Europe occupy the highest rung on the socioeconomic ladder among the world's migrant women.

By contrast, most migrant women in Asia are less qualified and belong to no higher than the lower-middle class. Many of the women I interviewed in Asia dreamed of going to North America or Europe but could not afford to do so. Migrant women in Hong Kong and Taiwan were relatively well educated and skilled, but because they lacked capital, they were unable to migrate to the United States, Canada, or Europe. Migrant women in the Middle East were the poorest and least educated. It is important to take such differences into account when analyzing the backgrounds and motives of female migrants.

Why Migrate? The Ideal Types of Migrant Women

Why on earth do women leave home for foreign countries? The primary reason is an economic one—all of them expect to earn money to support their family, build a house, purchase land, pay for their children's education, repay debts, and so on. However, it is not the only reason as the levels of economic need can vary. For some middle-class Filipinas in North America and Europe, migration tends to be a matter "of social mobility at the household level and of adventure and experience at the individual level."[16] Many migrant women in the Middle East, on the other hand, belong to the low-income class and migrate because their families are in serious financial need.

Given all this diversity among migrant women in Asia, it is difficult to generalize about motives for migration. These women's economic needs vary not only with the destination country but also with age, marital status, and stage in life. Nevertheless, I still think it useful to categorize the underlying orientations of migrant women. One way of doing this is to construct "ideal types." I use the Weberian term "ideal types" because they do not necessarily represent the exact situations of individual migrant woman. It is impossible to construct typologies into which all migrant women can be classified perfectly, since the motivations of human beings are so often complex. Having interviewed many migrant women, I can say that the reasons for migration are not simple and straightforward. Of course, the vast majority of migrants expect financial returns from working overseas and want to save money for themselves and their families. However, financial needs are sometimes mixed with or even superseded by factors other than economic ones, such as family problems. From this I conclude that the best way to clarify the underlying causes of female migration at the individual level is to extract the overriding motives of each migrant and mold these findings into ideal types that represent sets of *orientations* of migrant women.

Based on my fieldwork, I put forward five ideal types: (a) "adventurous women," (b) "dutiful daughters," (c) "good mothers and wives," (d) "distressed women," and (e) "destitute women." Because these are merely ideal types in the Weberian sense, some women may fit into two or more categories. In fact, I expect most of them fit multiple categories because individuals' motivations are so complex. Single "dutiful daughters," who say that they migrated mainly in order to help their family, often admit later that they also wanted to see a foreign country and experience a different culture. However, ideal types are still useful to highlight specific orientations of migrant women. Below I describe the five ideal types and give examples of each in the form of profiles of actual migrant women who seem to epitomize the orientation.

"Adventurous Women"

The first ideal type is "adventurous women." These are the ones who decide to work overseas to seek some adventure in life. Adventurous women fall into two groups. The first is comprised of young single women with a moderate level of education. It also includes college dropouts and graduates of minor colleges who have been unable to find a decent job locally. Younger daughters of large families of the lower-middle class fall in this category as well. These women became interested in working overseas while learning about foreign countries at school, or they heard exciting stories from their friends and relatives who had worked overseas. The second (and smaller) group includes older women who are unmarried and have no children. Some are separated, divorced, or widowed and live with their parents or siblings. Many of them are teachers, administrators, or sales clerks—white-collar jobs that pay little and offer limited career mobility. Although most women in both groups do not have any acute problems with daily survival, they belong to the lower middle-class and cannot afford to travel much even within their own country, let alone overseas. Overseas employment, which involves the opportunity to fly on an airplane and live in a foreign country, is appealing to them.

Most of these women are seeking a new experience overseas, but this does not mean they do not have economic motives. On the contrary, many of them dream about living the "middle-class life" so often depicted in the media—purchasing a nice house and stocking it with electronic appliances (a TV, a VCR/DVD, a stereo) and luxury goods (jewelry, cosmetics, designer clothes). Most young single women with no children have fewer financial responsibilities than married women and thus have a stronger orientation toward consumerism. They want more disposable income for conspicuous

consumption. Older single women with no children share this tendency to some extent, but generally, they are most worried about financing their retirement and see overseas employment as a means of saving enough money to start a business. In developing countries where social security is limited, many elderly people depend financially on their children. Women without children need more financial resources for their old age. Elenita and Kanthi, whose life stories are described below, are typical "adventurous women."

ELENITA: A YOUNGER SINGLE "ADVENTURER"

Elenita is a charming young Filipina living in a village outside Manila. She worked as a dancer in Cyprus for two years. She was only nineteen when she left the Philippines. After she graduated from high school, she dreamed of going to Europe. A friend of hers was already working in Cyprus as a dancer and encouraged Elenita to join her there. Soon after that, a recruitment agent (a Filipino woman married to a Greek) came to her village to meet applicants. Elenita went to see her and learned that she would not have to pay any recruitment fees if she went to Cyprus as a dancer. Therefore, she decided to go there and signed a contract.

She arrived in Cyprus and began working four hours a day at a dance club, for which she was paid US$350 a month. Although she had a large family including a little brother, she did not often think about supporting them. Only a few times did she send them small sums of money. Nor did she save or invest any money for herself. When I asked her what she did with her salary, she laughed and said: "I bought CDs, appliances, and *lots* of jewelry!" When she returned to the Philippines, she had to sell all of her jewelry to pay the recruitment fees for her brother's migration to Saudi Arabia. What she earned in Cyprus is now all gone. "But at least it was an experience," she said. "I met many people from different countries. My colleagues [dancers] were Macedonians, Yugoslavs, Thais, and so on. I also sat with the customers of different nationalities—Arabs, Europeans, [and] Japanese. I learned a lot." She was very happy with her experience and is willing to work abroad again.

KANTHI

Kanthi is a Sri Lankan domestic worker in Hong Kong. She never married and is now forty-six years old. In Sri Lanka she had a good job as an administrator at a maternity hospital. She left that job and emigrated in 1982 because she "wanted some adventure." She emigrated first to Kuwait, and worked there as a domestic worker for three years. Then she moved to Jordan in 1986 to work as a caregiver for another two years. She came to Hong Kong in 1989 and had been there for ten years when we met. Her parents

had passed away long ago, and her only sister was married, so for a time there was no one she needed to support. Then in 1989 her sister got divorced, and since then Kanthi has been supporting her and her five children. After working overseas for seventeen years, she took her savings and bought a house and a piece of land in Sri Lanka. "Now I really don't need money," she said. "People ask me why I work [in Hong Kong]. I say I am trying to learn many things. I have so many friends to take care of, too."

As an old-timer, Kanthi helps many young Sri Lankan domestic workers who have recently arrived in Hong Kong. Every Sunday she attends a gathering of Sri Lankan migrants in a downtown park; there, she listens to her friends' problems and offers them advice. She feels happy and fulfilled by helping them, and she enjoys being respected as a community leader. I asked her if she wanted to go back to Sri Lanka anytime soon. "Not for a while," she said. "I feel free here. In Sri Lanka, people ask me [too] many things." In Sri Lanka, the social pressure on women to get married is so strong that people ask her why she is not married and why she is working abroad. Kanthi does not want to confront those questions, nor does she want to face the stigma that is attached to single women working abroad. She feels much happier in Hong Kong where no one bothers her about these things. She said she wanted to live in Hong Kong as long as she could.

"Dutiful Daughters"

Many scholars have pointed out that women in developing countries are not necessarily more family-oriented than those in industrialized countries. Many of them do seek their own income, freedom from parental control, and new experiences.[17] I fully concur with these findings, but among some migrant women, filial piety and family obligations can still be the driver (at least the initial one) for migration. Women of this ideal type tend to be single and from a large family with many younger siblings or small nieces and nephews.

"Dutiful daughters" often say they migrated overseas mainly in order to support their parents or help with the education of their siblings. Sometimes they have family members who are sick and need expensive medications that the family cannot afford. So they consider it their duty to work overseas and earn money for everyone in the family, since they are single and have no one they need to take care of. They think they are in the best position to migrate overseas. Once they do migrate, they send home large sums of money (almost their entire salary) every month. However, this money is sometimes misused by family members, as I will describe in a later section.

Some single Sri Lankan women emigrate partly in order to assemble a

dowry for themselves. Dowries have been legally abolished in most South Asian countries, yet the custom is still alive among all social classes. Typically, the dowry is provided by the parents for their daughter's marriage. In cases where parents cannot afford to offer very much, daughters will be under great stress and worry since too small a dowry (or none at all) can lead to problems in the marriage, to conflicts with in-laws, and sometimes even to physical abuse. In Bangladesh, despite the Dowry Prohibition Act of 1980 and the Cruelty to Women Act of 1983, the dowry is still the primary cause of violence against women. Dowry-related violence against wives has been on the rise in Bangladesh in recent years; this is considered a serious social problem.[18]

In Sri Lanka dowries need not be too high, but many people still believe that providing a sufficient dowry is important for securing a happy marriage and placing a woman on a good footing with her in-laws. A woman whose parents are poor or who has many sisters may have to either accept a dangerous marriage or prepare her own dowry. Some daughters take the latter course and migrate overseas to work. For example, Lalita, a twenty-three-year-old Sri Lankan woman who worked in Hong Kong, said she needed to earn 15,000 rupees (US$210) for her dowry and 25,000 rupees (US$350) for her future. Women who earn their own dowry are looking out for themselves, but they are also helping their parents who otherwise would have to work extremely hard to earn enough money for dowries. These women feel guilty that the entire family has to suffer because so much income must be set aside for dowries. In this sense, dutiful daughters have mixed motives: both self-serving and altruistic.

Filipina domestic workers do not have to worry about dowries because there is no such practice in the Philippines. However, many of them migrate mainly to support their parents and siblings. Amelia is a typical "dutiful daughter."

AMELIA

Amelia is a Filipina domestic worker in the United Arab Emirates. She is from a large, poor family. Before she went to the UAE, she lived with her parents, brother, sister, and two nieces. As soon as she graduated from high school, she looked for a job but without success. She recalled: "Even the places like shopping malls hired young college grads, not high school grads." Her father was a landless farmer and had been having a difficult time making ends meet. Her brother worked as a tailor and her sister as a beautician, but both jobs were part-time and poorly paid.

Amelia had cousins in Hong Kong and a niece in Saudi Arabia; all of them were employed as domestic workers. To her "they seemed pretty suc-

cessful," and she developed an interest in working abroad. When one of her cousins came back from Hong Kong and started working for a recruitment agency, she told Amelia about her work experience and suggested that she apply for a job that was available in Singapore. "We were a poor family and [our] parents were old," she remembered. "I wanted to give them a good life before they died." In 1991, after consulting her brother, sister, and friends, she decided to take a domestic worker's position in Singapore for two years. She knew it would be a challenge for her since she did not even know how to cook, but she decided to try anyway. She did not tell her parents about her decision until the day before her departure. When she informed them, they were shocked but did not try to stop her. Amelia recalled: "My parents only cried and said, 'Sorry that we are so poor.'"

Amelia paid 7,500 pesos (US$180) to a recruitment agency as a fee down payment and went to Singapore. The rest of the fee was deducted from her salary over six months. Since she did not have any savings prior to leaving for Singapore, she borrowed money from her cousins. She worked hard in Singapore and remitted her entire salary to her sister, who was managing the family's finances. Her sister used the money for food, clothes, a television, and her own daughter's education. But she did not invest or save any of the money. By the time Amelia finished her two-year contract in Singapore and returned to the Philippines, all the money was gone, and the family went back to the same living conditions as before.

"Good Wives and Mothers"

Migrant women who belong to this ideal type are married and often have children. They want a better life for their family members, and they realize they are not earning enough to make ends meet or to provide good education for their children. Some of these women were forced to become breadwinners when the husband fell ill or lost his job. Most "good wives" and "good mothers" say they would never have migrated if circumstances had not required it. While foreign culture was appealing to a few, the vast majority of the "good wives and good mothers" never sought adventure or new experiences. Many of them looked upset when I asked if they were interested in experiencing a different culture. Typically they replied: "I am working here only for my husband and children's future, not for myself." They feel guilty about leaving their children at home and working overseas; yet they also have a strong desire to give their children a better future. By "better future" they often mean a private education in both high school and college. Especially in the Philippines, where the quality of public education is not considered very high, many people try to send their children to private

high schools and colleges. In Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, a "better future for children" includes a large dowry. As discussed earlier, some daughters migrate to save money for their own dowry; in the same vein, some mothers work abroad in order to save for their daughters' dowries. When there are a number of daughters in the family, the mother may need to stay abroad for years in order to save up enough dowry money.

"Good wives" are also willing to help their husbands. Some of my respondents migrated in order to cover their husband's debts or medical bills. Many migrant women from the Philippines were entrepreneurial; they saved money for their husband to start a small business. Some of them purchased a jeepney (a converted jeep for local transport) or tricycle (a motorcycle with a covered passenger seat attached) for such purpose. Others started a *sari-sari* store (a small grocery shop) for themselves when they returned home.

"Good wives" in Sri Lanka were not as interested in starting a business. Generally, their goals were to meet the needs of their husband and children—to pay their husband's debts, to cover the family's living expenses, to buy a parcel of land, to build a house, to pay their children's tuition, to save for their daughters' dowries, and so on. Some used their overseas earnings to open a dress shop, but none of them helped the husband start his own business.

Bangladeshi women were the least entrepreneurial. None of them showed any interest in starting a business or investing money for themselves or their husbands. Their overriding goal was daily survival: to feed and clothe the family. The money they earned overseas was too little to start a business in any case, but their lack of entrepreneurship was perhaps due to the lack of education. Without basic education, it is difficult for anyone to develop the ability to set goals and plans in life. Most of my respondents could not think in terms of objectives and strategies. Dire poverty was also a major factor. Since all of them were landless, their first priority was buying a house and land so that they would not have to worry about paying the rent.

The following cases of Cecile and Amelia are typical examples of "good wives and mothers" from the Philippines. Amelia, who was described above as a "dutiful daughter," reappears in this section. Her case illustrates the process of circular migration and changes in migrant women's life stages.

CECILE

Cecile is a thirty-five-year-old Filipina migrant in Hong Kong. She has been working as a domestic worker for six years. She is married and has three children—one boy and two girls—who are waiting for her to return home. Cecile had a difficult time finding a well-paid job in the Philippines, partly because she did not have a college degree. She spent one year in college but could not finish her studies because of financial problems. After earning a

secretary's certificate from a vocational school, she worked in a shoe factory in Quezon City for a while. Later, she found work with an NGO. However, her salary there was the minimum wage, and even after she added it to her husband's income, the family found it difficult to make ends meet.

Their financial situation deteriorated suddenly when her husband's business ran into trouble. With three friends, he had opened a store selling bamboo furniture. Since one of them was a local government official and community leader, Cecile's husband and the others trusted him completely and poured most of their savings into the business. Soon after they pooled their money, that person took it all to use for his own business, leaving the store bankrupt. Her husband and the other two partners tried to get the money back but did not succeed. In this way, they lost all their savings.

Cecile decided to work abroad to pay off her husband's debts and overcome the financial setback. Her two sisters were working in Hong Kong at that time, so she asked them to find a job for her. Some time later, one of them told her she had found one for her. Cecile immediately moved to Hong Kong and began working. "It was very hard to leave my family," she recalled, "but I had no choice." She was planning to work in Hong Kong for two more years. "By then, I will be able to save enough money for my family."

It is important to note that the goals of migrant women can change over time. Some single "adventurous women" and "dutiful daughters" turn into "good wives and mothers." After they get married, they emigrate again, but this time their goal is not to support themselves or their parents, but to support their own husband and children. In other cases, their family situation changes as their overseas stay is prolonged. Some women become separated or divorced because their long absence has strained their marriage (the most common cause of marital collapse is the husband's infidelity). At that point, they become the "official breadwinner" and their goal shifts to supporting themselves and their children. Amelia, whom I described earlier as a "dutiful daughter" who wanted to help her parents, made this transition.

AMELIA: FROM A "DUTIFUL DAUGHTER" TO A "GOOD MOTHER"

After Amelia finished her two-year contract in Singapore, she returned to the Philippines and got married. Soon after that, her husband decided to work as a waiter in Malaysia. Therefore, she followed him there and worked as a waitress from 1994 to 1997. They had a daughter in 1997. However, their relationship went through some turmoil, and they separated in 1998. Amelia faced financial instability and realized she would have to work overseas again.

Her goal had shifted from helping her parents and siblings to ensuring a better future for her daughter. She applied through the same recruitment agency as before and found a job as a domestic worker in Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates. Amelia's mother tried to convince her not to work abroad again, saying, "Don't go. You stay here. You can just help your sister [with her work]." Her father had passed away by then, and Amelia thought that her mother probably wanted her to stay close by. Nevertheless, she left home because she wanted to earn more income to give her daughter a better education and a better life.

In Abu Dhabi, Amelia earned 740DH (US$185) a month, working from 5:30 in the morning to 11 at night. She was allowed no holidays. She slept on the floor because there was no bed in her room. Her employers gave her very little food—sometimes none at all. She could not stand these working conditions and ran away to the Philippine Embassy. Despite the hardships she encountered, she remembers her experience as a positive one. She feels that she became more independent and gained self-confidence. She wants to leave the UAE as soon as she can and apply for another job in Hong Kong, and to continue to save money for her daughter.

"Distressed Women"

"Distressed women" have emigrated in order to free themselves from problems at home. Some of them have problems with their in-laws and want to escape their bullying. Others have a husband who is abusive or alcoholic or who is having an affair or has multiple wives. In this last case, women often have to assume a breadwinner's role, since the husband is financially unable to sustain the family. Distressed women have tried in vain to resolve the situation. Thus they see working overseas as the best means to escape from their harsh reality. Often these women hope to save enough money to start a business, become financially independent, and leave their husband and in-laws for good. They see working overseas as a solution to many of their problems. Pacita and Mercedita were such distressed women working in the United Arab Emirates.

PACITA

Pacita is a twenty-seven-year-old domestic worker working in Dubai. She is originally from Manila and arrived in Dubai in October 1998. At the time of the interview she had been working there for just over a year. She is married and has two children, who are being taken care of by her mother-in-law in the Philippines.

Pacita left home to work overseas in order to escape her husband. Her

marriage was difficult from the start. Her husband, a fisherman, lost his job soon after they married. After that, he worked at odd jobs and made some money, but never enough to support the entire family. For four years, Pacita worked in a garment factory in a neighboring village, where she made 130 pesos (US$3) a day. Their income was just enough to make ends meet. In fact, money was not really a major source of conflict for them. "I had lots of problems with my husband," she recalled. "He had many girls." In addition, he was sometimes abusive; he beat her whenever they had quarrels.

When friends told her that life was good overseas, she immediately jumped at the idea. She visited a recruitment agency where a friend worked and immediately found a job as a domestic worker in Dubai. Pacita only told her sister about her new job before she left home. "My sister was supportive of my decision, but I didn't let my mom know. She didn't know about it until I came here." She did not even inform her husband of her migration until she arrived in Dubai. When I asked her how he reacted to her working overseas, she said: "He said nothing."

MERCEDITA

Mercedita comes from a poor family. She started working in a garment factory in Manila when she was seventeen, as soon as she graduated from high school. She wanted to go to college, but her family could not afford the tuition. After working for a few years, she met her husband; soon after that, she got pregnant. After she gave birth to a son, she moved in with her husband and his family. At the time, he was still a student in the police academy; they were not yet married. They were only engaged, and married after he graduated.

Mercedita's parents-in-law gave her and her husband a small one-room house directly across from their own house. Her husband had four brothers who were already married and had children. They were all living nearby and often interfered with Mercedita's life. This gradually became stressful for her. Furthermore, her husband was a student whose only income was a stipend from his parents, which also caused problems. "My husband asked his parents [for money] whenever he needed something," she recalled. "I didn't like it because my mother-in-law did 'talk-talk-talk' [behind her back] with other in-laws about it and blamed me." Her in-laws thought she was spending too much money, even though the money she received was barely enough to cover basic needs.

Finally, she could not stand the situation any longer. "I thought I should earn money for my own family." When she told her husband she wanted to work overseas, he objected. "He said, 'I will marry another woman if you go to other country.' But I said, 'That's fine. Go ahead.' I didn't think that

he would really do it." In fact, he did. After Mercedita went to Singapore, he married another women without telling her. She only found out when a friend wrote to her in Singapore and explained what happened.

"Destitute Women"

It has been generally understood that migrant workers are not the "poorest of the poor."[19] However, this assumption requires careful examination. For instance, the payment schemes faced by migrant workers have been changing in recent years in ways that have altered the composition of the migrant workforce. Intense competition has driven many recruitment agencies to pursue a new labor supply—the destitute—in order to increase the number of their clients. Aware that these women cannot afford high migration fees, the agencies demand only a small cash deposit, or none at all, for some destinations in Asia. They do not of course lower the total fees; they simply deduct those fees from the migrants' salaries, in the worst cases for six months or more. This turns these women into semi-indentured laborers. These salary deductions and loan schemes have enabled more poor people—including the poorest of the poor—to join the migrant workforce. Especially in Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, the recruitment of the poor and the destitute has been accelerated by local "sub-agents." Some sub-agents are contracted by agencies; others operate independently. They approach destitute women in the neighborhood and lure them into migration by promising high wages and a better life. They are known for charging exorbitant fees and for defrauding those who sign with them. Since most of them operate illegally, it is very difficult to control their activities. More and more destitute women have been resorting to them.

Destitute women emigrate to escape extreme poverty and because they lack other means to survive. Most of the destitute women I encountered were in Bangladesh; there were only a few in Sri Lanka and the Philippines. They were migrating in order to achieve a short-term goal—to feed themselves and their children. None of them was interested in investing their income in a business, or in their own career development, or in private education for their children. In addition, many of them were separated, divorced, or widowed or had been abandoned by their husbands. In developing countries, the lives of low-income working-class women are very difficult even when they are married. Their lives are even harder when they become household heads. It is extremely difficult for them to find employment opportunities because of gender and age discrimination in the labor market. In Bangladesh, 96 percent of female-headed households live below the poverty

line and 33 percent are chronically short of food.[20] The story of Salma is a common one among migrant women from Bangladesh.

SALMA

Salma is a thirty-year-old Muslim woman living in a small village south of Dhaka. She was an orphan and never attended school. She got married but was divorced fourteen years ago and has been raising three boys since then. Because she has no family or relatives, there was no one to help her financially. "I have no husband," she said. "I had no money or property to inherit. I had no savings. And I had to keep paying the rent for a small room. The life was hard."

At first, Salma did household work for a wealthy family in her village, but this did not bring in enough money to feed her children. She quit that job and began selling vegetables. She made 2,000–2,500 taka (US$40–50) a month, but it was still not enough. One day, she went to sell vegetables to a wealthy family in the village. The "madam" suggested that she consider working abroad and offered to introduce her to an agent. Salma immediately agreed and met the agent. He told her that the fee to secure a job as a domestic worker in Bahrain was 50,000 taka (US$1,000)—a lot of money. She borrowed it from a local moneylender at high interest, left her children with her ex-husband's mother, and left for Bahrain in 1996.

Having had no knowledge in Arabic, Salma had a difficult time communicating with her employer at the beginning. Her "madam" used to get angry and beat her whenever she was unhappy. The food was another problem: she could not eat the Arabic food because it was so different. She was only eating some bread every day. But after three months, she had learned some Arabic words and had grown accustomed to the local diet. She worked very hard, rising at four every morning and working until one the next morning. She was being paid only 3,000 taka (US$60) a month even though she had been promised 4,000 taka (US$80). However, her salary was raised to 4,000 taka the following year. She sent 3,000 to 4,000 taka home every three or four months and saved the rest for herself. She stayed in Bahrain for two years and seven months, until she fell ill. Because she had no health insurance and the employer would not pay her medical costs, Salma ended up paying 40,000 taka (US$800) for medical treatment. After paying the recruitment fee of 50,000 taka with interest, she had little money left. Although she wanted to continue working in Bahrain, her illness forced her to return home. She has since recovered from her illness and is planning to work overseas again.

Emigration Processes: Social Networks and the Culture of Migration

As seen above, the profiles of migrant women are extremely diverse. However, the migration process itself—especially the ways in which prospective migrants find information about jobs—is quite similar: they find jobs overseas through personal networks or recruitment agencies. As many migration scholars have pointed out,[21] social networks play a major role in migration. The "harbingers" who emigrated earlier provide those still at home with information about employment opportunities abroad, and in this way link prospective migrants with destination countries.

In Sri Lanka, the majority of the migrant women in my sample (56 percent) found work through personal networks—through family members, relatives, friends, and so on. Even recruitment agencies, which are usually not considered social networks, have personal components. Among Sri Lankan migrant women who obtained a job through an agency, 73 percent had a relative or friend who worked there, and 15 percent knew someone who migrated through the same agency. All in all, only 12 percent of migrant women from Sri Lanka found work without any personal contacts.

In the Philippines, where recruitment agencies are thriving, a large majority (76 percent) of migrant women found work through a recruitment agency. But again, the majority of them had a personal connection with the agency staff. Only 17 percent of the respondents found work without any networks. Recruitment networks in Bangladesh exist as well, albeit to a limited extent: 25 percent of migrant women obtained their jobs through direct personal networks and 75 percent through sub-agents who knew them or a family member.

Most migrant women were acquainted with "harbinger migrants": 79 percent of Filipinas and 70 percent of Sri Lankans and Bangladeshis in my sample had friends or relatives who had worked overseas. Women in the Philippines and Sri Lanka were especially entangled in a broad, dense web of current and returned migrant women. At the time of the interviews, the vast majority of them had more than one family member and many friends who were working abroad or had done so in the past.

In the case of Ligaya, a twenty-seven-year-old Filipina domestic worker, both parents and an elder brother had been working in Hong Kong for fourteen years—her father as a factory worker, her mother as a domestic worker, her brother as a chauffeur. As a child in the Philippines, her uncle had taken care of her and her three siblings. "I was a mother, father, and big sister to all my two younger brothers and sister," she recalled. After finishing her train-

ing as a midwife, she began to think about joining her parents and brother. "I missed my parents so badly and wanted to be with them," she explained. "That's why I decided to move to Hong Kong." In 1992 her brother found a job for her as a domestic worker in the same house where he was working. Ligaya has been working there ever since. Although her salary is below the official minimum wage, she cannot complain; she is afraid that doing so might affect her brother's job.

Such networks can cross generations. Indrani, a twenty-two-year-old Sri Lankan woman, had a grandmother, an aunt, and three cousins who were working as domestic workers in Hong Kong. She became interested in joining them after one of her cousins found a job for her. Her father did not like the idea of her moving to Hong Kong, but the presence of these relatives softened his opposition and he finally agreed to let her go. Once she arrived in Hong Kong, however, Indrani's relatives, especially her aunt and grandmother, began controlling every aspect of her life. "They are much more powerful than my own employer," she sighed, "but at least I have some support whenever I get into trouble."

Over time, these family traditions of migration affect the values and behavioral systems of communities, forming a "culture of migration." As the number of migrants increases, migration "becomes deeply ingrained into the repertoire of people's behaviors, and values associated with migration become part of the community's values."[22] When migration was still dominated by males, young men perceived migration as a rite of passage to adulthood.[23] Later, as migration became more feminized in the Philippines and Sri Lanka, it also affected women's values and behaviors, and this forged a new culture of migration. In Bangladesh, where very few women emigrate compared to men, this culture has yet to develop.

Without necessarily providing a "rite of passage" to female adulthood, migration penetrates into the socialization process of girls. This is linked to heightened consumerism. During my fieldwork in a Philippine village, I found that girl children were already deeply embedded in and influenced by the migration culture. Nena, a nine-year-old whose mother is a domestic worker in Hong Kong, was already employed part-time as a domestic worker in her neighbor's house. According to the neighbor, Nena and her younger brother had not seen their mother for seven years. When I spoke to them, they said they liked their mother more than their father who lives with them. I asked them why. "Because mom buys me Hello Kitty," Nena answered. The neighbor explained: "Their mom sends them a lot of toys from Hong Kong and the kids love that." Sending many toys to children is a very common practice among migrant women. They try to compensate for their absence by fulfilling their children's material desires. Many migrant women ad-

mitted that this was not good for their children, but they still did it because they felt guilty about being away from home. They had few other ways to show their love. As Parreñas pointed out, this sort of "commodification of love" is the only way these transnational mothers can establish concrete ties of familial dependency with their children.[24]

Having been brought up with material comforts since early childhood, many children of "transnational families" associate migration with wealth and happiness. When I asked about her dreams for the future, Nena told me without hesitation that she wanted to become a domestic worker in Hong Kong like her mother because she could make a lot of money that way. Indeed, migrant mothers often become role models for their daughters. Yolanda, a returned migrant woman in the same village, has a daughter who is planning to work in Singapore as a nurse. The daughter has chosen to go to nursing school, expecting that a nursing diploma will enable her to find a job overseas like her mother. Yolanda is supportive of her, especially since her daughter plans to work as a professional nurse, not as a domestic worker. Most girl children of migrant women want to follow their mother's footsteps. They fantasize about the money they will be able to earn as migrants.

Materialism can have a strong impact on children's attitudes toward life. Children who are raised to be consumers tend not to incorporate lessons about working hard for the future. When the father and relatives in a migrant woman's household show little interest in education, the children often become disoriented and drop out of school—a serious problem in Sri Lanka. The attitude of the father as a role model can be another factor. A recent study found that remittances reduce the labor force participation of men left behind more than that of women left behind.[25] In other words, when a wife starts working abroad, the husband at home tends to stop working. Gamburd has observed that a wife's overseas employment poses a serious challenge to the masculinity of a husband, and to compensate, he indulges in drinking, gambling, and womanizing.[26] Such behavior of the father also leads to the loss of motivation for study and work among children.

Many children of migrants are aware that the material comforts they are enjoying will not last very long after their mother returns home, and that their standard of living cannot be maintained with the more modest earnings from local jobs. Often, the mother has only modest ambitions when she leaves home as a migrant worker; then she starts sending money back, and the children develop material desires and higher expectations that cannot be met without her overseas earnings. Hence, once grown up, they migrate overseas, which starts a cycle of intergenerational migration.

6. Palma-Beltran and De Dios 1992; NCRFW and ADB 1995.
7. Brochmann 1990; Yapa 1995.
8. Palma-Beltran 1992, 10; Vasquez et al. 1995, 26.
9. Alailima 1997; UNDP 2002.
10. World Bank 2000, 284.
11. UNDP 2004.
12. Lewis 1968.
13. Sassen 1988, 116–18.
14. Brochmann 1990; Yapa 1995; Jayaweera et al. 2002.
15. Again, I reiterate that I am referring to temporary migrants. I exclude permanent immigrants and refugees.
16. Tacoli 1996, 27.
17. Wolf 1992; Salaff 1995; Tacoli 1996.
18. UNDP 1994, 5.
19. Tsuda 1987.
20. UNDP 1994, 2.
21. Massey 1986; Massey et al. 1993.
22. Massey et al. 1993, 452–53.
23. Hondagneu-Sotello 1994.
24. Parreñas 2001, 122–23.
25. Rodriguez and Tiongson 2001, 722.
26. Gamburd 2000.
27. Wood 1981, 1982; Trager 1984; Lauby 1987; Chant and Radcliffe 1992.
28. Stark and Bloom 1985; Stark 1991.
29. Ellis 1998; Morris 1990; Selby et al. 1990; Davidson 1991; cited in Wolf 1992, 14.
30. Becker 1981; cited in Sen 1990, 131.
31. Wolf 1990, 63.
32. Yapa 1995, 84, 86.
33. Although family members outside the household also receive some money, household members tend to be the primary beneficiaries of remittances.
34. Kabeer 1999, 17.
35. Oppong and Abu 1987.
36. Geertz 1961; Jay 1969, cited in Wolf 1992, 63; Blumberg 1988; Kabeer 1999.
37. Blumberg 1988, 53.
38. Blumberg 1988, 66–69; Stichter 1990, 58.
39. Heinonen 1996, 111.
40. Yu and Liu 1980, cited in Go 1992, 263.
41. Deano 1985, cited in Go 1992, 263.
42. Eviota 1992, 35.
43. Eder 1999, 113.
44. Abeywardane 1996.
45. UN 1998; Karunaratne 1999, 22; Takakuwa 1999, 35–40.
46. Takakuwa 1999, 35–36.
47. CIRDAP 1993; cited in UNDP 1994, 6.
48. White 1992, 123.