



THE POLITICS OF DISTRIBUTION

**Migrant Labour, Development
and Religious Aid in Asia**

16 - 17 November 2017, AS8 Level 4

Poster of a Worker's Festival organised by the Catholic Church, Phnom Penh
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ASIA RESEARCH INSTITUTE
National University of Singapore

Migrant labour has been viewed as an important factor in growth, productivity and poverty reduction in Asia where rapid economic development has raised many to middle income countries. However, parallel to the growth of these economies has arisen new challenges and tensions as well as continuing underdevelopment (Rigg 2015). This includes what some scholars have identified as the formation of a labour surplus population in many parts of the world, where a decline in small agriculture and new industries generating less employment has resulted in a labour over supply that has made many “redundant” in the global production system (Ferguson 2015, Li 2010). Instead, distributive practices and “relations of dependence” (Ferguson 2015) have increased in the context of not only diminishing employment opportunities but also in uncertain and precarious employment, as is in the case of migrant labour which has often been linked to abuses over working conditions and wages.

In this sense, religious aid is one significant and diverse form of distributive practice. This is particularly the case where the rise in global civil society and non-state actors make up for many of the “structural holes” (Faist 2009) in social services neglected by the State. The absence of the State in this area, particularly in the global South, has led to an opening up of a space for alternative actors to ‘fill in the gap’, including faith-based actors where religious spaces have become simultaneously humanitarian and development spaces. This is particularly the case for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, who as ‘non-citizens’ are often marginalised in their access to formal work and social services.

The conference will engage with Ferguson’s concept of distributive practices (Ferguson 2015) to interrogate whether it is applicable to religious aid in the Asian context as a significant form of contemporary labour. Although having always existed in the form of remittances, kin-based sharing, patronage, “corruption” and relations of dependence on others such as NGOs, distributive practices have taken on a new amplitude within the context of rapid industrialisation and development. The conference will examine forms of contemporary distributive practices in Asia as they are enacted by religious actors, whether through religious aid organisations, religious networks or informal religious giving, within the context of migrant labour. Migrant labour is taken to encompass those who engage in rural-urban migration as well as what are usually assumed to be binary categories of legal and illegal, temporary and permanent, economic migrant and refugee/asylum seeker; in the recognition that these categories are often not fixed but fluid and changing.

It will also interrogate the ways in which religious concepts, traditions and practices affect and constitute relations of dependence, giving and distribution. It will explore whether distributive practices are given a distinct form and meaning by religious actors, and how these are experienced, produced and negotiated by local, as well as transnational actors. It will explore religious conceptions of development, livelihood and human fulfilment which underlie religious distributive practices, and how an understanding of these might shed light on how social inequality and precarity in Asia could be addressed.

This conference aims to bring together scholars and practitioners who are not only critically engaged with the politics of religious distributive practices, but who are specifically interested in exploring a politics of distribution that is grounded in and emerges out of practices in Asia.

CONVENOR

Dr May Ngo

Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore

E | arinmy@nus.edu.sg

16 NOVEMBER 2017 • THURSDAY

10:45 – 11:00	REGISTRATION	
11:00 – 11:30	WELCOME REMARKS	
11:00	JONATHAN RIGG • National University of Singapore	
	MAY NGO • National University of Singapore	
11:30 – 13:00	PANEL 1 • BUDDHIST-BASED APPROACHES TO DISTRIBUTION	
<i>Chairperson</i>	KENNETH DEAN • National University of Singapore	
11:30	SUNGYONG LEE University of Otago, New Zealand	Buddhist Approaches to Local Development: Case Studies of Sarvodaya and Joint Together Society
11:50	PATTARAT PHANTPRASIT Mae Fah Luang University, Thailand	To Have a Better Life: A Reason Why Thai Female Lower- Middle Classes Make Donations
12:10	MIKE GRIFFITHS Social Policy and Poverty Research Group, Myanmar	Parahita Organizations in Rural Myanmar: The Politics of Emergent Forms of Redistribution
12:30	Questions & Answers	
13:00 – 14:00	LUNCH	
14:00 – 15:30	PANEL 2 • MUSLIM-BASED APPROACHES TO DISTRIBUTION	
<i>Chairperson</i>	MOK MEI FENG • National University of Singapore	
14:00	RAJESH KALARIVAYIL Tezpur University, India	Divine Space to Distributive Space: An Analysis of Iftar in Mosques for Migrant Labourers in Kerala, South India
14:20	PAMUNGKAS A. DEWANTO Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Netherlands	Migrant Workers Advocacy Community in Malaysia: Binding the Madurese, Helping Others
14:40	LUKMANUL HAKIM DARUSMAN University of Muhammadiyah Jakarta, Indonesia, and Australian National University	The Significance of Religious Aid for Migrant Workers and its Relation to Economic Development in the Perspective of Islamic Law (Maqasid Sharia or the Objective of Islamic Law in Indonesia)
15:00	Questions & Answers	
15:30 – 16:00	TEA BREAK	
16:00 – 17:40	PANEL 3 • SPECIAL PANEL ON FACTORY WORK AND CATHOLIC AID IN CAMBODIA	
<i>Chairperson</i>	TINA SHRESTHA • National University of Singapore	
16:00	YANN DEFOND Labour Pastoral Committee, Cambodia	Testimony of a Volunteer with the Labour Pastoral Committee
16:15	SREYTOUCH PANG Factory Worker, Cambodia	My Experience of Factory Work and the Young Christian Worker's Movement (JOC)
16:30	BOPHA NŒUN Factory Worker, Cambodia	Garment Factory Work in Phnom Penh: From Village to the Capital City
16:45	MAY NGO National University of Singapore	The Politics of Presence: Piety and Factory Work in Cambodia
17:00	Questions & Answers	
17:30	END OF DAY 1	
18:00 – 20:00	CONFERENCE DINNER (For Speakers, Chairpersons & Invited Guests)	

17 NOVEMBER 2017 • FRIDAY

10:45 – 11:00	REGISTRATION	
11:00 – 12:30	PANEL 4 • RELIGION AS AN ALTERNATIVE MODEL OF DISTRIBUTION	
<i>Chairperson</i>	CHIU TUEN YI JENNY • National University of Singapore	
11:00	JESSICA FIELD O.P. Jindal Global University, India	Supporting Refugees to Work?: Exploring the Limitations and Possibilities of Urban Refugee 'Self-reliance' Initiatives in Delhi
11:20	MUBASHIR HAMEED University of Hyderabad, India	Gulf Migration, Religious Aid and Economies of Obligation in Malabar
11:40	BUBBLES BEVERLY NEO ASOR De La Salle University, Philippines	'I Was a Stranger and You Welcomed Me': Catholic Pastoral Care of Migrants as a Religious Distributive Practice in South Korea
12:00	Questions & Answers	
12:30 – 13:30	LUNCH	
13:30 – 15:00	PANEL 5 • CRITICAL APPROACHES TO RELIGIOUS DISTRIBUTIVE PRACTICES	
<i>Chairperson</i>	GOH JIA MIN CHARMIAN • National University of Singapore	
13:30	WONG BOON KENG GEORGE Nanyang Technological University, Singapore	Benevolent Accidental-Police in a Neoliberal State: A Rancierian Analysis of the Unintended Consequences of Religious Aid Strategies towards Low-Wage Migrant Workers' Politics in Singapore
13:50	ELISABETH DEWI Parahyangan Catholic University, Indonesia	Standing in the Midst of Pious Pilgrims and Devoted Breadwinner: Stories of Indonesian Female Domestic Workers as <i>Ibu Haji</i>
14:10	PATRICK NEVELING University of London, UK, and University of Bern, Switzerland	From the Politics of Distribution to Super-Exploitation: Neoliberal Moralities, Anti-Social Cosmologies and Capitalist Nation-States in the Making of Asia's Special Economic Zones since 1965
14:30	Questions & Answers	
15:00 – 15:15	CLOSING REMARKS	
15:00	MAY NGO • National University of Singapore	
15:15	END OF CONFERENCE	

Buddhist Approaches to Local Development: Case Studies of Sarvodaya and Joint Together Society

Chandima DASKON

University of Otago, New Zealand
cdasdon@gmail.com

SungYong LEE

University of Otago, New Zealand
sungyong.lee@otago.ac.nz

How do Buddhist understandings of development affect the operational principles of development projects? Do such religious approaches offer any alternative or supplementary models that address outstanding issues in contemporary development practice?

This paper examines the above questions through a comparative analysis of two Buddhism-based development organisations: Sarvodaya in Sri Lanka and Joint Together Society (JTS) in South Korea. Out of a wide range of principles, it pays a particular attention to four operational principles that both organisations uphold. First, *shramadána*, or sharing one's labour for common good, has been applied for the community residents stand as the 'owner' of development programmes rather than aid recipients. Second, *need-based development* is pursued in order to avoid the emergence of self-centredness and greed for material wealth and power, which many conventional development programmes generate. Third, *equality and mutual-respect* are highly emphasised in order to avoid social exclusion, disempowerment and discrimination. Fourth, the two organisations adopt a *holistic approach to development* that strives social, cultural, ecological and spiritual integrity.

This paper will firstly explain the theoretical and philosophical origins of these principles by referring to the Buddhist approach to development. It then will explain how these principles are applied in the field practice of the development programmes facilitated by Sarvodaya and JTS. Finally, it will discuss the theoretical and practical implication of the findings in the context of development agencies' support to international/domestic migrants. Especially, it will discuss the conceptual and practical challenges to the application of Buddhist principles into the ongoing projects of supporting migrants.

Chandima Daskon is a Research Affiliate at the National Centre for Peace Conflict Studies, University of Otago. Her research focuses mainly on the nexus of culture, development and peacebuilding. Her recent research investigates the mechanism in which the Buddhism and the Buddhist Sangha in Sri Lanka have influenced the country's protracted civil conflict.

SungYong Lee is Senior Lecturer at the National Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Otago. Dr Lee has examined the conflict resolution and post-conflict peacebuilding processes in Cambodia, the Philippines, Angola, Guatemala, South Thailand, and El Salvador. Some themes that he is particularly interested in are post-liberal peacebuilding, local ownership in post-war reconstruction, the roles of religious actors in peacebuilding. He is an editor and author of *Local Ownership in International Peacebuilding* (Routledge: 2015), *International Peacebuilding: An Introduction* (Routledge, 2016) and *Local Ownership Development in Asian Peacebuilding* (Palgrave Macmillan: forthcoming 2018).

To Have a Better Life: A Reason Why Thai Female Lower-Middle Classes Make Donations

Pattarat PHANTPRASIT

School of Social Innovation, Mae Fah Luang University, Thailand
ployphant@hotmail.com

This work examines how religion and Thai value affects lower-middle class women's lives and emotions. Thai society has expected women to be a good woman, a good daughter, a good wife, and a good mother. In terms of religion, women cannot ordain to be a monk like men, so they are the one who are expected to take care parents in order to show their gratitude. In cases of lower-middle class women, they are pressured not only in terms of gender, but also in terms of social status and economic conditions. As a breadwinner of their families, these women migrate to urban areas both in Thailand and abroad to find job. Because of having no qualifications, they have to work in informal sectors, tourism, illegal job, prostitution etc. However, society perceives them as 'a bad woman' who work illegally, sale their bodies, and behave unacceptably rather than 'a good woman' who work for support their family. Thus, these lower-middle class women donate a lot of money to temple to show that they are 'a good woman/person' who support Buddhism. In terms of emotions, donations fulfil their dream and comfort them. Based on an idea about the next life in Buddhism, these women believe that they will be born as the rich and have a better life in their next life. The more they donate, the better their lives are. Donation, thus, is a key to understand how Thai lower-middle class women perceive and hope.

Pattarat Phantprasit is currently working at School of Social Innovation, Mae Fah Luang University, Chiang Rai, Thailand. Before this, she worked at Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Thaksin University, Songkhla, Thailand. She graduated Master Degree from Chiang Mai University in history and later she also graduated MSc gender history from University of Edinburgh. Her interested fields are gender, history, femininity and masculinity, and emotions and feeling studies. Now she has expanded her specialised fields to gender and development and contemporary issues in Thailand and border of Myanmar and Laos, to be exact, Greater Mekong Sub Region area.

Parahita Organizations in Rural Myanmar: The Politics of Emergent Forms of Redistribution

Mike GRIFFITHS

Social Policy and Poverty Research Group, Myanmar
drmike@psmail.net

Daw Myat Thida SOE

Social Policy and Poverty Research Group, Myanmar

A renewed emphasis on redistributive politics in the face of changing labour patterns has again drawn attention not only to State-led, more universal approaches but also to informal practices of reciprocity, many of which are rooted in religious or cultural institutions and norms. This paper draws on recent empirical research conducted in Myanmar, which demonstrates a widespread and often sophisticated array of localized expressions of reciprocity. In the Myanmar context, characterized by a weak social contract and low levels of trust in central institutions, the provision of welfare by such organizations vastly exceeds State-delivered distribution-and indeed contributions to such groups by individual community members typically exceeds the amount of formal taxation. The incorporation of indigenous epistemologies has resulted in a more resilient framework for redistribution, deriving legitimacy not from notions of entitlement or individual responsibility, but frequently from Buddhist principles of altruism (Parahita), where obligations and motivations for reciprocity are linked to religious beliefs and activities (such as collective action to ordain Buddhist monks). This tends to focus legitimacy more locally, and as such has led to criticisms that such systems are excessively vulnerable to economic pressure, that they can act as constraints against more individualized forms of human rights and citizenship; and that they maintain, rather than reduce, social and economic inequalities by supporting traditional patterns of hierarchy. However, this paper demonstrates that the presence of community social organizations is associated with a reduction in inequalities; where community organizations have enabled constructive dialogue on issues of human rights; and where local redistributive practices and institutions have surprisingly flourished in the face of significant out-migration.

Initially trained in clinical medicine and public health, **Mike Griffiths** has worked in the social protection sector in Myanmar for over 14 years, currently working as lead researcher for the Yangon based Social Policy & Poverty Research Group (SPPRG), which has a particular focus on conducting research relevant to emerging government policy. Previous research work in Myanmar includes being lead researcher on the National Disability Survey 2009-10, a nationwide survey on formal sector migration, and two large-scale surveys looking at profiles of rural poverty in Myanmar. Forthcoming publications include compilations of contemporary migration research and disability research in Myanmar, and analysis of the performance of traditional social protection organizations in delivering social assistance. As well as working for SPPRG, Dr. Griffiths is also a PhD candidate for the University of Hull, with current research focused on studying patterns of resilience in rural households and studies of traditional social protection organizations in Myanmar.

Daw Myat Thida Soe works as a research assistant at SPPRG, and has contributed to recent surveys on resilience, social protection and community organizations. She also is part of a team providing public relations training to government programmes.

Divine Space to Distributive Space: An Analysis of Iftar in Mosques for Migrant Labourers in Kerala, South India

Rajesh KALARIVAYIL

Department of Social Work, Tezpur University, India
rajesh.wdr@gmail.com

The paper analyses Iftar organized in Mosques, by Mosque Management Committees in Kerala, a southern state in India during the time of holy month of Ramdan. Kerala is estimated to have 2.5 million migrant labourers in 2013, which is roughly 7 % of its total population (Narayana and Venkiteswaran, 2013). Lack of skilled labour and high wages, mainly due to high levels of international migration of native people to Middle East, attracts migrant labourers from other states such as West Bengal, Assam, Uttar Pradesh and Orissa. The level of integration of migrant labourers with Kerala society is very low due the different languages they speak and diversity in food and cultural habits. The paper draws on interviews conducted with members of mosque management committees and migrant labourers who have attended the Iftars organized in the Mosques. In this essay we explore those beliefs and values that make the transformation of religious spaces into distributive spaces possible. How do faith actors and migrant labourers understand the emergence of such spaces?

Rajesh Kalarivayil is currently working as Assistant Professor at the Department of Social Work, Tezpur University, Assam, India. He completed his PhD from Centre for Studies in Science Policy, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. His research interests include science, technology and innovation studies, migration and informal sector. His recent publications are “‘Saved a Generation’: Campaigns against Hazardous Contraceptives in India” in *Asian Journal of Social Science*, and “Unionisation in Post Reform India: A Review of Trends and Trajectories” in *Redefined Labour Spaces: Organising Workers in Post Liberalised India*.

Migrant Workers Advocacy Community in Malaysia: Binding the Madurese, Helping Others

Pamungkas A. DEWANTO

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Netherlands
p.a.d.dewanto@vu.nl

In a country where immigrants working in informal sectors can barely access social justice, the role of advocacy organizations is highly important. However, in a semi-democratic country such as Malaysia, often the presence of advocacy organizations is limited. Despite the limit, this does not mean that advocacy movements are completely absent. Attempting to enrich the literature of transnational advocacy networks, this research would like to highlight the role of Madurese Family Association in Malaysia (Ikatan Keluarga Madura di Malaysia/ IKMA) that currently undertakes advocacy activities for other Indonesian migrants. As a migrant workers' community that maintains both Madurese and Islamic values in its ritual events, IKMA plays an important role not only in developing social ties among the Madurese in Malaysia but also in building advocacy networks with their counterparts both in Malaysia and in the hometown. That blend of characteristics makes IKMA a hybrid community, a type of advocacy actor that is not sufficiently addressed in the literature on transnational advocacy networks. This research investigates why communal and religious community as such shifts its aspiration from a community that merely functions as a gathering space to a community that provides advocacy. By employing semi-structured open-ended interviews and participating in IKMA's activities and events, I inquire how can we understand its position in the intersection between advocacy and communal/religious practices. This research is conducted in several locations in Malaysia following the mobility of IKMA members.

Pamungkas A. Dewanto is currently a PhD Candidate at the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. From 2012, he has been focusing on the issue of labour migration from Indonesia, that is including the bureaucratic politics of the migrant-sending governments, labour recruitment policies, and currently the pattern of migrant workers' transnational advocacy networks in Malaysia. Previously, he taught at the Department of International Relations, Bina Nusantara University. He is an awardee of SHAPE-SEA research grant 2016 as well as a grantee of the Indonesian Education Endowment Fund (LPDP) 2016-2020.

The Significance of Religious Aid for Migrant Workers and its Relation to Economic Development in the Perspective of Islamic Law (Maqasid Sharia or the Objective of Islamic Law) in Indonesia

Lukmanul Hakim DARUSMAN

University of Muhammadiyah Jakarta, Indonesia, and Australian National University
elhakim.cordova@gmail.com

Sri Hartini RACHMAD

BPS Statistics Indonesia
shrachmat2@gmail.com

One of the largest migrant workers suppliers is Indonesia, particularly to the Middle East. This could be the similarity religion as the main reason of Indonesian migrant's worker choice to work in Gulf's countries, the haj opportunity, lack of job opportunity in home countries, other social networking and migrant's agencies are some supporting factors that have derived them to be International Migrant's worker. Thus the protection and religious aid are extremely needed for migrant workers. This paper will analyse the protection of migrant workers in the perspective of Maqasid Sharia. The focus of the research is on the implementation of Islamic concept of Maqasid al Sharia (The objective of Islamic Law) by taking Migrant workers in Saudi Arabia as an Example. This research will see the work in Islamic through that concept such as protecting the Religion (hifzh al-din), protecting the Soul (hifzh an-nafs), protecting the Reason, (hifzh al-'aql), protecting the Heredity (hifzh an-nasb) and protecting the Property (hifzh al-mal).

In relations to the increasing number of migrant workers, that phenomenon sometimes creates new problems such as the emergence of various cases of human rights violations. Thus, the research analyzes how religious aid is given by the local government to Migrant workers through the implementation of those principles to help migrant workers by giving them guidance to find good social and religious milieu and lead them to the correct way in accord to the law. It is hoped that these efforts can help the migrant workers. The method is a combination of qualitative method by conducting library research and observation with social, religious and law approaches.

Lukmanul Hakim Darusman is a PhD Graduate of the Faculty of Asian Studies, Australian National University, Canberra, Australia. He is a Lecturer of Islamic studies for the subject of History of Islamic intellectual development, Islamic History, History of Islamic Law at the post-graduate program, University of Muhammadiyah Jakarta, Indonesia. He is a member of the founders of PhD program and a lecture of for Research Methodology in PhD Program (Management of Islamic Education), Muhammadiyah University, Jakarta, Indonesia. He teaches Research Methodology in Law for Post-graduate Program, Jayabaya University, Jakarta. His interest of research is Islamic studies. He has published his PhD thesis on *Jihad Two Faces of Sharia, Sufism and Islamic Jurisprudence (FIQH) and the Revival of Islamic Movements in the Malay World*, case studies of Sheikh Yusuf al Maqassary of Indonesia and Sheikh Dawud al Fatani of Thailand, published by VDM Dr Muller, Leipzig Germany, in August, 2010.

Sri Hartini Rachmad is a Senior Researcher on Social-Economics Demography and Statistics Applied at BPS Statistics Indonesia; lecturer and research student adviser at Statistics Institute, Jakarta. She graduated from the Australian National University, Canberra-Australia. Her research interests are international and population development: climate change and vulnerability, disaster and water-management, data-assurance & quality, MDGs-SDGs, poverty, employment, migration, education, health, gender and family planning. She was a researcher for Human Development Report for UNDP's Provincial (2013), and the principle investigator for a pilot project on disability measurement improvement for developing country in Indonesia funded by UNS' coalition (2012/3). A book chapter (2013), Amazon, "Gendered patterns of urban commuting with better connectivity in Jakarta Megapolitan area" in *Gender, Roads, and Mobility in Asia*. She was also the principle investigator on "Gender Overview on Earthquake Disaster in Padang-West Sumatra" coordinated with Oxfam International (2010). She is currently (2017) on progress doing research on "Asean Disability: Review Data System".

Testimony of a Volunteer with the Labour Pastoral Committee

Yann DEFOND

Labour Pastoral Committee, Cambodia
9@defondyann.com

“The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us.” (John 1:14) This is the guideline of Yann Defond’s testimony in which he explains why he left everything to devote his life to the factory workers in Phnom Penh’s suburbs. More widely, he speaks about the commitment of the Catholic Church to the workers through the Labour Pastoral Committee of the Catholic Phnom Penh vicariate. Yann continues by talking about some of the obstacles he faces in Cambodia, as he is not Asian and some of his difficulties are due to the fact that he is a migrant himself.

At 30 years old, **Yann Defond** decided to spend all his life with Cambodian factory workers. He was born in France to a Christian working-class family and got to know Cambodia as a volunteer during his youth. In Phnom Penh, he works as a graphic designer, translator and actor. God chose to live in human reality as Jesus, who spent more time working than proclaiming the Gospel. This inspires Yann to live in a room like thousands of other factory workers in an industrial park in Phnom Penh. He is a member of the Labour Pastoral Committee of the Catholic Phnom Penh vicariate.

My Experience of Factory Work and the Young Christian Worker's Movement (JOC)

SreyTouch PANG

Factory Worker, Cambodia

With around 800,000 workers, the garment sector is the second largest employer in Cambodia after agriculture. Its productivity makes the country gain GDP points, and in theory allows families to leave their misery. But at what cost? In her testimony, SreyTouch PANG explains how her work experience has made her grow in proudness, in maturity and how it has changed the life of her family. At the same time, she speaks about the bad conditions in the factory and how it has an impact on her health, how it increases the feeling of injustice and decreases her self-esteem. Finally, SreyTouch will talk about the way her movement, the Young Christian Workers, helps give meaning to her work.

SreyTouch Pang was born in Svay Rieng, east of Cambodia. She moved to Phnom Penh, the capital city, with her family in the hopes of obtaining better life conditions. She stopped going to school to work in a garment factory near their new home in Phnom Penh. Nothing had prepared SreyTouch for working in a factory, and the work conditions in her Chinese-owned factory are difficult. However, she is happy to be able to help her family. Her job does not really give her much opportunities for growth, and even though she is not Christian, she has joined the Young Christian Workers movement where she might gain some meaning from her labour for herself and beyond that of her family.

Garment Factory Work in Phnom Penh: From Village to the Capital City

Bopha NŒUN

Factory Worker, Cambodia

The textile sector (garment and shoes) represents 80% of exportations from Cambodia. This industry is thus very important for the Kingdom's economy. Through her testimony, Bopha NŒUN explains why she had to leave her province to work in the peripheral suburbs of Phnom Penh, following in the footsteps of many young women her age. Bopha explains the consequences of her choice, which is the choice of her family, whom she can visit four or five times a year. As a Buddhist practitioner, she finds answers to her uprooting and the consequent changes in her life in the teachings of the Buddha.

Bopha Nœun came to Phnom Penh to work in the garment industry almost 2 years ago, joining her older sister. Her parents live on the large island Koh Thom, in Kandal province, with her 5 other sisters. Bopha works in a big factory next to the 1.8 metre high room she rents. Before working in a factory, Bopha helped her Buddhist family with farming in her village, which she felt very comfortable with. In the capital city, she doesn't enjoy the same social relationships and if she could choose, she would prefer to live in the countryside.

The Politics of Presence: Piety and Factory Work in Cambodia

May NGO

Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore
arinmy@nus.edu.sg

The Little Sisters of Jesus in Cambodia are nuns from different Asian countries who work in factories in Phnom Penh, in a predominately female workforce, as a way of solidarity and as a form of witnessing that follows in the path of Jesus. This presentation will explore whether, in attending to the lived experience of these female factory workers' realities through themselves bodily engaging in that reality, the Little Sisters offered a different way of 'doing' development- one which avoids engaging in discourses of progression or improvement commonly utilised in development discourse, but rather simply predicated on presence with the other.

This presentation is a reflection on a period of ethnographic fieldwork in Cambodia examining the nexus between religion, industrialisation and development through the case study of Cambodian factory workers and Catholic development actors. If religion is understood as not only related to belief but also practice, and through this the cultivation of not only a spiritual self but also a moral and ethical one, how does religion become intimately tied to ethics and politics? How is a politics of presence- one that includes various bodily practices, not only of prayer and piety but alongside it the practice of submitting one's body and mind to factory work- also entangled in the politics of development? Can a politics of presence be conceptualised as another form of distributive practice?

The presentation will examine how a theorising of a politics of presence can be related to emerging political and moral possibilities, through a case study of the Little Sisters of Jesus and their engagement in factory work.

May Ngo is a Post-doctoral Fellow in the Religion and Globalisation Cluster at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore. She earned her PhD in Anthropology at Swinburne University of Technology, Australia. Her doctoral research examined the role of religious actors in the humanitarian field, focusing on a case study of a Christian faith-based organisation in Morocco working with Sub-Saharan African irregular migrants. She has a forthcoming article to be published in the *Journal of International Development* and a book to be published by Routledge's Research in Religion and Development book series based on her doctoral dissertation. Her research at ARI focuses on the intersection between industrialisation, development and religious actors, focusing on factory work in Cambodia and Catholic aid organisations.

Supporting Refugees to Work?: Exploring the Limitations and Possibilities of Urban Refugee ‘Self-reliance’ Initiatives in Delhi

Jessica FIELD

O.P. Jindal Global University, India
jfield@jgu.edu.in

Self-reliance is about individualised responsibility for social wellbeing and economic security. This idea drives urban refugee livelihood programmes, in India and beyond, as humanitarian organisations seek to curb aid dependency. However, ideologically rooted self-enterprise approaches take little account of insecure labour markets, nor refugees’ actual capabilities to transform humanitarian assistance and livelihood opportunities into something sustainable and meaningful for them.

Alternative models of support are emerging, though. Recent research undertaken with refugees in Delhi suggests that many feel a strong sense of a ‘social safety net’ through the presence and activities of ad hoc grassroots groups and faith organisations – churches, gurudwaras and faith-based community institutes. These organisations are undertaking what Ferguson (2015) refers to as ‘distributive practices’, as they support refugee communities by means other than wage labour. What are these practices? And how do they impact the lived experiences of refugees in Delhi?

This paper will share early findings from our recent project on refugee self-reliance in Delhi, and will contribute to emerging literature that is interrogating the appropriateness of individualised and market-driven ‘solutions’ to the ‘problem’ of supporting refugees. Moreover, in discussing the role of non-governmental community networks and faith organisations in distributive practices for vulnerable refugee groups, it will examine concerns over the ‘responsibilisation’ of the refugee (and their community) for their own welfare.

Jessica Field is an Assistant Professor in International Affairs, Jindal Global University, India (Haryana); a Research Associate with the Institute for Risk and Disaster Reduction, University College London; and a Research Fellow at the Humanitarian and Conflict Response Institute, University of Manchester. A trained historian and interdisciplinary researcher, Dr Field has lead and consulted on multiple academic and policy research projects focusing on humanitarian issues in India, including for the Scottish Government, Save the Children UK, the International Institute for Environment and Development, and UCL. She is currently Principal Investigator on the IIED-funded project: Refugee (self-)support in Delhi: Exploring where humanitarian norms meet development needs.

Gulf Migration, Religious Aid and Economies of Obligation in Malabar

Mubashir HAMEED

University of Hyderabad, India
mubashirhameed@uohyd.ac.in

The proposed paper is a study on reciprocal enabling of an economic aid in the context of Gulf Migration in Malabar, Kerala, India. Known as *Panapayattu*, this is an economic practice that comprises networks of transactions through which capital is generated for different purposes. When a person wishes to conduct Panapayattu, he invites people from his region for a feast and guests present an amount to the host that is documented in a register. The register is then used as a reference while repaying which should ideally be the double of the earlier given money. When the first person again conducts Panapayattu the difference between the money received and repaid becomes the reference amount to pay.¹

Even though this practice cut across different communities, the Mappila Muslim community plays a major role in its sustenance and renewal. This paper looks at a specific historical juncture of 'Gulf boom', that witnessed mass migration to Gulf countries. Panapayattu along with its auxiliary forms have enabled many to find money for visa and tickets to the Gulf. This has resulted in an increased participation and in turn has benefitted the practice itself as the migrants started to repay from gulf through their relatives back home. The money involved in such transactions also increased from the remittances. But later on the prosperity gained through Gulf had made people withdraw from the practice and resulted in a steep decline and even extinction in many places. The migrants themselves though in small scale started similar practices in Gulf. After the economic crisis in 2000's many had to quit Gulf and started pursuing enterprises in their home country. Many turned to Panapayattu again to find capital for their ventures and later culminated in a revival, now some single Payatts yield millions of Rupees. The paper looks at the transformations and ruptures in this distributive practice due to Gulf Migration and also religious ethics guiding them.

Mubashir Hameed is currently pursuing his PhD in Sociology from University of Hyderabad, India. He has an MA in Sociology from University of Hyderabad and BA Honours in Sociology from University of Delhi. He was the National Young Sociologist of 2013-14 for the best undergraduate paper in Sociology. His PhD topic deals with everyday forms of debt among the Muslims of Malabar. He has presented papers in various National and International conferences.

¹ For example, A conducts a payattu, B makes payment of 100 Rs. When B conducts Payattu, A is supposed to pay it as double i.e 200 Rs. This can vary from less than double to more according to one's financial condition or the kind of relation they both share. These exchanges are continued throughout the lifetime and comes to an end only when the reference or principal amount is repaid known as payatt murikkal (literally to end or cut payattu).

‘I Was a Stranger and You Welcomed Me’: Catholic Pastoral Care of Migrants as a Religious Distributive Practice in South Korea

Bubbles Beverly Neo ASOR

Behavioral Sciences Department, De La Salle University, Philippines
bubblesbeverly@gmail.com

While most literature on international migration has recognised and mentioned the pivotal role of religious organisations in migrant integration and migrant identity formation, there is still a paucity of work which systematically analyses the role of faith-based organisations (FBOs) as social service providers. Social service provision to migrants is often subsumed under charity and needs-based approach to migration hence dismissed as passive, non-agentic and 'depoliticised' due to its inability to address migrants' long-term needs in terms of legal rights and citizenship. This paper addresses this literature gap by positing that social service provision and delivery to migrants is a powerful political statement and an embodied practice of social inclusion and belonging which challenges welfare and integration regimes. Based on a multisited ethnography of Catholic social service providers in South Korea, I examine the Catholic Church's teachings on and pastoral work for migrants as a distributive practice which aims to respond to migrants' physical, biological, mental, psychological, economic, spiritual, cultural and social needs not only for migrants' survival but also for the maintenance of individual's 'human dignity' regardless of legal status and migrant categories. This paper reveals that the social services received by migrants such as financial, legal, labor, medical and social assistance are not seen as 'dole' but as a source of agency and (inter)dependencies in the midst of precarity, temporariness and downward social mobility.

Bubbles Beverly Neo Asor is a lecturer in the Behavioral Sciences Department at De La Salle University Manila. Her research focuses on Filipino migration, international migration to South Korea, religion-migration nexus and state-civil society relations in the context of migration and the Catholic church as a mediating structure.

Benevolent Accidental-Police in a Neoliberal State: A Rancierian Analysis of the Unintended Consequences of Religious Aid Strategies towards Low-Wage Migrant Workers' Politics in Singapore

WONG Boon Keng George

Nanyang Technological University, Singapore
gwong011@e.ntu.edu.sg

Politics, as defined by Ranciere (2001; 4), is characterized by practices of struggles aimed at rupturing both the relationships and logics of arche (source of rule) through dissensus. The specific opposite of politics, termed “the police” (2001: 10) consists of practices which forecloses such ruptures. Using Ranciere’s framework of politics, this paper analyzes the unintended consequences of religious aid strategies in policing low-wage migrant workers’ politics in Singapore. Tracing two prominent religious institutions’ distributive practices with low-wage migrants in Singapore through interviews and fieldwork findings, I illustrate how on the one hand, religious aid in Singapore plays important roles in providing services and welfare to migrants which state actors has neglected, while on the other hand, also subjects migrants under their care to policing when they become recipients of religious aid. Consequently, policing of migrants’ involvement in politics is transferred from direct policing under state actors to pastoral policing through religious aid, an outcome that was unintended by both state and religious actors. This paper empirically highlights the politics of religious aid in Singapore where religious aid practices produced new forms of political relationships which state and religious actors have neither envisioned nor predicted, and these relationships expands Ferguson's ideas of subsistence, progress and concrete presence into configurations of policing that contribute into building the low wage migrant identities that most Asian states such as Singapore often constructs for its low-wage migrants: ephemeral, invisible, yet politically bankrupt. In doing so, religious aid sometimes end up contributing to the very political precarity experienced by low-wage migrants which these distributive practices were aimed at alleviating.

Wong Boon Keng George is currently a PhD candidate in the Sociology Department at the Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, where he also received his Masters of Arts (Sociology). He obtained his B.SocSc in Political Science and Sociology from the Singapore Management University and was awarded the Ho See Beng Excellence Award (Top Graduating Political Science Student). His current research focuses on analyzing migrant politics which challenges conventional literature of state-centered or subjectivities-centered discourses, using Singapore as a case study to illustrate the problematic of contemporary understandings and interventions in addressing possibilities of politics for low-wage migrant workers.

Standing in the Midst of Pious Pilgrims and Devoted Breadwinner: Stories of Indonesian Female Domestic Workers as *Ibu Haji*

Elisabeth DEWI

Parahyangan Centre for International Studies, Parahyangan Catholic University, Indonesia
elisabeth.dewi@unpar.ac.id

Having interviewed 19 women in West and Central Java, this study shows that among women domestic workers working in Saudi Arabia, the issue of making the pilgrimage to Mecca and their Islamic faith became one of the most important discussions among the participants and most important motivations for working overseas. There has been a long history of Indonesian workers travelling to the Middle East on either a regulated or unregulated basis, since they have been attracted not only by the possibility of higher earnings, but also the hope of having the opportunity to identify themselves as devout Muslim. Some women pray five times a day, fast during Ramadhan, participate in Qur'anic readings, perform *sedekah* (contributions to the needy), wear Muslim dress and head covering and make the pilgrimage to Mecca. In addition, there was a time that Indonesian authorities and husbands of women migrant workers expressed an assumption that women would be safe in the devoutly Muslim atmosphere of Saudi Arabia; an assumption that was not shared by other nations. This assumption related to a coherence of interests and practices, both socially and culturally, between Indonesia and the Middle East, due to their shared identity as Muslims. However, the migration process and type of work of these women as domestic workers show that religious belief and the reality of life were in the different spectrum. The discourses related to protection, home-based work and dependent relations were highlighted.

In 1996, **Elisabeth Dewi** gained Bachelor from Parahyangan Catholic University in Bandung, Indonesia. In 2003 she gained MA from UMass Lowell, USA. In 2010, she gained PhD from Women's Studies in Victoria University, Melbourne. She is lecturer in International Relations Department, Parahyangan Catholic University. She is Head of Parahyangan Centre for International Studies and editor of International Relations Academic Journal. She is also Coordinator for Women's Concern Network in Bandung and a Secretary Executive for Gender and Women's Empowerment Sub Commission for Bandung Diocese. She is Gender Consultant for various project in Indonesia, such as International Organization of Migration (IOM), Asian Development Bank (ADB), Cowater International, Save the Childre, CARE, and Artisanal Gold Council.

From the Politics of Distribution to Super-Exploitation: Neoliberal Moralities, Anti-Social Cosmologies and Capitalist Nation-States in the Making of Asia's Special Economic Zones since 1965

Patrick NEVELING

Department of Development Studies, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, UK, and
Historical Institute, University of Bern, Switzerland
patrick.neveling@gmail.com

Special economic zones (SEZs) have been central to Asian economic miracles since the 1960s. This presentation discusses the rise of SEZs and how this was backed by the emergence of neoliberal moralities derived from historically embedded anti-social cosmologies of monotheistic and polytheistic cults. The presentation thus argues for a shift in perspective – seeing religion not as a weapon of the weak, but rather as a weapon of states and capital to meet weekly production targets in the global factory. This shift provides crucial understanding why SEZs can flourish as machinations of inequality, offering abject conditions for a predominantly migrant labour workforce and miraculous investment incentives for capital.

The presentation extends these insights to criticise James Ferguson's (2015) recent research and theorising on "distributive practices"/"politics of distribution". I show how this rests on an ahistorical claim of an escalating lack of wage labour in the present when, on the contrary, the very same lack of wage labour fuelled the rise of SEZs societies across Asia since the 1960s. Instead of a flat ontology of "politics of distribution" I propose a return to the concept of superexploitation, which dominates distribution of wealth created in SEZs. Superexploitation is driven by the nation-state generating conditions for capital to pay wages so low that domestic units have to subsidise workers' livelihoods while national governments give generous subsidies to capital.

Expanding arguments I have made elsewhere (e.g. Neveling 2015), I show how such superexploitation is not contested but nurtured by religious movements, which often discriminate against workers on moral grounds and thereby transpose neoliberal moralities into anti-social cosmologies of monotheistic and polytheistic cults that have a long history of sustaining inequality in pre-colonial, colonial, imperial, and postcolonial regimes across Asia.

Patrick Neveling teaches Development Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, and is Associate Researcher at the Historical Institute, University of Bern, Switzerland. He has published widely on the global history and anthropology of capitalism with foci on export processing zones and special economic zones, neoliberalism, colonial and postcolonial transactional orders, the invention of tradition, tourism, and others. Patrick is also a leading editor of www.focaalblog.com. Many of his publications are available for free download at <https://soas.academia.edu/PatrickNeveling>.

ABOUT THE CHAIRPERSONS

CHIU Tuen Yi Jenny is Postdoctoral Fellow in the Asian Migration cluster at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore. She obtained her PhD in Sociology from The Chinese University of Hong Kong. From 2014-2015, she was a visiting fellow at Harvard University for 17 months under the sponsorship of the Harvard-Yenching Institute. Her research interests include migration, gender, marriage and family, violence against women, and ageing. Her current research focuses on (il)legality and gendered dynamics of marriage migration between Mainland China and Hong Kong. She is also working with Associate Professor Elaine Ho (PI) on the Translational Relations, Ageing and Care Ethics (TRACE) project (Co-Is: Professor Brenda Yeoh and Associate Professors Shirlena Huang and Leng Leng Thang).

GOH Jia Min Charmian is a part of the Migrating out of Poverty research team at the Asia Research Institute, NUS. Her research interests include the migration industry and labour migration governance in Asia.

Kenneth DEAN is Raffles Professor of Humanities and Head of the Chinese Studies Department, National University of Singapore, and Professor Emeritus, McGill University. He is the Religion and Globalization Research Cluster Leader, Asia Research Institute, NUS. Dean is the author of several books on Daoism and Chinese popular religion, including *Ritual Alliances of the Putian Plains: Vol. 1: Historical Introduction to the Return of the Gods, Vol. 2: A Survey of Village Temples and Ritual Activities*, Leiden: Brill, 2010 (with Zheng Zhenman); *Epigraphical Materials on the History of Religion in Fujian: The Quanzhou Region*, 3 vols., Fuzhou: 2004 (with Zheng Zhenman); *Lord of the Three in One: The Spread of a Cult in Southeast China*, Princeton: 1998; *Epigraphical Materials on the History of Religion in Fujian: The Xinghua Region*; Fuzhou 1995 (with Zheng Zhenman); *Taoist Ritual and Popular Cults of Southeast China*, Princeton 1993; and *First and Last Emperors: The Absolute State and the Body of the Despot* (with Brian Massumi), Autonomedia, New York. 1992. He directed *Bored in Heaven: A Film about Ritual Sensation* (2010), an 80-minute documentary film on ritual celebrations around Chinese New Years in Putian, Fujian, China. His current project is the construction of an interactive, multi-media database linked to a historical GIS map of the religious sites and networks of Singapore. His most recent publication (with Hue Guan Thye) is entitled *Chinese Epigraphy in Singapore: 1819-1911* (2 vols.), Singapore: NUS Press, 2017.

MOK Mei Feng is a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Asia Research Institute. She received her PhD in History from the University of Washington in 2016. Her research is on the Chinese diaspora in modern Vietnamese history during the Cold War. She focuses on Chinese diasporic communities negotiating nation-building and transnationalism in everyday life.

Tina SHRESTHA is a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Asian Migration cluster at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore. Dr Shrestha received her PhD in Cultural Anthropology from Cornell University. Prior to joining ARI, she was postdoctoral fellow at the International Institute for Asian Studies, Leiden. Her previous research on Nepali migration and asylum seeking process has appeared in *Studies in Nepali History and Society* and in an edited volume *Refugee Resettlement in the United States: Language, Policy and Pedagogy*. Her research at ARI focuses on brokerage and documentation in the employment recruitment agencies facilitating labor migration from Nepal to Malaysia. She has a forthcoming piece in *Anthropology of Work Review*.