

AHRC End of Award Conference
Universities of Hull and Keele

15 – 17 June, 2009
Keele University

DIASPORIC ENCOUNTERS, SACRED JOURNEYS

GENDERED MIGRANTS, SOCIALITY AND THE RELIGIOUS IMAGINATION.

PROGRAMME

Keynote Speakers

Professor Nicole Constable, University of Pittsburgh
Professor Martin F. Manalansan IV, University of Illinois
Professor Annelies Moores, University of Amsterdam
Professor Raul Pertierra, Ateneo de Manila

Convenors:

Claudia Liebelt, Deirdre McKay (Keele)
Mark Johnson, Alicia Pingol (Hull)

Organizer:

Pnina Werbner
(Keele)

**Sponsored by the AHRC Diaspora, Migration and Identities Programme and
The British Academy**

THE CONFERENCE AT A GLANCE

Monday, 15 June

11.00-12.45	Registration, Keele Hall Foyer
12.45-1.00	University Welcome
13.00-14.00	Lunch, Keele Hall Ballroom
14.00-16.00	<i>Session 1: Religious Encounters and Moral Engagements in Muslim Lands</i> (*All conference sessions will be held in Keele Hall, Salvin Room*)
16.00-16.30	Tea and Coffee
16.30-17.30	Keynote Address: <i>Muslim migrants, domestic labour: the gender of transnational relations</i> Prof. Annelies Moors, University of Amsterdam
17.30 – 19.00	<i>Session 2: Islamic Conversion, Renewal and Contests In Diaspora</i>
19.30	Dinner & AHRC Welcome Keele Hall, Terrace Restaurant

Tuesday, 16 June

7.30 – 8.30	Breakfast, Comus Restaurant
9.00 – 11.00	<i>Session 3: Christian Spirituality and Networking in the Global Ecumene</i>
11.00 – 11.30	Tea and Coffee
11.30 – 12.30	Keynote Address <i>Servicing the World: Flexible Filipinos and the Unsecured Life</i> Prof. Martin Manalansan IV, University of Illinois
12.30 – 13.30	Lunch, Keele Hall Ballroom
13.30 – 15.00	<i>Session 4: Gender and Sexuality: Between Freedom and Constraint</i>
15.00 – 16.00	Keynote Address <i>Diasporal subjects, authentic selves: religion, migration & ICT among overseas Filipinos</i> Prof. Raul Pertierra, Ateneo de Manila University
16.00 – 16.30	Tea and Coffee
16.30 – 18.30	Session 5: Negotiated Families: The Ambivalence of Care and Transnational Dilemmas
19.30	Reception and Conference Banquet Keele Hall Terrace Restaurant

Wednesday, 17 June

7.30 – 8.30	Breakfast, Comus Restaurant
9.00 – 11.00	<i>Session 6: National Belonging and Transnational Caring in the Filipino Diaspora</i> Keele Hall, Salvin room
11.00 – 11.30	Tea and Coffee
11.30 – 12.30	Keynote Address <i>Political Ties and Religious Difference: Foreign Domestic Workers in Hong Kong</i> Prof. Nicole Constable, University of Pittsburgh
12.30 – 13.30	Lunch, Keele Hall Ballroom
13.30 – 15.00	<i>Session 7: The Predicaments of Labour Migration</i>
15.00 -15.30	Tea and Coffee
15.30 – 16.30	Round Table: Critical Reflections on/from Policy, Practice and Advocacy

CONFERENCE THEME

The aim of this conference is to critically explore how shared ritual participation and shared religious imaginaries of sacred places, texts, icons, and holy sites engender a felt sense of belonging, attachment and conviviality within a global faith community, while providing a platform for mobilisation, leadership, and fostering morally grounded relationships and mutual aid among migrants. Broadly, the conference will address the following questions: What shape do migrants' newly formed social networks take? How do their spiritual engagements enhance their social and symbolic capital both at 'home' and abroad? How do migrants mobilise friendship and congregational support to cope with the predicaments of everyday life, as well as the economic and legal strictures placed upon them? Rather than religion simply reinforcing subordination and acquiescence, may it not afford lone migrants, men as well as women, greater freedom and independence?

The conference grows out of the 24-month 'Footsteps' Project on sociality and the religious imagination in the Filipino diaspora, conducted at the Universities of Keele and Hull and funded as part of the AHRC Diaspora, Migration and Identity Programme. While early studies on migrant domestic workers and female migrants often centred on their vulnerability and exploitation, the Footsteps project sought to explore comparatively migrants' subjective experiences as travellers, who engage emotionally and intellectually with the sacred geographies to which they migrate to work: the Holy Land for Christians, and the Arabian Peninsula, cradle and heartland of Islam, in the case of Muslims.

Though many of the papers in this conference focus on Filipinos, they also include contributions on a wide range of transnational migrants originating from and/or moving to countries in Southeast Asia, South Asia, the Middle East, Europe and North America and explore a number of inter-related themes as follows:

Care and Sociality	Social Networking
Pilgrimage and Sacred Journeys	Gender and Sexuality
Religious Conversion	Transnational Families
Mobilising for Rights	

Conference Organization

The conference is organized in an intimate workshop style with a limited number of plenary-based papers and key note presentations. It includes an invited session for policy makers in this field.

Exhibition

The conference includes a photo exhibition produced by Claudia Liebelt and Alicia Pingol.

DETAILED PROGRAMME & CONFERENCE SESSIONS

Monday, 15 June 2009

11.00-12.45	Registration, Keele Hall Foyer
12.45-1.00	University Welcome Professor Dame Janet Finch, CBE DL AcSS, Vice-Chancellor, Keele University
13.00-14.00	Lunch, Keele Hall Ballroom
14.00-16.00	Session 1: Religious Encounters and Moral Engagements in Muslim Lands **All conference sessions will be held in Keele Hall, Salvin Room** (Chair: Prof. Pnina Werbner)
14.00-14.30	“It Doesn’t Matter What They Believe As Long As They Are God-Fearing”: Migrant Domestic Workers and Religious Diversity in Yemen Dr. Marina de Regt, International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam
14.30-15.00	‘maddad ya om al-awagez’: Spiritual and Material influence of Religion on the experiences of Local and Foreign Domestic Workers in Egypt Amira A. Ahmed, University of East London
15.00-15.30	Activism at the Altar? Faith-Based Networks, Vows and Magic Among Sri Lankan Domestic Workers in Jordan Elizabeth Frantz, London School of Economics
15.30-16.00	Knitting an Ethno-Religious Niche in Domestic Services: Iraqi Christian migrant women in Istanbul Dr. Didem Daniş, Galatasaray University, Istanbul
16.00-16.30	Tea and Coffee
16.30-17.30	Keynote Address: <i>Muslim migrants, domestic labour: the gender of transnational relations</i> Prof. Annelies Moors, University of Amsterdam (Chair: Dr. Mark Johnson)
17.30 -19.00	Session 2: Islamic Conversion, Renewal and Contests In Diaspora (Chair: Prof. Kathryn Robinson)
17.30-18.00	Muslim Belongings and Becomings: Migrant Domestic Workers and Islamic Da’wa in Kuwait Attiya Ahmad, Duke University
18.00 –18.30	Labour Diaspora or Spiritual Sojourners: Muslim Filipinos Traversing Contested Landscapes at Home and Abroad Dr. Mark Johnson (with Dr. Alicia Pingol), University of Hull
18.30 – 19.00	Transnational Mobilities: Rights, Religion, and Indonesian Migrant Women in Saudi Arabia Dr. Rachel M. Silvey, University of Toronto
19.30	Dinner & AHRC Welcome Keele Hall, Terrace Restaurant Prof. Kim Knott, Leeds University Director, AHRC Diaspora, Migration and Identities Programme

Tuesday, 16 June 2009

7.30-8.30	Breakfast, Comus Restaurant
9.00-11.00	Session 3: <i>Christian Spirituality and Networking in the Global Ecumene</i> (Chair: Prof. Kim Knott)
9.00-9.30	“God has a programme for me”: Vietnamese Female Leaders of Pentecostal House Churches Prof. Gertrud Hüwelmeier, Humboldt-University Berlin
9.30-10.00	On Filipino Struggles and Spiritual Transformations in the ‘Holy Land’: Domestic Workers’ Trajectories to, in and beyond Israel Dr. Claudia Liebelt, Keele University
10.00-10.30	Christianity among Filipino Crew Olivia Swift, Goldsmiths, University of London
10.30-11.00	Opportunities and Pitfalls in Irregular Filipina Migrant Religious Practice Dr. Kyoko Shinozaki, University Mainz
11.00-11.30	Tea and Coffee
11.30-12.30	Keynote Address <i>Servicing the World: Flexible Filipinos and the Unsecured Life</i> Prof. Martin Manalansan IV, University of Illinois (Chair: Dr. Alicia Pingol)
12.30-13.30	Lunch, Keele Hall Ballroom
13.30-15.30	Session 4: <i>Gender and Sexuality: Between Freedom and Constraint</i> (Chair: Dr. Mark Johnson)
13.30-14.00	Intimate Desire: Sri Lankan Migrant Women and the ‘Christian’ State - from Sri Lanka to Lebanon Monica Smith, National University of Singapore
14.00-14.30	Bodies and Bodies! Offerings for the Here and Now and the Hereafter Dr. Alicia Pingol, University of Hull
14.30-15.00	Public Morality and Private Behaviors: Filipina expressions of gender and sexuality in Arab-Islamic contexts of Bahrain Dr. Sharon Nagy, DePaul University
15.00 – 15.30	‘Haven in a heartless world’? Australian-Indonesian Muslim families after the Bali Bomb Prof. Kathryn Robinson, Australian National University
15.30 - 16.00	Tea and Coffee
16.00 – 17.00	Keynote Address

	<p><i>Spirituality, Sexuality and the New Media among the Filipino Diaspora</i> Prof. Raul Pertierra, Ateneo de Manila University (Chair: Prof. Daniel Miller)</p>
17.00 – 18.30	<p><i>Session 5: Negotiated Families: The Ambivalence of Care and Transnational Dilemmas</i> (Chair: Dr. Deirdre McKay)</p>
17.00 – 17.30	<p>Family and family-like interactions in households with round-the-clock paid foreign carers in Israel Dr. Liat Ayalon, Bar-Ilan University</p>
17.30-18.00	<p>Making New Citizens: Mothering and Migration Dr. Umut Erel, The Open University</p>
18.00-18.30	<p>Parenting from a Distance: Media, Debt and Cosmology among Filipino Transnational Families Dr. Mirca Madianou, Cambridge University Prof. Daniel Miller, University College London</p>
19.30	<p>Reception & Conference Banquet Keele Hall, Terrace Restaurant</p>

Wednesday, 17 June 2009

7.30-8.30	<p>Breakfast, Comus Restaurant</p>
9.00-11.00	<p><i>Session 6: National Belonging and Transnational Caring in the Filipino Diaspora</i> (Chair: Dr. Claudia Liebelt)</p>
9.00-9.30	<p>Popular Religiosity and the Transnational Journey: Maintaining Diaspora Identity through the Sacred Josefina Socorro Flores Tondo, University of Canterbury, Christchurch.</p>
9.30-10.00	<p>Uses of Religion, Gender Dynamics and Labour Strategies among Filipina Migrants in Portugal Maria Inês David, Lisbon University</p>
10.00-10.30	<p>The Catholic Church in the Lives of Irregular Migrant Filipinas in France: Identity Formation, Empowerment and Social Control Dr. Asuncion Fresnoza-Flot, URMIS, Université Paris 7 Denis Diderot</p>
10.30-11.00	<p>“They think we are just caregivers”: The Ambivalence of Care in the Lives of Filipino Medical Workers in Singapore Megha Amrith, University of Cambridge</p>
11.00-11.30	<p>Tea and Coffee</p>
11.30-12.30	<p>Keynote Address Political Ties and Religious Difference:</p>

	<p><i>Foreign Domestic Workers in Hong Kong</i> Prof. Nicole Constable, University of Pittsburgh (Chair: Dr. Claudia Liebelt)</p>
12.30-13.30	Lunch, Keele Hall Ballroom
13.30-15.00	<p>Session 7: The Predicaments of Labour Migration (Chair: Dr. Marina de Regt)</p>
13.30-14.00	<p>Borrowed lives: Faith and Debt in Filipino Migrant Networks, Hong Kong and London Dr. Deirdre Mckay, Keele University</p>
14.00-14.30	<p>Mitigating Legal Barriers: Filipina Domestic Helpers Negotiate the Politics of Indifference in Hong Kong Dr. Estelle Kennelly, Independent Scholar</p>
14.30-15.00	<p>The Limits of Sociality: A Single Bangladeshi Migrant Woman in Australia Dr. Santi Rozario, Cardiff University</p>
15.00 -15.30	Tea and Coffee
15.30 - 16.30	<p>Round Table Discussion Critical Reflections on/from Policy, Practice and Advocacy with Margaret Healy, <i>Kalayaan</i> and Mattia Fumanti, Middlesex University</p>

ABSTRACTS

Key Note Presentations

Muslim migrants, domestic labour: the gender of transnational relations

Prof. Annelies Moors, University of Amsterdam

Monday, 16.30-17.30

Whereas both migrant domestic labour and transnational Islam are burgeoning fields of research, very little attention has hitherto been paid to the ways in which religion is relevant to migrant domestic labour, be it in terms of religious practices, religious belonging or religious institutions. Moreover, if this has been done, it is largely limited to studies focussing on Christianity. In my presentation, in contrast, I will address the ways in which another religious tradition, Islam, can be productively addressed in studies of migrant domestic labour. This implies a double move. On the one hand, a focus on religious belonging is helpful to understand how migrant domestic workers are positioned, and position themselves, with respect to labour and kinship relations as well as a presence in the public. On the other hand, paying attention to the everyday practices of female migrant domestic workers and their imaginaries, contributes to a better understanding of transnational Islam by moving away from a prevalent focus on male migrants and on Muslim intellectuals. I will discuss these issues based on my involvement in the research programme 'Muslim cultural politics' that includes a research line on the cultural politics of migrant domestic labour.

Servicing the World: Flexible Filipinos and the Unsecured Life

Prof. Martin Manalansan IV, University of Illinois

Tuesday, 11.30-12.30

This paper examines the intersection of religion and gendered subjectivities in Philippine labour migration. Focusing on the affective dimensions of gender subjectivity and religious practices, I track the ways in which Filipinos in the diaspora make emotional linkages between gendered positionalities and religious devotion as a way to survive and inhabit their labour. Utilising ethnographic interviews and media analysis, my analysis centres on how gendered bodily dispositions, stances or composites provide the fulcrum for surviving the violence and precarity of flexible labour both in the Philippines and in the diaspora.

Spirituality, Sexuality and the New Media among the Filipino Diaspora

Prof. Raul Pertierra, Ateneo de Manila University

Tuesday, 16.00 – 17.00

The global condition has made culture a major problem of our age. It is no longer the principal basis for a nation-state. Culture crosses national boundaries and links members in Diasporal or virtual communities. Culture presents a world that is not quite as it seems. It consists as much of unfulfilled aspirations as it does real achievements. While local culture is closely related to experiences and routines of everyday life, it also includes pre-reflective bases involving gender, age, class, and ethnicity. National culture is less directly connected to everyday experience and consists predominantly of

normative and exemplary rules imposed on everyday life through appropriate institutions such as schools and government bureaucracies. The former is a model of, while the latter is a model for, the practices of everyday life. Like national culture, global culture is also a model for a form of life. Its source lies outside the local and national.

We are caught simultaneously in these three dimensions of culture and each poses its own problematic. In every case, culture provides the framework for making sense of our place in the world. The problem is that our place in the world is not always directly related to our experience of or our response to it. Migration, overseas work and ICT presently constitute important elements of Filipino culture. This paper unravels their effects and consequence for the local, the national and the global condition. Filipinos increasingly crave for commodities and lifestyles only accessible through overseas work. But once overseas, their Filipino identity persists, shifting its basis from territorial contiguity to personal identity and memory. The global condition mimics a national imagination when it portrays the world as a unified and integrated community. ICT reinforces this mimicry by connecting spatially distant interlocutors through the banalities of everyday life. But these fictions are no more effective than the old ones in their attempts to persuade. We have still to see what social and cultural futures await us.

***Political Ties and Religious Difference:
Foreign Domestic Workers in Hong Kong***
Prof. Nicole Constable, University of Pittsburgh
Wednesday, 11.30-12.30

Hong Kong is not a location that is known to attract migrant domestic workers for religious or spiritual reasons. Despite the religious freedom it offers, this self-proclaimed “Asian World City” is better known as a monument to neo-liberal capitalism, a shrine to wealth and economic disparity. Ninety-five percent of Hong Kong’s population is ethnic Chinese, and it is temporary home to close to 400,000 migrants, including over 200,000 foreign domestic workers, the majority of whom are women from the Philippines and Indonesia, with smaller numbers of domestic workers from Thailand, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh and India. Ethnic and religious differences are significant to multiple varieties of Muslim, Christian, Hindu, and Buddhist migrant workers, and of great day-to-day importance in many migrants’ lives. Within the context of domestic worker life, during their time off, many workers stick with the people they know from home and maintain social ties that are likely to follow ethnic/national and religious lines. Within the context of domestic worker political activism, however, there exist numerous affiliations and subdivisions that cross ethnic/national, religious lines in striking ways. This paper traces some key junctures between political activism and religious difference in Hong Kong. In particular, I ask how encounters among and between Filipina and Indonesian women domestic workers, based on their shared gendered migratory work experiences and yet structured in part by religious institutions and infrastructures, can support shared political goals and activism, appreciation -- and sometimes even celebration -- of religious and cultural differences and of gendered subjectivities.

Sessional Papers

Monday
14.00-16.00

Session 1: Religious Encounters and Moral Engagements in Muslim Lands

(Chair: Prof. Pnina Werbner)

“It Doesn’t Matter What They Believe As Long As They Are God-Fearing”: Migrant Domestic Workers and Religious Diversity in Yemen

Dr. Marina de Regt, University of Amsterdam (marina.deregt@gmail.com)

Abstract

Yemen, one of the poorest countries in the Middle East, is usually not regarded as a country of immigration. Yet, in the past twenty years the number of migrants and refugees has rapidly increased. Most of them come from Somalia and Ethiopia, neighbouring countries where living conditions are worse. Whereas Somali and Ethiopian men have difficulties finding paid work in Yemen, most women are employed as domestics. In the past two decades the demand for paid domestic labour has increased among urban middle and upper middle classes. In addition to East African women, there are small numbers of Asian women employed as domestics. They mainly come from the Philippines, India and Indonesia. The religious backgrounds of migrant domestic workers are diverse; they can be Muslim, Ethiopian Orthodox, Catholic, Pentecostal, Hindu and even Buddhist. Yemen is a conservative Muslim society where spreading any religion other than Islam is forbidden by law. Yemeni employers often stress religious tolerance and state that the religious background of their domestic workers is not important. Yet, some employers have a clear preference for Muslim or non-Muslim domestics. Which role does religion play in the employment of migrant domestic workers? What happens when people of different religious backgrounds come together in the private sphere of the household? And how do migrant domestic workers who are not Muslim practice their religion? The paper is based on anthropological fieldwork in two Yemeni cities in the period 2003-2007.

‘Maddad ya om al-awagez’: the Spiritual and Material influence of Religion on the Experiences of Local and Foreign Domestic Workers in Egypt

Amira A. Ahmed, University of East London (amira_auc@yahoo.com)

Abstract

In Egypt, informal networks such as kinship, friends, neighbours, charities, NGOs and religious organizations comprise crucial channels for both Egyptian and non-Egyptian women, which enable them to obtain viable jobs in household services. Literature on paid domestic work emphasizes the interpersonal relation between employees and employers as an instrumental aspect in shaping and defining work relations and conditions. Such a relation is manifested in the personal characteristics sought after by employers, including the worker’s religion. This paper explores the rising religious and conservative ideologies in Egypt which have been increasingly determining who the ‘good’ domestic worker is. Some features of such ideologies are manifested in for instance the widespread advertisements which highlight a ‘religious’ employer looking for a ‘Muslim’ and/or ‘veiled’ worker. In addition, domestic workers seek religious figures and saints for spiritual comfort from their work and life anguish. For instance, ‘Om alawagez’ [the mother of the poor] is one of the names of Sayedda Zeinab and it is called upon in times of crisis and despair to symbolize protection and salvation. On the other hand, charities and NGOs supporting refugees in Egypt, particularly churches, were found to be a significant employment channel for both Christian and Muslim Sudanese refugees in Cairo. Beside its role as a locus for worship, the church also provides a sanctuary and socialization venue for refugees; many complaints and work-related conflicts are made and often solved inside the church in respect for Holy place and

the religion. The paper is based on an ongoing qualitative comparative study between rural urban and refugee women domestic workers in Cairo.

Activism at the Altar? Faith-Based Networks, Vows and Magic Among Sri Lankan Domestic Workers in Jordan

Elizabeth Frantz, London School of Economics (E.A.Frantz@lse.ac.uk)

Abstract

More than 100,000 Sri Lankan women journey to the Middle East each year on temporary contracts to work as housemaids. These women, most of whom are Buddhist, occupy a socially disadvantaged minority with limited room to manoeuvre in predominantly Muslim countries. Despite the constraints, they do not suspend their spiritual commitments during these sojourns. This paper focuses on women who migrate to Jordan and, drawing on 24 months of fieldwork in Amman and Sri Lanka, explores ritual practices and participation in faith-based networks. It discusses participation in Catholic and Pentecostal church services as a means of coping with insecurity and uncertainty. It also describes more individualised uses of churches by Roman Catholics and Buddhists as arenas for the making and fulfilling of ritual vows (bara), saint veneration and magic. In its final section, it explores why so many of these activities have emerged in association with Christianity rather than with the dominant religion in Jordan, Islam.

Three main points are made. The first is that, through ritual, migrants can exert control over social relations in ways that might otherwise be impossible and negotiate concerns about ethics, envy, protection, sexuality, shame and respectability. Thus, these activities form part of the religious imaginary, extending beyond instrumentalism. The second point is that, despite the adaptive use of Christian sites of worship, this is not a case of Buddhism transformed. Rather, these activities should be understood as Buddhism by other means, a further instance of a pluralist approach to the divine. The final point is that faith-based networks constitute an important form of collective action and a vital support mechanism. But the extent to which they can be considered activist is questionable. Evidence from Jordan reveals that while they mitigated hardships, they did not diminish the fault-lines of social inequality within the migrant community, nor did they alter migrants' underprivileged position within the Jordanian labour market.

Knitting an Ethno-Religious Niche in Domestic Services: Iraqi Christian Migrant Women in Istanbul

Dr. Didem Danis, Galatasaray University, Istanbul (didemdanic@yahoo.com)

Abstract

This paper analyses migrant networks and ethnic niches in the case of a transit migrant group, namely Iraqi Christians in Istanbul. The case of the Iraqi Christians represents a remarkable example of niche formation in the domestic work sector thanks to the religious networks they utilize to find jobs at local Christian households. Among the various migrant groups in Istanbul, transit migrants stand out for their different employment strategies. Unlike female migrants from ex-Soviet countries, who dominate the domestic services sector in Turkey, transit migrants are obliged to work in order to cover their daily expenses in the uncertain waiting period before they make the next migratory step. Despite the disadvantages of this temporariness of stay, Iraqi Christian women have a separate niche within the domestic work hierarchy of Istanbul. This

paper aims to present the mechanisms of this ethno-religious niche by a focus on the role played by the churches and church personnel in bridging two groups in this employment relationship, i.e. Iraqi Christian transit migrants as workers and local Christian households as employers. Social ties built around religious affiliations play an essential role in the spread of information and in finding employment, and churches function as intermediaries (or even as recruitment agencies) that connect and regulate the relations of the Iraqi Christian migrants and the indigenous non-Muslims in Istanbul.

Monday
17.30 -19.00

Session 2: Islamic Conversion, Renewal and Contests In Diaspora

(Chair: Prof. Kathryn Robinson)

Muslim Belongings and Becomings: Migrant Domestic Workers and Islamic *Da'wa* in Kuwait

Attiya Ahmad, Duke University (aa38@duke.edu)

Abstract

Flush with petrodollars, over the past 30 years Kuwaitis have increasingly brought women, primarily from South and Southeast Asia, to work within their households. One-sixth of the total population, they are an ever-present feature of Kuwait's social landscapes. Of different national, ethnic, linguistic, educational and religious backgrounds, in Kuwait they share a common situation and set of experiences. Intimately imbricated into the everyday lives of Arabic-speaking Muslim Kuwaitis, their labour, whether it be cooking, cleaning, or caring for children and the elderly, is crucial to the social reproduction of Kuwait's population. While the attention paid to their experiences has been at best scant, the accounts that do exist largely focus on the structural factors leading to their migration, and to their conditions of work. Elided is another significant and fairly widespread phenomenon. In the past 10 years, upwards of 35,000 migrant domestic workers have taken *shehadeh*, the Islamic testament of faith. Based on over a year and a half of fieldwork in Kuwait (2004, 2005-2007), and two month of subsequent work in Nepal, in this paper I discuss the forms of Muslim belonging into which domestic workers are being articulated. I argue that in order to understand these forms of belonging, we need to pay close attention to the spaces in which domestic workers learn Islamic precepts and practices. Over the course of becoming Muslim, domestic workers attend classes organized by an Islamic *dawa* movement, which focuses its activities on Kuwait's migrant populations. These classes are offered in the languages spoken by domestic workers, and are taught by *dai'yat* who are typically from their places of origin. Perhaps unintentionally, these classes have become spaces in which national, ethnic and linguistic bases of belonging are being reconstituted, but as I discuss, these are being reconstituted in and through Muslim concepts, practices and networks. I argue that this phenomenon points to how the form of Muslim belonging developing through Kuwait's *dawa* movement is one that develops through, and not in opposition to, other forms of belonging, including linguistic, familial, ethnic and national ones.

Labour Diaspora or Spiritual Sojourners: Muslim Filipinos Traversing Contested Landscapes at Home and Abroad

Dr. Mark Johnson and Dr. Alicia Pingol, University of Hull (j.m.johnson@hull.ac.uk)

This paper is concerned with migrant Muslim Filipino sojourns in and to Saudi Arabia. In particular, we focus on the way that Islamic belief and practice figures and is refigured in the experiences and imaginings of their travels and travails and practices of place making across landscapes that are sacred and profane and sometimes both simultaneously. We emphasize the contested nature of landscapes not only because of the varying gendered relations of power that

enable and constrain their sojourns and inhabitations, but also because religious belief and practice is often both the idiom and object of social struggles for recognition at home and abroad.

Transnational Mobilities: Rights, Religion, and Indonesian Migrant Women in Saudi Arabia

Dr. Rachel M. Silvey, University of Toronto (silvey@geog.utoronto.ca)

How are Indonesian women migrants who work in Saudi Arabia, and advocates who work on their behalf, framing their rights in relation to religion? What sorts of geographies of religious, national, and transnational belonging and exclusion are produced in relation to migrant rights activism? What are the ramifications of these women migrants' shifting transnational political and religious identities for understanding immigration politics in Indonesia? This paper focuses empirically on the migrant rights groups (interstate organizations [ISOs] and non-governmental organizations [NGOs]) working on behalf of Indonesian migrant women workers in Saudi Arabia to provide a grounded examination of the ways in which the politics of religion (and its frequent discursive erasure in the name of 'secular' interventions) inflect contemporary efforts to improve migrants' rights. In contrast to essentialist and Orientalist views of "women and Islam," the paper centers on the socially and historically produced meanings of gender, religion, and rights among this group of migrants.

Tuesday
9.00-11.00

Session 3: Christian Spirituality and Networking in the Global Ecumene

(Chair: Prof. Kim Knott)

"God has a programme for me": Vietnamese Female leaders of Pentecostal House Churches

Prof. Gertrud Hüwelmeier, Humboldt-University (ghuwelmeier@yahoo.de)

Abstract

After the fall of the Berlin Wall and the breakdown of the East German socialist government, thousands of former contract workers in East Germany stayed in the then reunified Germany. A number of them joined Vietnamese Pentecostal churches that had been founded in the host country. While Vietnamese contract workers were isolated and ghettoised during socialist times in East Germany, charismatic Pentecostal churches helped them settle into the new political, social and cultural surroundings. Many former asylum seekers and contract workers also returned to Vietnam. In recent years, a small but growing number have started founding branches of their churches in late socialist Vietnam, where charismatic Pentecostals are watched closely by the government. Based on ethnographic fieldwork among Vietnamese migrants in Germany and returnees in Vietnam, this paper focuses on transnational religious networks and the maintenance of cross-border connections. In particular, it will examine the role of women in Pentecostal churches. Whereas all pastors are male in these churches, a large number of the believers are women. While many female believers in Germany have obtained a high degree of independence in the host country, the lives of returnees in late socialist Vietnam are quite different due to the strong patriarchal structure of Vietnamese society and its recently reinvigorated orientation towards ancestor worship promoted by the Communist Party of Vietnam. However, a number of female followers in Vietnam have become the leaders of house churches, which attract mostly women as worshippers. The paper explores shifting gender

concepts in Pentecostal Vietnamese charismatic churches by arguing that the empowerment of women – despite the male dominance in leadership positions – is one of the main factors of the churches' success.

On Filipino Struggles and Spiritual Transformations in the 'Holy Land': Domestic Workers' Trajectories to, in and beyond Israel

Dr. Claudia Liebelt, Keele University (claulie@gmx.net)

Abstract

Collective dreams and imaginations play a major role in migratory moves. Filipinos, who have been recruited to work as carers in Israel in large numbers since the early 1990s, narrate their moves as blessings, pilgrimages or spiritual journeys. In Israel, the 'Holy Land' of Christians worldwide, predominantly female Filipino migrants actively engage with the sacred geography they encounter, organising Catholic Block Rosary Crusades in Tel Aviv, praying at the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem or undertaking bus tours to Holy Sites throughout the country. Moreover, migrants frequently narrate their trajectories to, in and beyond Israel as spiritual transformations. Within the dislocating process of migration, women may become 'born again,' seek refuge and compassion in faith communities, turn into global activists for Christ and upon return to the Philippines gain much cultural capital from their knowledge of Israel and Jewish customs. Based on ethnographic research on Filipina carers in Israel and returnees in the Philippines, my paper will follow migrants' narratives of spiritual transformations in the Holy Land. Rather than understanding religious engagement within the process of migration as mere empowerment, my paper argues that religion gives Filipina migrant domestic workers an idiom of making sense of reality, of organising comfort, solidarity and compassion, something that transforms them spiritually from those who do the dirty work into morally superior beings.

Christianity among Filipino Crew

Olivia Swift, Goldsmiths' College, University of London
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Abstract

The sea has always been a site of contestation and exploitation, something to conquer in the name of trade, and/or God. Today, hundreds of thousands of seafarers – mostly men - work aboard ships for contracts typically lasting between six and nine months. For these men – who are perhaps more 'long-distance commuters' than 'migrants' - religion continues to be an important part of life at sea. In this paper I describe the nature of religion aboard a car-carrying ship crewed by 23 Filipino men in European waters, where I researched for one month, in 2007. The Philippines provides more seafarers than any other nation. The paper also draws upon more extensive research among maritime companies, NGOs and other organisations in London and Manila, primarily between 2005 and 2006. Christian missionaries are the primary welfare providers to the seafarers crewing the world's ships and, I argue, are a more active presence at sea than trade unions, such that a rhetoric of Christian solidarity is more pervasive than that of class and men's shared faith contributes to cohesion aboard. On the other hand, I also explain that shared acts of faith rarely occur; indeed faith, in the curiously liminal space of the sea, tends to be a private affair for many such men. For these seafarers, being at sea might be thought of as a kind of hermitage, the implications of which I also discuss.

Opportunities and Pitfalls in Irregular Filipina Migrant Religious Practice

Dr. Kyoko Shinozaki, University Mainz (shinozak@uni-mainz.de)

For migrants, irregular migrants in particular, networks play a decisive role in getting their everyday life organized. Not only do networks and activities based on a shared religious belief serve to create a secure space that safeguards irregular migrants from the authorities. But they can also be more actively mobilised. My paper looks at Catholic religious practice among irregular Filipina migrant domestic workers in Germany as an unexpected means to wrestle with conflicts emerging from the migration process. Drawing from expert and narrative interviews with these migrants as well as participant observation, I show that Catholic religious networks and activities yield both opportunities and pitfalls for irregular Filipina migrant domestics. Opportunities, in the sense that some of the migrants have established leadership in religious communities and beyond, despite their irregular migration status; furthermore, while working at the bottom of the German labour market, Filipina migrant domestics engage in transnational charity initiatives for metropolitan Manila slums. These are the opportunities that help migrant women discover and forge positive identity in irregular underemployed migration. Yet, ironically, another facet of the same religious practice informs them as to the 'correct' gender norms. Central concerns in Catholic communities are marital relationships and extramarital affairs. While, or precisely because, migrant women have become breadwinners of the family, they seem to abide by the conventional gender roles and sexuality.

Tuesday
13.30-15.30

Session 4:

Gender and Sexuality: Between Freedom and Constraint

(Chair: Dr. Mark Johnson)

The erasure of sexuality and desire: | Ca-ri-tas | love for all people | and Sri Lankan female migrant in Beirut

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Abstract

Drawing upon fieldwork in 2007 and 2008 in Beirut, Lebanon, I analyze how Caritas Lebanon Migrants Center (CLMC), the largest NGO to operate in Lebanon and a Catholic organization, aims to protect, shape and hide Sri Lankan migrant women's desires and sexual lives. CLMC endeavors to encourage marriage, monogamy and motherhood while discouraging transgressive sexual practices which deviate from the norm. Moreover, they operate to create an image for the wider public of Sri Lankan migrant women as the victim of sexual abuse and/or the chaste and pure one who is the dutiful mother, daughter and wife. In this paper, I specifically focus upon two examples of CLMC intervention projects. An internationally released film on the lives of Sri Lankan migrant women in Beirut and a multi-country research project on migrant women's vulnerabilities to HIV both operate to silence and make invisible women's desires for intimacy while at the same time emphasizing women's roles as dutiful and chaste mothers, daughters and wives. In addition, the notion of Sri Lankan women as the sexual victim with little or no agency is reinforced.

Bodies and Bodies! Offerings for the Here and Now and the Hereafter

Dr. Alicia Pingol, University of Hull (a.pingol@hull.ac.uk)

Abstract

This paper gives a glimpse of the 1.3 million Filipino workers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It is about the regulation of bodies, where women although veiled still cry for protection; where men could be hunters even while hunted. They come in various phases and faces: skins born with or retouched, laughing and agonizing, feasting and boozing, praying and scheming, waiting for rewards; circumventing rules, captured and released; yet still staying and returning. Thus, although bodies are their own to rule, they have to inevitably bear the brunt of institutional restrictions or eventually reap its blessing. Deployed as docile bodies, they are agents of their own emancipation; they rise, mobilise and fight their external and internal wars in do-it-yourself ways.

Public Morality and Private Behaviors: Filipina expressions of gender and sexuality in Arab-Islamic contexts of Bahrain

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Abstract

Based on ethnographic research amongst Filipina/o residents in Bahrain, this paper examines the intersections of religion, gender and sexual morality in public discourses and spaces. Recent readings and reformulations of the Habermasian concept of the public sphere have worked to address the fundamental realities of diversity and multiplicity in complex societies. Goeff Elay suggests that the public sphere in complex, stratified societies is “the structured setting where cultural and ideological contest or negotiation among a variety of publics take place”. Using the example of recent public discourse of gender and sexual morality in Bahrain’s public spaces, two main features of the “structured setting” are explored: mechanisms of dominance and subordination and the spatialization of discourse. Ethnographically, the paper describes cultural contests about the appropriateness of Filipina/o expressions of gender and sexuality in Bahrain’s public spaces where the dominant Arab-Islamic ideologies and Filipina practices are often in contradiction to each other. These examples highlight how public behavior and public critique of private behaviors contribute on the one hand to the public formation and enactment of identities, while on the other hand help to expand discursive space bringing previously taboo subjects under public scrutiny and debate.

‘Haven in a heartless world’? Australian-Indonesian Muslim families after the Bali Bomb

Professor Kathryn Robinson, Australian National University
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Abstract

For Indonesian women who profess Islam, Muslim practice and belief are invoked in conjugal and family relations. For Indonesian Muslims, marriage is regulated in accordance with Islamic law, and Islamic courts adjudicate in matters of divorce. This paper explores the negotiation over conjugal roles and responsibilities among Australian-Indonesian intercultural couples, resident in Australia. Does Islam provide the idiom for some of the axes of negotiation in family life? In which aspects of conjugal /parental/ household relations does Islam tend to be invoked? I will also explore the impact of the 'post Bali bombing' hostile public discourse in relation to Indonesian Muslims (and Islam in general), on personal and family relations for these intercultural families, but also on their connections with the wider Australian community. What strategies have been adopted by the Indonesians (mostly women) in intercultural marriages to manage their relations with in-laws, neighbours and the increasingly hostile wider community?

Tuesday
17.00 – 18.30

**Session 5: Negotiated Families:
The Ambivalence of Care and Transnational Dilemmas**

(Chair: Dr. Deirdre McKay)

Family and Family-like Interactions in Households with Round-the-Clock Paid Foreign Carers in Israel

Dr. Liat Ayalon, Bar-Ilan University (ayalonl@mail.biu.ac.il)

Abstract

This paper reports on a study of family and family-like interactions and transfers, or exchanges of goods and resources, between paid, round-the-clock, Filipino home carers and those they care for in a sample of households in Israel. Qualitative interviews about their experiences and attitudes concerning the care role were conducted with 22 family members and 29 Filipino home-care workers. A thematic analysis of the interview data identified three major themes: the structure and internal dynamics of the adapted family or family-like system of care; the role of family members; and the role of Filipino home-care workers in the new system of care. Sons and daughters tended to appropriate the care management positions and to reduce their social and emotional support for the care recipient. In contrast, spouse care-givers continued to provide some of the personal and emotional care even when a Filipino home-care worker was employed. Filipino home-care workers were made responsible for daily care and domestic routines and provided emotional and social care. It was found that family members do not relinquish their role as care-givers when round-the-clock foreign carers are on hand, but the nature of their role changes. The results suggest that foreign home-care workers' job description needs to be redefined to acknowledge the substantial social and emotional care that they provide.

Making New Citizens: Mothering and Migration

Dr. Umut Erel, The Open University (U.Erel@open.ac.uk)

Abstract

This paper looks at how mothering practices of migrant women in the UK (re-)construct notions of citizenship for themselves and their children. It investigates how migrant women to the UK make a home for themselves and their children: how does migration affect the intergenerational identities of mothers and children? How do mothers see their role in bringing up future citizens of their new country of residence? When families migrate they change not only their country of residence, but also relations among genders and generations. When it comes to migrant families, where the cultural, social and linguistic resources of the mother's country of origin are different from those in the new country of residence, the aspect of ethnic identity and allegiance becomes part of these negotiations. Women are often seen as symbols of the ethnic or national group and transmitters of its values and culture, yet migrant mothers also transform the meanings of ethnic identity and belonging, in the process challenging gendered ethnicised notions of subjectivity, collectivity and citizenship.

Parenting from a Distance: Media, Debt and Cosmology among Filipino Transnational Families

Dr. Mirca Madianou, University of Cambridge (mm577@cam.ac.uk)

Professor Daniel Miller, University College London (d.miller@ucl.ac.uk)

This paper is based on one year's fieldwork with Filipina mothers – mainly domestic workers and nurses – in London and Cambridge, followed by fieldwork with the children of these same mothers in three Luzon provinces. The focus of our research was on the nature of their communications and the impact of changes in communication technologies on family relationships. In this paper we will compare accounts of the period when communication was dominated by letter writing and sending cassette tapes, with the contemporary situation which includes the use of social networking sites such as Friendster, yahoo messenger and skype with simultaneous web-cam. We use this material to challenge the assumption that improved and more constant communication can necessarily ameliorate or even improve the problems associated with separation in parenting. Beyond this we also want to investigate the nature of mothering as a relationship. Starting from the idea that in Filipino ontology, the sense of being is constituted through debt, we examine both the obligations imposed by the sense of debt and the obligations imposed by the imperative to communicate.

Wednesday
9.00-11.00

Session 6:
National Belonging and Transnational Caring in the Filipino Diaspora
(Chair: Dr. Claudia Liebelt)

Popular Religiosity and the Transnational Journey: Maintaining Diaspora Identity through the Sacred

Josefina Socorro Flores Tondo, University of Canterbury, Christchurch
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Abstract

Diaspora communities created by massive migration of people from places where popular religious devotions abound make for an interesting area of diasporic studies. Amidst New Zealand's secular society, the trajectory of popular religiosity is seen among Filipino diasporan communities. This paper will show how the social-economic-political and the religious-spiritual continuously interact in a shared and often intertwined space within the Filipino diaspora. Filipino popular religious devotions and rituals connect the sacral-spiritual to the secular-material assisting the diaspora's creation of "home space" in a foreign land. The transnational border crossing of the Filipino popular devotion to the Infant Jesus in the "Sinulog" ritual dance have aided and facilitated the maintenance, conservation and preservation of imagined "Filipino" identity in a foreign land. The diaspora observance of the "Sinulog" ritual dance in New Zealand illustrate and emphasize the role and importance of religious tradition in identity maintenance, formation and (re)construction among Filipino migrants and has become a prominent diaspora identity marker in the Filipino cultural production, consumption and transformation in the international stage.

Uses of Religion, Gender Dynamics and Labour Strategies among Filipina Migrants in Portugal

Maria Inês David, University Lisbon (ines.david@fcs.unl.pt)

Abstract

Rendering a classic example of current trends of feminisation of labour and migration (Parreñas 2000; Constable 2005; Ribas-Mateos 2005), the experiences of Filipina migrants are still not documented in Portugal. Despite constituting a shy presence (Vermeulen 2001), the group has been growing since the 1980s and, particularly, after Macau's handover to China in 1999. Accompanied by and triggering other migratory paths, many Filipina domestic servants followed their employers from the Portuguese ex-colony across the world. This paper aims to contribute to

inscribe the Portuguese national context as yet another site for transnational comparisons about Filipino migration by tracing not only the typified migratory paths, in terms of the motivations, transnational trajectories and avenues of incorporation, but also mapping their fragmented social organization. Based on 13 semi-directive interviews and fieldwork conducted in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area (2007-2008), the paper tries to analyse how religious idioms of reference and the transnational congregational networks Filipinas bring to Portugal constitute important resources (informational, economic, moral and social) contributing to their specific process of insertion among the national competitive inter-ethnic domestic labour market (Catarino and Oso 2000; Fikes 1998). Additionally, the paper will explore how Filipinas also use religious discourse to reorganize transnational mothering and long-distance conjugality (Tacoli 1999; Parreñas 2005).

The Catholic Church in the Lives of Irregular Migrant Filipinas in France: Identity Formation, Empowerment and Social Control

Dr. Asuncion Fresnoza-Flot, URMIS, Université Paris 7 Denis Diderot
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Abstract

Filipino migrant mothers working in the domestic sector in and around Paris are somehow emblematic of the current migratory wave to France – a migration that is feminised, that does not originate from former French colonies and that is strongly connected to the service sector. Here I present some of the results of empirical studies I conducted on this population as part of my Masters course research on Filipino entrepreneurship and of my PhD research on Filipino transnational motherhood, studies that did not specifically focus on religion but during which the important place of religion in the lives and activities of these migrant women soon became obvious. Immigrating without their families and finding themselves in irregular situation put Filipino migrant women in a precarious living condition in France. To confront the contradictions and difficulties related to their separation from their family and to their illegal migration status, many Catholic migrant Filipinas renew their religious devotion and reinforce their church affiliation. For these migrants, Catholic churches are not only places where they can express religious belief, but also a social institution supporting their social and economic incorporation in France. However, other Catholic Filipinas in Paris try to stay away from religious gatherings to avoid gossip and prejudice. These two contrasting attitudes of migrant Filipinas in France point to the central role of religion in the structuration of immigrant populations and of the Church as a centre of collective identity and as an instrument of social control.

“They think we are just caregivers”: the Ambivalence of Care in the Lives of Filipino Medical Workers in Singapore

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Abstract

This paper will examine the notion of ‘care’ and its many inflections in the lives of Filipino migrant medical workers in Singapore. This migration has gained pace in recent years in light of Singapore’s development into a regional medical hub and the demands of its rapidly ageing population. The paper will explore ethnographically how Filipino migrants narrate and experience ambivalent and contradictory visions of ‘care’ as they move across borders. It will consider what it means to ‘care’ for one’s family and country by leaving to care for others in Singapore’s hospitals and nursing homes. While a few Filipino medical workers speak of their medical or nursing work as embodying values of compassion, care and ‘touch’, influenced by their Catholic faith, for many more, “affective labour” in the context of medical work, is fraught with complexity and ambiguity (Hardt, 1999). This paper will explore the ways in which many Filipino medical workers try to

distance themselves from ideas of 'care' in their working lives, instead positioning themselves as 'professionals' and attempting to shed the long-standing associations of Filipinos with 'care' work in the global economy. And while 'care' is a word which evokes feelings of shame or resentment on the part of many Filipino medical workers, 'care' is precisely the trope they draw on when speaking of their families and of the forms of sociality they have left behind in the Philippines; a contrast to the often alienating and 'uncaring' forms of living and sociality that they encounter in Singapore.

Wednesday
13.30-14.30

Session 7: The Predicaments of Labour Migration

(Chair: Marina de Regt)

Borrowed lives: Faith and Debt in Filipino Migrant Networks, Hong Kong and London

Dr. Deirdre Mckay, Keele University (d.c.mckay@esci.keele.ac.uk)

Abstract

This paper explores how notions of religiosity become set against concepts of indebtedness to shape the Filipino diaspora. 'Utang' (debt) is a very practical problem for Filipino migrants and, simultaneously, an important strategy through which they build community, as well as being a key concept in their spiritual self-understandings. For migrants living lives 'borrowed from God,' the ways their religious confessions interpret debt for their congregations often run at odds with Filipino borrowing practices, whether they loan from banks, credit agencies, or community lenders. The resulting tensions inform people's experience of themselves and others as both properly faithful and authentically Filipino. Applying Strathern's (1996) idea of 'cutting the network' enables me to compare and contrast the ways that debt shapes Filipino communities in Hong Kong and London, revealing how religious subjectivities and community politics are connected to the broader forces shaping everyday financial markets.

Mitigating Legal Barriers: Filipina Domestic Helpers negotiate the politics of indifference in Hong Kong

Dr. Estelle Kennelly, Independent Scholar, Denver, Colorado (ekennelly@yahoo.com)

Abstract

Caught in the web of the global migrant labour trade, thousands of Filipino women leave the safety of their own familiar communities throughout the Philippine Islands to work in countries with different cultural practices and unfamiliar values. This paper enters the global-local discourse from the perspective of the experiences of the Filipina domestic helpers in Hong Kong. Faced with the task of implementing new policies for controlling labour migration into Hong Kong, the legislators have focused on the end result, providing domestic helpers to serve the middle and upper class households, and seeking to ensure that the imported foreign labourers are temporary sojourners with no right of abode. To this end the legislature has drawn up an employment contract with extraordinarily restrictive terms which are monitored and implemented by the various legal and governmental agencies. Embedded within the legislative process are unexamined cultural mores and practices, such as China's long history of the lower status of women with domestic helpers at the very bottom of the social hierarchy, engendering abuses of their rights. To mitigate the restrictions, a complex transnational Filipino community has been created to provide a milieu of sociality and an informal social infrastructure organized by the religious communities to provide safe houses, advice and paralegal assistance to negotiate the legal system. This paper will explore the potential consequences of unexamined cultural practices on those who are the more vulnerable in the society--those relegated to the periphery of the society's consciousness.

The Limits of Sociality: A Single Bangladeshi Migrant Woman in Australia

Dr. Santi Rozario, School of Religious and Theological Studies, Cardiff University
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Abstract

In this paper, I revisit some material which I presented in an earlier paper, regarding Dipti, a Bangladeshi migrant woman from a Christian background who has been working for many years as a nurse in Australia. Dipti's story can be understood as a search for sociality in a variety of dimensions. None of these have ultimately been very successful, in large part because of the gendered nature of her situation as an unmarried woman. Her strategies have included extensive financial sponsorship for her natal family in Bangladesh, which she saw for many years as her primary social context; unsuccessfully pursuing marriage with a white Australian man, and later with a Muslim Bangladeshi man; and finally assisting members of her family to migrate to Australia with the aim of creating a local social context where she felt she genuinely belonged. Through all of this, she has maintained a heavy work routine, consisting of a full-time job often accompanied by substantial part-time work, in order to generate the financial resources that were required for this quest for social acceptance and recognition. I discuss briefly on the aspects of gender relations in Bangladeshi society that underlie Dipti's predicament, and also explore the extent to which involvement with the Catholic Church, and with a Bangladeshi Christian prayer group in Sydney, have provided alternative contexts for sociality for her and other female Christian Bangladeshi migrants in Australia.

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