer status. The story of their transition is a familiar one: the obvious comparative advantage of these labor surplus nations began their economic development plans emphasizing what Gary Fields calls the "export led growth of a labor intensive character" in the early phases, which led to tremendous growth in manufacturing production outputs and subsequent rise in employment at constant wages due to the governments' explicit policies to promote economic growth at the expense of workers' rights to bargain for better wages and working conditions; the eventual rise in workers' wages contributed to rural-urban migration in Korea and Taiwan, specifically, and contributed to full employment paving the way for the historical reversal in the flow of labor migration.

The leading scholars of ILM in the respective countries have more or less echoed the structuralist model of labor transition expounded earlier by Lewis, Fei, and Ranis and eventually came to describe the change from labor import to labor export status as the "Lewisian turning point." In an attempt to locate the Lewisian turning point in developing countries of Asia, Abella, Fields, and Nayyar provided the theoretical framework under which Park (Korea), Skeldon (Hong Kong), Watanabe (Japan), and Vasuprasat (Thailand) examined the transition and concluded that there was a definite point in which each country experienced the changes in migration. Despite the strength and importance of analyzing factors that contribute to such migration transitions, they have not outlined the unique features of migration transition in developing countries that have varying

degrees of foreign labor integration and incorporation historically, culturally, and numerically and overlooked the significance of both the state's specific labor import strategies and the characteristics of migrant labourers within the context of migration transition.

The importance of separating ILM to developing countries from developed countries rests less on the structural factors of migration than the specific modes of their incorporation, calculated strategies deployed by the state to deal with the structural crisis, and the ways in which each state mediates the supply and demand of labourers by mechanisms of control and sanctions. At the heart of the issue in each of the four countries is its lacking orientation towards immigration policies and the place these unskilled migrant workers occupy. The pattern of ILM into these countries, therefore, necessitates a model of ILM into developing countries that have specific agendas in terms of incorporating unskilled foreign workers in these countries. Toward this end, the following sections will focus on the temporary contract system, the increasing role of illegal workers and clandestine labour migration networks.

Industrial Technical Trainees, Contract Labourers, and Guest Workers: The State Managed Split Labour Market

The Ministry of Labor in Korea reported that labor shortages in manufacturing firms have steadily increased since the mid-1980s. The table 6A below shows an increasing level of labor shortages from 3.2% in 1986 to 9.1% in 1991. These problems were curbed temporarily by simultaneous increase in wages,¹¹ on the one hand, and a sudden influx of foreign workers, on the other. The Korean Federation of Trade Unions, however, recently declared that the manufacturing sector is still short of 360,000 workers, which constitute 7.5% of the sector's total 4.8 million work force. A continuing shortage of laborers particularly in chemical and various

TABLE 6A. LABOR SHORTAGES IN THE MANUFACTURING AND OFFICE (CLERICAL) SECTORS, KOREA, 1986-1992 (%).

	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
Manufacturing	3.2	4.8	5.2	4.9	6.9	9.1	6.8
Office/Clerical	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.1	1.3	1.3	1.7

Source: "A Report on the Study of Employment Outlook." 1994. Ministry of Labor, Korea.

¹¹Korea experienced on an average 20% increase in wages between 1988 and 1991. Incidentally, these years represent the formative years of foreign labor migration into Korea.

manufacturing companies prompted the Korean Federation of Small Businesses to push for the increase in the number of trainees admitted each year.

In an effort to deal with the imminent need for labor, the Korean government responded by initiating the industrial trainee system, apparently modeling after Japan, in November of 1991.¹² Initially, only those companies that have branches in other countries were qualified to bring in trainees for the sole purpose of training skills. As time progressed, the increasing need for foreign labor created an impetus for much broader system which will cushion against the labor shortage in the country. As a result, the Korean government permitted the Korean Federation of Small Businesses (KFSB) to recruit and manage potential trainees from eleven countries under 27 privately owned "international manpower recruiting agencies."¹³

The labour importation measures by Taiwan were centered around alleviating labor shortages in construction and manufacturing and a few attempts to import nursing workers for households in order to induce female workers to participate in the labor market. The so called "contract workers" were first imported in October 1989 to provide the labour power necessary to aid in the national development construction projects; two years later, 15,000 workers mostly from Southeast Asian countries were filled in 6 industries, including textile and construction, with a maximum ceiling of 20% of the number requested by a firm. In the five year period from the beginning of 1989 to 1994, there were six waves of contract workers for manufacturing and construction projects, mostly concentrated around the 3D jobs (Tsay 1995).

In Hong Kong, the significant proportion of migrant workers was employed as domestic helpers. Started modestly in the mid-1980s, the number of domestic workers shot up from 7,000 to 30,000 a year in 1993.

¹²A set of strict regulations was applied to companies that showed intention of bringing-in foreign industrial trainees. To begin with, companies must meet the following criteria: companies that already have branches abroad or that have partnership with foreign companies; companies that provide skills to underdeveloped countries; companies that export industrial equipment and machinery; with a recommendation by authorities in each industry, companies that would otherwise go under if they do not bring-in trainees are qualified. The total number of trainees who entered under this system did not exceed 10,000 for each year. In most cases, trainees who entered under these strict regulations tended to be placed in mid to large size companies, since smaller companies lack capital to have companies abroad or have joint relationship with foreign companies. Unfortunately, the average salary among these trainees was extremely low, ranging from US\$100 to US\$200 per month.

¹³Park, Seok-Woon. "Policies and Protective Measures Concerning Foreign Migrant Workers," a compilation of survey research reports by the Korea Research Institute for Workers' Human Rights and Justice, with financial support of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Foundation, pp. 101-102.

While the greatest number of domestic workers come from the Philippines, there has been strict prohibition of such workers from China for a fear that "such worker immigration will be difficult to police, since maids could change jobs and disappear into the local community" (Skeldon 1995). Unlike Korea and Taiwan, the Hong Kong's labour importation schemes outside the domestic sphere ranged from retail and catering services to import/export traders who must prove upon submission of application their experience in the specific field for which applicants seek employment. They are categorized as "skilled" workers at the "technician, craftsman, and supervisor levels." In addition, the number of construction workers showed a steep climb from 2,000 workers in 1990 to 17,000 in 1994 and they expect the number to increase to 27,000 in 1996 (Skeldon 1995).

Despite remarkable increase in their standard of living, Singapore has experienced labor shortages since the 1960s. Contrast to its counterparts in Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, Singapore is a relatively tiny, heterogeneous city-state, constituting only 2.1 million people of whom Chinese (76%), Malays (15%), and Indians (7%) were the dominant groups in 1970. More importantly, the number of "guest workers"¹⁴ has increased to 18% of Singapore's workforce due to the problems associated with emigration (table 6B). As such, the Singapore government has been actively pushing for both the pro-natalist policies and anti-emigration measures to increase the number of Singapore workforce, especially in the areas where key policy decisions are being made, and to overcome dependence on foreign guest workers by placing levies and quotas on employers. Nonetheless, years of dependence on low wage guest workers cannot be undone so easily as the Singaporean government is beginning to find out (Chew and Chew 1995).

Whether they are categorized as industrial trainees, contract labourers or

TABLE 6B. FOREIGN WORKFORCE IN SINGAPORE (thousands, % of total workforce)

	1970	1980	1990	1992	1994
Foreign Worker Population	73	120	150	200	300
% of total workforce	11.2 %	11.1 %	12 %	12.7 %	17.9 %

Source: Quoted from "Migration and Singapore: Implications for the Asia Pacific." 1994.APMJ 3(2-3): 253.

¹⁴The foreign workers are classified into two categories in Singapore: guest labour and immigrant labour. The former group consists of work permit and professional pass holders. The line that divides among the guest labourers hinges on whether or not one possesses "skills" as defined by the Minister of Labour; this has significant implication in terms of attaining residence and citizenship, getting married to Singapore citizen, and the duration of their stay in Singapore. The holders of professional passes have inordinate advantages in terms of obtaining such privileges.

guest workers, unskilled migrant workers in Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore are monitored in varying degrees by the respective states. Such labor importation schemes are designed specifically to target industries where labor shortages have been pronounced as a result of structural changes in each country. In view of socio-economic policies, these programs provide short-term contract labourers in order to fuel the necessary labor power in declining and emerging industries, on the one hand, while establishing legitimate cause to monitor and control the flow of unskilled foreign workers, on the other. In this way, the developing countries of Asia maintained a strict set of regulations not only to deny privileges of residency and citizenship to unskilled foreign workers, but also to support the split wage system which basically pays only a fraction of the cost in wages to particularly unskilled foreign workers.

In Singapore,¹⁵ for instance, guest labourers who hold work permits (i.e., unskilled foreign workers) are immediately repatriated upon expiration of their contracts, which usually lasts for four years, and are barred from bringing in their dependents. Whereas unskilled workers are explicitly discouraged from taking root in Singapore, foreign professionals have much easier time obtaining residency permits and can stay in Singapore as long as their employers find them needed in their firms (Chew and Chew 1995). At the same time, however, the presence of contract workers in developing countries of Asia helps to re-train citizens who may fall victim to the structural crisis. In Singapore and Hong Kong, for example, employers of unskilled contract workers must pay levies¹⁶ which make up a bulk of costs to re-train citizens "who have been displaced through the structural changes in the domestic market" (Skeldon 1995). Since employers must pay for the levies, the foreign workers are directly impacted by low return on their wages.

However, the low wage situation among trainees in Korea, for instance, has created unanticipated problems as they fled the companies for which

¹⁵After July 1, 1992, a new regulation stipulated that foreign workers can make upto 67% in marine (particularly ship repair) industries; also after April 1, three foreign workers can be hired for every local employee in construction industry, formerly the ratio was 2:1. In addition, subcontractors were not formally counted in total labor force population, particularly in shipyards, but after July 1, 1992, the shipyard companies are required to have one main sub-contractor and each sub-contractor will be counted in total labor force population.

¹⁶Above mentioned regulation also indicated that there will be changes in the amount of levies placed on hiring foreign workers. In shipyards industry, levy on skilled and unskilled workers will be respectively, S\$250 and S\$350 per person. In construction, S\$250 for skilled (remained constant) and S\$400 for unskilled (up from S\$350). As of April 1, 1992, levy on domestic workers has risen from S\$250 per month to S\$300 per month.

they were originally contracted in search of better paying employment in neighboring companies, thereby creating a pool of illegal workers. Coupled with low wage problems, almost one out of every three trainees left his/her company because many employers utilized violence, threats and confiscation of trainees' passports to keep them from running away. These problems clearly speak to the inherent flaws in the design of contract work system and to the ineffectiveness of "temporary" rotation system. The obvious problem rests on the fact that none of the countries in developing countries of Asia is willing to grant flexibility to workers (e.g., limited or no renewal of contracts, lack of immigration and marriage laws which could allow foreigners to become residents and citizens).

Even though the inherent bias against unskilled foreign contract workers in the developing countries of Asia reflects states' efforts to utilize such workers on a temporary basis through discriminatory practices, they have created a system that systematically produces illegal workers. The criminalization of unskilled contract workers provides legitimacy to governments which exercise their power to control and manipulate the flow of such workers based on the supply and demand of labourers. The defenseless position of criminalized workers, coupled with already existing pool of illegal workers, not only helps to fuel the labor power necessary for companies that are struggling to survive, but also heightens the exploitative treatments of foreign workers to another level.

Illegal Foreign Workers: The Easily Tractable Labor Supply

The number of illegal workers in developing countries of Asia has increased tremendously since the governments officially sanctioned the labor importation schemes on a contractual basis. Despite each state's formal attempts to curb the tide of illegal workers, the reality suggests that such pool of labourers provide an essential component of total workforce in Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore. The fact that there is a greater number of illegal workers than unskilled contract workers in most of these countries suggests that either the governments have miserably failed to control the flow of illegal workers or they have tacitly supported the "temporary" presence of such workers in order to quell the cries of industries in dire need of labourers. The evidence shows that the latter case is, in fact, truer to reality in these countries.

The official count of overstayers, which comprise of those who overstayed either tourist or trainee visas and those who broke the contract with their employers by fleeing from companies, in Korea steadily increased. The number of legal trainees has yet to surpass the number of overstayers since

the inception of industrial trainee system, which began officially in November of 1991. At the end of 1995, the number of overstayers exceeded the number of trainees by more than 230% (see Table 1 and 2). In addition, the government figures could not tabulate those who enter the countries through clandestine networks who may or may not be accounted for by the immigration services. Similarly, when Taiwan officially opened its borders to foreign workers in 1989, there were already 50,000 to 100,000 foreigners working illegally, which constituted one percent of the 8.5 million Taiwanese workers (Tsay 1995). In Hong Kong, the number of illegal workers who were repatriated by the government authorities has exceeded the number of contract workers entered legally to this island-state. According to Skeldon, the repatriated illegal workers in Hong Kong ranged from 10,000-12,000 per annum between 1981 and 1984 to 43,000-44,000 in 1992 and 1993 and 35,000 in 1994. The principal reason why there is a greater number of illegal workers than contract workers is inextricably related to Hong Kong's labor importation policy, which only allocated roughly 27% of 'qualified' applicants and only 11% of total application for foreign workers by various industries in 1994. Although Singapore is known for its tough stance against illegal guest workers, the number of undocumented workers was found to be anywhere between 200,000-300,000 in 1993.¹⁷

If these staggering numbers of undocumented workers in developing countries of Asia are not sufficient reason to believe in the importance of such workers on their economies, then there are other evidences to prove the vital role they play in their overall economic development schemes. Beginning with Singapore, which apparently made international headlines by caning and jailing an undocumented Thai worker on June 22 1989, the actual number of offenders convicted (and actually penalized) of illegal employment was only a fraction of complaints received by authorities.¹⁸

¹⁷Prasai, Surya B. 1993. "Asia's Labour Pains." *Far Eastern Economic Review* 29 April, p. 23.

¹⁸The table below is drawn from Chew and Chew article. 1995. "Immigration and Foreign Labour in Singapore." *ASEAN Economic Bulletin*. Nov.

Complaints on Illegal Employment, Arrests and Conviction of Foreign Workers, and Number of Composition Fines Offered to Employers, 1991-1993

Year	No. Of Complaints Received on Illegal Employmen	Foreign Workers Arrested	No. Of Offenders Convicted	No. Of Composition Fines Offered to Employmen
1991	2,193	2,090	330	Not Stated
1992	2,957	1,797	346	151
1993	3,494	1,928	415	209

Source: Annual Report, Ministry of Labour, Singapore.

Moreover, the Singapore Government granted the 'final' amnesty to undocumented Thai workers on July 18 1989 (Chew and Chew 1995). In Hong Kong, the Royal Hong Kong Police figures revealed that over half of all arrested undocumented workers were found to be apprehended for the third time or more in 1993, whereas the same figure had been only 10% in 1988 (Skeldon 1995). In Korea, while there have been several attempts to formally discourage unskilled foreigners working illegally by placing heavy penalties on both workers and employers, the vehement opposition by small to mid-size companies and the realization of repatriating such a large number of undocumented workers was practically impossible, the government responded by passing a series of amnesty programs for foreigners working illegally in Korea.¹⁹

In the first phase of amnesty program from June 10, 1992 to the end of July in the same year, the government pardoned those companies that report hiring of illegal foreign workers to the immigration office and gave them six month grace period to process their repatriation. As the expiration date for this amnesty period rapidly approached, the government repeatedly extended the grace period of six months each time until the end of 1993. Although the Ministry of Justice's determination to sweep out illegally residing foreigners became evident in their public declarations, the continuing labor shortages prompted another extension of grace period to the first half of 1994. In all, the government extended four times within the two year period. These extensions are clearly suggestive of the following facts: one, the entrance of foreigners under the industrial trainee system needed to be complemented by additional pool of laborers; two, the Korean government's indecisive measures directly sent messages to foreigners that, as long as there is a continuing labor shortage, working illegally in Korea is worth taking a chance; three, the temporary nature of extensions underscores the view that foreigners represent an indispensable work force but their long term residence is clearly objectionable.

Apart from the imminent need for laborers willing to work in 3-D jobs, foreign workers provide convenient source of labor supply that can fight against neither capital nor the government. The combination became even more vicious after they were systematically "illegalized." Since the existing trainee system does not adequately provide the means for their existence in Korea, the government policies tacitly encourage workers to break contracts and leave their assigned workplaces. There is no doubt that companies

¹⁹Park, Seok-Woon. "The Situation of Migrant Workers in Korea," p.7. Unpublished article written in Korean.

which employed foreign trainees will have to incur costs when the workers leave, including time and training spent on foreign workers and additional time in finding and training new workers. For illegal foreign workers, they are chained psychologically, and sometimes physically confined in the factories by their employers. Whether intended or not, the *illegalization*²⁰ of foreign workers serves to benefit companies that can not always pay their workers on time or that pay them markedly less than native workers. In addition, the immigration and police officers often flagrantly demand bribes from illegal workers and/or indirectly request "cigarette" money from factory owners who hire them. At the same time, illegal workers who are caught by authority figures are sent to immigration detention centers where they must not only endure harsh treatments by officers, but also pay exorbitant fines which range from US\$500 to US\$5,000.²¹

The common perception among employers that illegal foreign workers are temporary laborers provides the basis for abusive treatments by their employers who often "use them when needed and dismiss them when not." Marx is correct in so far as viewing workers as commodities in the process of alienation on production lines. In the case of racialized illegal foreign workers, commodification of labor becomes truly apparent. However, they are not only alienated from production process as parts of machinery, but also subject to all kinds of investigations, incarcerations, and expulsions by the state apparatus. Since immigration officers usually conduct factory raids to round up foreigners working illegally, illegal foreign workers can not predict when they will become the next target. Although these factory raids occur infrequently, it is an extremely effective way of controlling illegal foreign workers since their physical features set them apart from the native Korean workers. Knowing that illegal foreign workers can be subject to immediate deportation, the Korean government is not so much concerned with how they will repatriate them. The main question is when and to what

²⁰By illegalization I mean the process by which proper workers become illegal due mainly to the faults and contradictions inherent in a system.

²¹Since there is no explicit standard by which illegal workers are fined, immigration officers arbitrarily decide on the amount. Usually, foreigners pay penalties based on the duration of illegal residence. According to an immigration officer in Seoul, he indicated that an illegal residency of upto one year is subject to fines of 1,000,000 won (US\$1,250), 1.5 years (1.5 million won), 2 years and over (2 million won). Illegal foreign workers caught by the immigration officers are sent to one of dozen "protection" centers where they are confined to cells behind tightly secured bars until the completion of their repatriation papers. Since the airfares are incurred by the foreigners themselves, people who can not come up with the necessary amount are detained there until they do so. In some cases, foreigners are released after several months from the "protection" centers.

extent the government intends to crack down on illegal foreign workers. Because illegal foreign workers become the objects of state surveillance, discipline and punishment through selective enforcement, their situation is qualitatively different from native workers in the sense that the existing regulations, laws, and codes "criminalize" the former group. The state not only defines the parameter within which laborers must exercise their given rights, but also further distinguishes people who are legitimate citizens from the illegitimate ones. Such functions of the state appear to be nothing out of the ordinary, even to the point of having no real significance in the lives of common citizens. For foreign workers, however, this distinction, which defines their life chances vis a vis native workers, is of critical nature. It is precisely in this context that illegal foreign workers become subject to intense exploitation and the fruits of which immediately benefit their employers and broadly sustain those businesses caught in the "crisis" of capitalist development in developing countries.²²

The *criminalization* of foreign workers not only funnels tractable illegal foreign work force into companies that are struggling to survive, but also serves as a mechanism that divides foreigners from native workers. To begin with, the fact that illegal foreign laborers are willing to work under the horrific conditions (i.e., 4D—dirty, dangerous, difficult, delayed wages—jobs) could conceivably send an indirect message to the native workers that they can be replaced by the influx of "illegal" workers from abroad or by foreign "trainees" disguised as cheap laborers. The reality, however, dictates otherwise. Since illegal foreign workers are bereft of rights either as workers or as citizens of a foreign country, they do not yet pose as a direct threat to the native workers. This is possible only because the existing system, which tacitly contributes to the racialization of foreign workers, implicitly sanctions the uncontrolled flow of foreigners intending to reside and work illegally, while effectively managing their mobility and visibility through the legal and social system which shuns confrontation with justice in dealing with foreigners who entered illegally (e.g., neglecting to regulate and

²²Based on numerous interviews with illegal foreign workers, it was found that they complain mostly about delayed and/or non-payment of wages. Although many small companies are in fact having difficulties paying their workers on time, an increasing number of employers clearly exploit their illegal status by intentionally delaying wages. In some cases, the employers pay native Koreans while the illegal foreign workers' wages are frequently delayed. This intentional delay of wages is perhaps the primary reason why most illegally employed foreigners seek jobs elsewhere. The problem, of course, is that a new group of illegal foreigners fill those same jobs left behind by people who came before them. In this way, some employers effectively reduce company expenditure by withholding wages and hiring illegal foreign workers in succession.

punish those employers who violate international standard of labor laws such as not paying wages, restricting physical mobility of laborers, physical abuse, and other forms of battery in work places). As a consequence, natives naturally accept the materialization of social and economic stratification based on racial differences. A racially stratified wage system, then, contributes to a racial hierarchy which is supported by the existing legal, social, and management structure. If these institutions represent the bone structure of a body, then the substantive contents (blood and flesh) are the ideological, cultural superstructure which provides oxygen and gives life to its form. In other words, the current system which exploits foreign workers presupposes the pervasiveness and a widespread support (whether active engagement in creating stratified society or implicitly acquiescent of that system) of cultural contingency based on combined factors of perverted nationalism and racial superiority.

The seemingly apparent distinction between native and foreign workers, however, is imperative in quelling the discontents among native workers on the one hand, and managing foreign workers' mobility on the other. The increasing presence of illegal, racialized foreign workers takes away tremendous pressure from the shoulders of small company employers whose survival literally depends on paying "cheap" wages. The fact that a large number of illegal foreign workers is willing to work for low wages and to endure less than satisfactory working conditions, the natives are naturally less inclined to assert their rights as laborers. In other ways, employers have greater flexibility in controlling and managing illegal foreign workers whose rights can not be protected adequately under the existing system. Even though employers are the immediate exploiters of illegal foreign workers, the legal, social and cultural conditions must be also present in order to support, whether directly or indirectly, such exploitative relations. A network of legal and para-legal institutional bodies, then, constitute the main source from which exploitation becomes justified. Without the interdependent and formally autonomous structures which clearly isolate illegal foreign workers (i.e., the relationship among immigration authorities, brokers, and employers, policy makers and local policemen, and the overall traineeship structure under which maneuvering foreign workers rests), the exploitation of foreign workers would be comparable to the situation of native workers.

Clandestine Labour Migration: The Wave of the Future?

Twenty-six Pakistani men were arrested two weeks before the lunar new year in 1996 while working in chemical companies located at the heart of Shiwa industrial complex, one of the largest industrial complexes not only in Korea, but perhaps in all of Asia. Over 3,700 small to mid-size companies are camped in this 10 sq. mile zone, which is the work/home site to numerous Korean and foreign workers. Due to its complex economic, cultural, and political developments in the last ten to fifteen years, Korea's industrial labour force in the 1990s bears distinct marks of unfamiliar, even strange color.

Mr. Malik, a forty-five year old man who was arrested in the last police raid, left behind his wife, two children, and parents in Pakistan two winters ago in search of good paying jobs which he had hoped would enable him to earn enough money to open a small shop in his homeland after a few years. He heard from his neighbor, who had been in Korea earlier, that jobs were plenty and money could be easily made in Korea. Tempted by those sweet sounding words, he thought long and hard about making the adventurous journey of his life. But, his decision to board a plane to the Far East was not an easy one to make, especially because it meant leaving everything that was so dear and precious to him behind and entering a world that he had only imagined. The question of borrowing US \$3,000 to finance his trip to Korea also loomed largely in his mind. Despite such uncertainties and painful break-ups, Mr. Malik finally contacted the broker who had previously handled the necessary paper and correspondence work for Mr. Malik's neighbor in 1991. This decision was perhaps the biggest gamble in his life.

Upon arriving at Kimpo international airport, a man in gray suit offered him a casual hand-shake and perfunctory greeting as soon as he walked bewilderingly out of the maze like tube which, suspending in mid-air, connected the plane to the concrete walls of the white building. The officer unceremoniously walked him through the customs check point and a pair of sliding sensor doors. As usual, anxious crowd of people had gathered all the way round the exit doors awaiting their family members, friends, and business partners to appear on the television screens. Brushing shoulders with unfamiliar faces and instinctively avoiding the curious gazes, the uncanny pair exited the final set of sliding doors and headed directly towards the taxi stand. That was the first and the last time Mr. Malik saw him.

Even though the price for illegal entry into Korea is extremely high, there

are hundreds of people like Mr. Malik who await their turn in their home countries. A host of others has tried to gain entry into Korea legally as tourists, but many were turned away at the gates of international airport in Korea. A young man from Bangladesh attempted to pass as a tourist but could not convince an immigration officer that he simply wanted to visit Korea in February of 1994. Instead of returning to his home country, he decided to go to Bangkok where he contacted his family members in Bangladesh in order to amass enough money to try coming into Korea for the second time. He, then, approached a broker who has been smuggling potential workers into Korea, Japan, Taiwan, and European countries for a large sum of money. Surely, a month later this same man confronted an immigration officer again at the airport. This time, however, he was welcomed by those authorities who rejected his entry earlier.

This illegal method of gaining entry into Korea is an international problem since there are several times as many brokers as the number of countries from which foreign workers come. Nonetheless, whether as tourists or as illegals, foreign workers residing and working illegally in developing countries of Asia are subject to whimsical regulations and novice calculations of the governments. Likewise, the so called foreign industrial trainees and contract workers, whose stated purpose is to learn specific skills, have been abandoning the companies with which they signed contracts and are seeking for better paying jobs elsewhere. As a consequence, almost one out of every three trainees has left their trainee companies and employed illegally in companies where their friends are working.

The fact that developing countries of Asia have more illegal foreign residents/workers than those who have legitimate visas indicates an extremely loose control of foreigners entering the country illegally. At the same time, it appears that these governments tacitly encourage illegal foreign workers to work in order to cope with the problem of labor shortage. This does not mean, however, that the governments of Asian developing countries hope to see a multicultural labor force as in many other countries. Instead, their simplistic measures are tantamount to "konjunkturpuffer" approach, meaning "use'em when needed and dismiss'em when not." This was most evident in the industrial trainee and temporary contract systems and is the precise way in which these governments have been dealing with illegal foreign workers in general.

It is important to note, then, that the mobility of labor to a large extent depends on the characteristics of migrants themselves and individual contacts with formal and informal networks which facilitate, and sometimes

create demands through manipulation, false advertisement, and hollow promises. But, there is a general trusting relationship between potential illegal workers and brokers, especially if migrants are "leap frogging" from one country to another in this way and because others with whom they have a close relationship had successfully entered a country or countries illegally. Ultimately, however, the extent to which illegal migration actualizes depends on each country's explicit and implicit policies and precedents. That is, there is an element of rationality when it comes to risk taking. An illegal migrant will not take a chance on entering a country without making careful calculations as to his/her ability to succeed because the costs of failure are enormous in terms of psychological disturbances of being jailed, of incurring financial burdens (many would have to pay back loans), and of facing their families upon their shameful return to the country of their origin, forcibly.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The labour shortages in developing countries of Asia have prompted ILM into these regions on unprecedented levels. Clearly, structural transformations in each of these economies render serious considerations in terms of examining the flow of ILM; however, the traditional structural paradigm ultimately fails to address the unique features of ILM into developing countries of Asia. In order to better understand labour importation schemes of developing countries, we must not assume that such a migratory pattern coincides with ILM into developed countries which have clearly defined immigration laws. For this reason, the principal question related to temporary migration in developing countries must address the level of tension that exists among government (and its enforcement and legislative apparatuses), various interest groups (unions, companies, religious and NGOs), and natives (in terms of their receptivity to foreigners in their midst). These inter-related factors will invariably affect, if not determine, whether or not "chain migration" is a possibility in developing countries.

Another common feature of ILM into developing countries of Asia is that they unwittingly encourage illegalization of migrant workers. Despite their original intentions, it became an effective political-economic strategy. First of all, most developing countries in Asia did not intend to permanently incorporate migrant workers into their national labor force. The contractual condition of importing migrants from abroad stemmed from the general consensus among policy makers that migrants would be repatriated upon

completion of explicitly stated period of employment. They soon realized that maintaining strict control over such flexible workers was not only difficult, but also impossible to attain without applying such inhumane, restrictive measures as passport confiscation, company level curfews, physical restraints, and withholding or non-payment of wages. Secondly, the illegalization of migrants provided the legitimacy of government control, though they could not maintain the cover-up for an extended period of time. Against the increasing backlash from the native population, the government could not justify a steady flow of legal migrants whose cultural mores, religious practices, and social qualities were perceived fundamentally foreign to the natives. By steadily increasing the flow of legal migrants and tacitly allowing the entrance of illegal workers through the "back doors," the government was able to meet the demands of companies' labor shortage while maintaining legal means to control and punish illegal workers. The latter strategy, in turn, eases the pressure from the native population, whose growing dissatisfaction with the presence of foreigners needed to be vented, by channeling their frustrations away from the government to the migrant workers. The criminality and deviant behaviors of migrant workers reported in the news media reinforced the notion that migrant workers ought to be strictly monitored and used only to ease the economic difficulties stemming from labor shortages.

Finally, the increasing clandestine networks through which unskilled migrant workers are being funneled into developing countries of Asia are qualitatively different from migration into such developed countries as the U.S., Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. One must carefully distinguish such migratory patterns between developing and developed countries in terms of the relationship between legal apparatus such as the police and immigration control officers and the illegal immigrants, the penalties and disciplinary measures placed on workers and employers, the proportion of legal versus illegal entrants, and the repatriation process.

In terms of policy measures, the past practices of "using" and "dismissing" unskilled foreigners in developing countries of Asia must be reconsidered, in light of the fact they are in important positions to set an example which could mutually benefit both sending and receiving countries. The existing system calls forth careful re-examination of labor needs in the country, while ensuring the rights and privileges to foreign workers. Although it may be premature to assume that foreigners from less developed countries will reside for an extended period of time, the government has to anticipate potential backlash among the natives as well. More importantly, the idea that foreigners will be used primarily as

laborers, without considering its social consequences, has to be abandoned in light of other countries' experiences. Nonetheless, the phenomenon of industrial and guest workers from around the globe in developing countries of Asia opens a new chapter in their histories and the long term effects of their presence will draw attention from a diverse group of people within the countries and abroad.

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