Unequal networks: comparing the pre-migration overseas networks of Indonesian and Filipino migrant domestic workers

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Abstract   *Previous studies of Asian migrant domestic workers' pre-migration overseas networks have tended to be ethnographic, small-n case studies such that it is unclear if network differences between migrants are due to individual- or country-level differences or both. This article draws from an original survey of 1,206 Filipino and Indonesian domestic workers in Singapore and Hong Kong to reveal statistically significant differences in the pre-migration overseas networks of these two nationality groups even after controlling for migrants' educational attainment, marital status, employment status, age, year of first migration, and survey location. Multiple regression analysis highlights how Filipino respondents are more likely than Indonesian respondents to have known existing migrants prior to their first migration from their homeland. Filipino respondents' overseas networks are also significantly larger, more geographically dispersed, and comprise more white-collar contacts. These findings open up new terrain for migration scholars to study the impact of these nationality-based network differences on the two groups' divergent migration experiences and aspirations.*

The importance of overseas contacts in fostering cumulative migration is well documented within the international migration literature (Bashi 2007; Boyd 1989; Faist 2000; Garip and Asad ~~2013~~2016; Massey and Espinosa 1997; Massey et al. 1987; Palloni et al. 2001). Within the subset of studies focusing on the overseas networks of migrant domestic workers from Asia and elsewhere, there are plentiful accounts of how pre-existing connections to overseas migrants spurred the migration decisions of later cohorts of domestic workers (see Anggraeni 2006; Constable 2007; de Regt 2010; Gamburd 2000; Hillmann 2005; Kuschminder 2016; Lan 2006; Liebelt 2011; Oishi 2005; Parreñas 2001). Overseas contacts can help match aspiring migrant domestic workers with a willing overseas employer, gift/loan them money to cover their

migration-related costs, or simply operate as an exemplar of the potential of international labour migration to increase an individual's socioeconomic standing at home. However, existing studies of migrant domestic workers have tended to rely on small-n samples, often limited to a single nationality. They tend to focus on how a migrant's specific contacts in her first destination country aided the migration process, documenting post hoc through rich ethnographic data how a particular migration trajectory was adopted, rather than attempting to map the entirety of a migrant's pre-migration overseas network. As a result, it is not clear if reported differences in the size and composition of pre-migration overseas networks across different nationalities of domestic workers are due to individual-level demographic differences, country-specific migration histories and cultures, or both.

This article attempts to address this gap in the literature by drawing from an original survey conducted between 2014 and 2015 of 1,206 Indonesian and Filipino migrant domestic workers in Singapore and Hong Kong. The Philippines and Indonesia are useful countries to compare given that they are the two largest source countries of migrant workers (of all types) in Southeast Asia (IOM 2011:19; Setyawati 2013). In both countries, domestic work is the single largest occupational category of land-based migrant workers leaving each year, amounting to 33 per cent of all Indonesian migrants leaving the country in 2013 and 35 per cent of all Filipino migrants (BNP2TKI 2014; POEA 2013). In both countries, almost all of these migrant domestic workers are women. Both nationalities enjoy a significant presence in the major markets for domestic workers in Asia and the Middle East, such as Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Kuwait, despite Indonesia's labour export program having been initiated roughly a decade after that of the Philippines (Lan 2003; Paul 2017; Yeates 2009).

Previous studies have highlighted significant differences between migrant domestic worker populations from the Philippines and Indonesia in terms of their pre-migration educational attainment levels, and their average overseas wage rates, relative status in each overseas market, and the racialized stereotypes associated with each group (see Paul 2017, 2013; Lan 2003; Constable 2014; Platt et al. 2016). However, while there are a growing number of studies comparing the relative living and working conditions of Indonesian and Filipino domestic workers in specific overseas markets (see Lan 2006, 2003; Constable 2007; Platt et al 2016; Paul 2017), a literature search did not uncover similar, comparative work on the pre-migration overseas networks of these two nationality groups. This is despite the acknowledged importance of such networks in the lives of aspiring and current migrants.

Existing studies of Asian domestic workers have provided detailed accounts of individual domestic workers who found their first overseas job through the efforts of siblings and other relatives, friends, or neighbours already employed as domestic workers (see Anggraeni 2006; Constable 2007; de Regt 2010; Lan 2006; Liebelt 2011; Oishi ~~2001~~2005; Parreñas 2001; Paul 2011b, 2013). In ~~an~~her ethnographic account of labour migration from a village in the province of Ilocos Norte in the Philippines to Rome, Italy, Itaru Nagasaka (1998) showed how a woman migrant from the village loaned money and provided accommodation in Rome to assist more than 10 of her

relatives to join her in Italy. There are also stories of Filipinas who chose to become migrant domestic workers because they were swayed by the fashionable clothes and exciting stories they heard from migrant contacts who returned to the Philippines for short holidays and flaunted their newfound wealth and cosmopolitanism (Liebelt 2011; Lan 2006). Meanwhile, almost all of the Filipina domestic workers working in Italy and the United States that Rhacel Parreñas (2001:41) interviewed had entered through family reunification or tourist visas sponsored by close relatives who had earlier moved to these two countries.

In studying Sri Lankan domestic workers in the Middle East, Michele Gamburd (2000) writes that as the size of informal overseas networks grew, prospective Sinhalese domestic workers from Sri Lanka became less reliant on recruitment agents, labour brokers, and moneylenders to secure overseas employment, and instead turned more and more to informal personal contacts abroad who could provide plane tickets and direct-hiring job offers at lower prices. Similar trends have been observed among different cohorts of Indonesian women migrants (both internal and international) who became less reliant on migrant labour brokers over time and instead borrowed money from migrant friends or asked these friends to directly match them with overseas employers (Elmhirst 2002).

These studies provide critical insights into the mechanisms through which migrant networks influence the migration process, but they tend to only highlight overseas contacts who ~~had~~ provided direct assistance, and do not attempt to map the entirety of a domestic worker's pre-migration overseas network. As a result, we have only a general sense of the prevalence, size, and composition of pre-migration overseas networks amongst Asian migrant domestic workers. There is an implicit acceptance within the Asian domestic worker literature that Filipino domestic workers are members of larger, more geographically dispersed, and more white-collar overseas networks, but whether this is due to particular individual-level demographic advantages these individuals possess, or their belonging to a country with a higher out-migration rate and a more established history of out-migration, has not been confirmed. For instance, Marina de Regt (2010: 43) notes that in Yemen, local households preferred to hire Indonesian domestic workers over Filipinos because the former came to Yemen 'via recruitment agencies – as opposed to utilizing informal or personal networks of domestic workers – thus restricting their access to other workers and the support structures that a ready-made network of workers might provide'. However, this insight does not necessarily mean that Indonesian migrant domestic workers in Yemen had fewer pre-migratory network contacts compared with Filipinos – just that they had none in Yemen. The ruling by the Indonesian government that Indonesian domestic workers must use a registered labour broker or recruiter in order to secure the appropriate permissions for overseas employment (Killias 2010), could also result in a preponderance of migration accounts that neglect to mention Indonesian domestic workers' pre-migration network contacts because the worker did not rely on their network contacts to go overseas. As a result, we still lack systematic comparison of the pre-migration networks of Filipino and Indonesian domestic workers.

Analysis of the original survey data presented in this article goes some way to

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addressing this gap in our knowledge, revealing significant differences in the ego-centric, pre-migration overseas networks of Indonesian and Filipino domestic workers working in Singapore and Hong Kong. Regression analyses demonstrate that Filipino domestic workers in the sample were on average significantly more likely than Indonesian domestic workers to have known existing overseas migrants prior to their own departure from their homeland, even after controlling for individual-level differences in educational attainment, age, marital status, year of first migration, and survey location. Among those respondents with pre-migration overseas contacts, Filipino domestic workers' overseas networks were also significantly larger, more geographically dispersed, and comprised more white-collar workers. I posit that these national-level differences in pre-migration networks contribute to the divergent migration experiences encountered and destination aspirations expressed by the two groups.

In the following sections, I provide some background information about Indonesian and Filipino domestic workers, and explain why they are ripe for comparison. There are already several excellent review articles that discuss how migrant social capital embedded in pre-migration networks fosters cumulative migration (see Boyd 1989; Faist 2000; Garip and Asad 2016; Massey et al. 1987; Palloni et al. 2001) and so I do not devote much time to this question, focusing instead on the factors that have been identified as influencing the size and composition of personal networks more generally. Next, I outline how the survey was conducted, describe how the regression models were constructed, and present the results. I conclude with the contributions of my findings to the twin literatures on migrant networks and migrant domestic workers, and outline new questions that this research opens up for further exploration.

Studying Asian migrant domestic workers

Within the literature on migrant domestic workers, Filipino migrants have received the most academic attention, partly because of the vast government bureaucracy in the Philippines and its embassies and consulates around the world, supporting the mass marketing and export of Filipinas as innately nurturing caregivers (see Constable 2007; Lan 2006; Parreñas 2008; Paul 2011a; Rodriguez 2010; Tyner 2004). The Philippine government's efforts have largely worked and, in the global labour market for domestic workers, Filipinos tend to command some of the highest average wages because of their cultivated reputation for being more educated and more proficient in the English language (Paul 2011a; Rodriguez 2010; Tyner 2004).

Over the last ten years, however, there has been increasing interest in studying Indonesian domestic workers as they have been encroaching into the Filipino share of paid domestic worker markets in Southeast and East Asia, and in the Middle East (see Anggraeni 2006; Constable 2007; Lan 2006, 2003; Lindquist 2010a, 2010b; Rahman and Fee 2009; Silvey 2004, 2006). The top destinations for newly-hired Filipina domestic workers in 2010 were Hong Kong, Kuwait, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Taiwan, and Singapore, in that order (POEA 2011). There is no official breakdown of the top destinations of Indonesian labour migrants by occupational category, but their top destination countries in 2013 across *all* occupations were Malaysia, Taiwan, Saudi

Arabia, the UAE, Hong Kong, and Singapore in decreasing order (BNP2TKI 2014), and all of these countries are major markets for Indonesian MDWs (Hugo 2007; IOM 2013; Lan 2006).

Despite some overlap in their overseas markets, there are important differences in the constitution of domestic worker flows from the Philippines and Indonesia. While roughly ten per cent of Filipinos live overseas (9.5 million people, counting permanent, temporary, and irregular migrants), Indonesia only has between one and two per cent of its population overseas.[1] Most Indonesian domestic workers, like most Indonesians, are Muslim, while most Filipino domestic workers are Christian.[2] Filipina migrants also tend to be more educated than their Indonesian counterparts. It is not uncommon for Filipinas with bachelor's degrees to go abroad as domestic workers, as their wages in these low-status overseas jobs still outstrip their possible earnings from white-collar work back home (Constable 2007; Parreñas 2001). Indonesian domestic workers often only have either a junior high or high school education (Surtees 2003: 100), in line with the lower educational attainment rates within Indonesia as a whole (OECD 2013). Indonesian domestic workers are also reported to be more likely to suffer abuse and receive lower wages compared with their Filipino counterparts (Chin 2003; Constable 2014, 2007; Lindquist 2010a, 2010b; Paul 2017; World Bank 2006), and are granted reduced freedom of mobility by their employers (Platt et al. 2016; Schumann 2016). More broadly, labour migration flows from Indonesia tend to be more narrowly focused on low-wage occupations including domestic, construction, and agricultural work, while Filipino labour migrants occupy a broader spectrum that encompasses high-skilled jobs such as engineers and nurses as well as low-skilled and low-wage work.

However, when it comes to differences in the pre-migration overseas networks of these two nationality groups, less scholarly attention has been paid, outside of trying to map post hoc the particular migration processes individual migrant domestic workers undertook and the impact their network contacts had on these processes. In earlier work, I have taken a critical approach to studying aspiring migrants' mobilization of their overseas social capital, highlighting how existing migrant domestic workers do not always provide migration assistance to their at-home contacts when requested (Paul 2013). Even when help is extended, this migration assistance is often differentiated and conditional on a range of factors including the strength of the tie between the aspiring migrant and the overseas contact, the nature of the work available overseas, the state of the overseas economy, and host country immigration policy. But literature searches did not uncover any studies that attempt to systematically map and compare the overseas networks of Filipino and Indonesian migrant domestic workers either pre- or post-migration.

Influences on networks

Within the social networks literature, significant attention has been paid to the structural, cultural, and personal factors that influence the size, shape, and composition of an individual's personal network (Fischer 1982; Hill and Dunbar 2003; Moore 1990; Vaisey and Lizardo 2010). Age has been found to have a quadratic relationship with

personal network size, with a peak network size observed when an individual is between 50 and 60 years on average (Hill and Dunbar 2003). More generally, educational attainment and socioeconomic status are both positively associated with network size (Campbell 1988; Campbell et al. 1986; Fischer 1982; Marsden 1987). Family structure also influences the composition of an individual's personal network (Hill and Dunbar 2003; Moore 1990). Married individuals tend to have more ties to kin rather than non-kin, compared with non-married individuals. Marriage tends also to have a positive effect on the number of kin in an individual's personal network, while having young children has been found to have a negative effect (Moore 1990).

At the same time that individual-level factors have been found to influence the size and composition of social networks, researchers have also focused on the role of place. The communities and neighbourhoods in which individuals reside greatly influence the social networks in which they find themselves (Blau and Schwartz 1984; Rankin and Quane 2000). Individuals living in neighbourhoods where a particular social class forms the majority are more likely to have network connections with people from that social class, regardless of their own class background (Huckfeldt 1983). I extrapolate from these neighbourhood-based studies to hypothesize that a similar phenomenon occurs among individual migrant domestic workers born in countries – in this case, the Philippines – with a higher proportion of overseas migrants, a longer history of out-migration, and a more geographically disparate and white-collar mix of outgoing migrants, even after controlling for various individual-level factors.

Data and methods

In order to test this hypothesis, I use data from an original survey of migrant domestic workers in Singapore and Hong Kong I conducted between 2014 and 2015 that investigated respondents' migration histories and aspirations. Singapore was chosen as one study site because it is situated in the middle of most Filipino domestic workers' destination hierarchies, offering better working conditions than Middle Eastern countries, but not as high wages as what is available in markets like Hong Kong or Canada (Paul 2017; 2011b). The Singapore Ministry of Manpower (2017) reports that there were over 240,000 migrant domestic workers working on this island of 5 million people, one for every five households, at the end of June 2017. Of these, roughly 125,000 were Indonesian and 70,000 were Filipino, allowing for easy comparisons between the two groups' migration histories and plans (Tan 2015). Migrants from Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and India make up the remainder of the migrant domestic worker population in Singapore.

There are approximately 330,650 migrant domestic workers in Hong Kong (Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department 2015), with 53 per cent from the Philippines and 45 per cent from Indonesia (Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services 2015). Almost all (98 per cent) are female. Unlike other Asian and Middle Eastern markets, Hong Kong includes migrant workers under the purview of its Employment Ordinance, which provides all workers with a minimum wage, a mandatory weekly day-off that is a 24-hour period of continuous rest, paid leave during all statutory public holidays, and

maternity protections.[3] But alongside its greater popularity, there are also higher financial and human capital entry-barriers into the Hong Kong market imposed by the local government and by recruitment agencies that route different aspiring migrant domestic workers to different markets (Paul 2017). Migrant domestic workers ~~now~~ heading to Singapore have to endure four-to-five months of salary deductions to secure a job there (Seow 2016), while MDWs seeking work in Hong Kong are expected to forfeit six-to-eight months of wages to pay off their placement fees (Paul 2017).

For both study sites, a team of undergraduate volunteers were trained in recruiting potential survey respondents and administering the survey in public and NGO spaces where migrant domestic workers tend to congregate on their rest-days (if they receive any). Survey sites included shopping centres popular with migrant workers, various public parks, and several churches and temples with large migrant memberships so as to canvass as wide a selection of ~~the~~this migrant population as possible. In Singapore, three NGOs that run weekend classes for migrant workers also allowed the research team to conduct surveys with their students. In addition to English, survey forms and participant information sheets were available in Tagalog, Bahasa Indonesia, and Burmese to ensure ease of understanding. Migrants were asked if they would be willing to participate in a short, anonymous survey on their migration and destination decision-making processes and plans. Study participants had to be currently working as migrant domestic workers and be over 18 years old. There were no gender restrictions, but there were only women in the final sample as few men are employed as migrant domestic workers in either Singapore or Hong Kong, and surveyors did not encounter any men who self-identified as migrant domestic workers in either location.

In addition to questions on participants' age, marital status, number of children, and educational attainment at the time of their migration, the survey asked respondents to briefly list their employment and migration history, and indicate their future migration plans. With respect to their pre-migration overseas network, the survey asked, 'Before you left your home country, please list any relatives/friends who were overseas.' Respondents were asked to specify the nature of the relationship they had with their pre-migration overseas contact, the contact's country of residence, and occupation at the time of the respondent's first departure from their home country. Occasionally, respondents reported having had several pre-migration overseas contacts in a particular overseas country but were unable to recall or specify the exact number. This typically happened with Filipino respondents who reported having a married aunt or uncle's family in the United States or elsewhere. In such cases, their response was re-coded as having only two contacts in that country. In a few cases, respondents reported large numbers of overseas relatives (such as 20 or 30 in a single country). In order to avoid the skewing of regression results because of these outliers, the *total* number of pre-migration overseas contacts a respondent could be counted as possessing across all overseas destinations was capped at ten. This conservative approach results in an estimate of the average size of individual migrants' pre-migration overseas networks that is in fact an undercount.

In Singapore, a total of 650 surveys were collected but 3 were dropped due to missing network data. Of the remaining surveys, 50 were with domestic workers of

other nationalities (29 Sri Lankans, 17 Myanmarese and 4 Indians) and they were also excluded from the analysis in this article as their sample size was too small to make meaningful comparisons. In Hong Kong, a total of 616 surveys were conducted. Most respondents in Hong Kong were either Filipino (n=408) or Indonesian (n=202). Six respondents who were of other nationalities were dropped.

To avoid issues with retrospective surveying and survivorship bias in case migrants embedded in pre-migration overseas networks tended to stay longer overseas, and to take into account that Indonesian migrant domestic workers in our sample only started to leave Indonesia from the 1990s onwards, we excluded all respondents (n=26) who had left their home country before the year 1990. That left a final sample of 1,180 migrant domestic workers across the two locations, of which 431 were Indonesians and 749 were Filipino.

Pre-migration overseas network measures

~~Four~~Five different network measures are studied in this article: whether or not the respondent had at least one overseas contact prior to their first migration from their home country (*HadNet*, a dichotomous variable), the size of this overseas network (*SizeNet*, a continuous variable), the presence of white-collar contacts in these networks (*WhtColNet*, a dichotomous variable). the number of countries across which these network contacts were spread (*CtryNet*, a continuous variable), and the number of world regions across which these network contacts were spread (*RgnNet*). (Overseas contacts' countries were categorized into five world regions: Asia, the Middle East, Australasia, North America, and Europe. No respondent indicated possessing a pre-migration overseas contact in Central or South America, or in Africa.) Five hypotheses were tested for these five dependent variables, with the expectation that all would be significantly correlated with the migrant's nationality, after controlling for a range of demographic variables. More specifically, Filipino domestic workers were expected to be more likely to possess a pre-migration overseas network, have a larger pre-migratory overseas network, have a more geographically dispersed network (by country and by world region), and be more likely to possess white-collar contacts within their network, even after controlling for various individual-level characteristics. In all five cases, this expectation was tied to the greater proportion of Filipinos working overseas and the greater diversity that exists within the Filipino diaspora, both in terms of migrant occupations as well as destination countries.

Independent variables

The primary focus of this article was in testing if there was a country effect on the various dependent variables, so a dummy dichotomous variable for respondents' country of birth was created (0 = Indonesia, 1 = the Philippines). The literature on network composition identifies various individual-level characteristics as playing a role and so several control measures were included in the model including age in years (measured as a continuous variable), age-squared (in order to test for a quadratic relationship between network size and age), employment status prior to first migration

(0 = unemployed, 1 = employed), marital status prior to first migration (0 = single, 1 = widowed/divorced/separated, 2 = married), parental status (0 = no children prior to first migration, 1 = at least one child), and educational attainment prior to first migration (0 = some primary school, 1 = some high school, 2 = some diploma or vocational training, and 3 = some university education). I also controlled for the possibility of cumulative causation creating an upward trend in the size of individuals' pre-migration overseas networks over time, by adding a continuous measure for the year in which the respondent first migrated. Finally, I controlled for a location effect, in case the pre-migration networks of migrant domestic workers employed in Singapore were somehow fundamentally different from those in Hong Kong regardless of nationality.

Results

Descriptive information about the sample is presented in Table 1 and reveals statistically significant demographic differences both within and between the two nationality groups. Filipino respondents tended to be older than Indonesian respondents when they first left their country, with only 6.8 per cent of Filipinos having first left their homeland before the age of 21, in comparison to more than 28 per cent of Indonesian respondents. The two groups also displayed statistically significant differences in marital status prior to their migration, though the size of this difference was not large. Roughly 40 per cent of Indonesian respondents reported having been married at the time of their first migration, in contrast to 45.7 per cent of Filipinos. Meanwhile, 9.5 per cent of Indonesians in comparison with 6 per cent of Filipino respondents had been widowed, divorced, or separated at the time of their first migration. With respect to children, 47 per cent of Indonesian respondents reported having had at least one child at the time of their first migration while 62 per cent of Filipino respondents had already given birth to at least one child prior to their first migration.

Corroborating earlier studies, the Filipino migrants in the sample were much more educated on average than their Indonesian counterparts. While less than 2 per cent of Indonesian respondents had some university education, almost 45 per cent of Filipino respondents did. And while 55.5 per cent of Indonesian respondents had only some primary school education, only 3 per cent of Filipino respondents fell in this category. In addition, 68.6 per cent of Filipino respondents had been employed in their home country prior to their departure from their home country, in contrast to 52.7 per cent of Indonesian respondents. There were also significant differences between the two nationality groups in terms of their decade of departure from their home country, with Filipino respondents more evenly distributed across the three decades under consideration, while the first migration dates for the Indonesian respondents in the sample were concentrated in the 2000s (with 59 per cent of Indonesian respondents having left their home country for the first time in the 2000s). Overall, at the time they left their country for the first time, Filipino domestic workers in the sample were on average older, had spent more years in formal education, were more likely to be married, ~~had~~more likely to have given birth to at least one child, and been employed in their home country, as compared with the Indonesian domestic workers in the sample.

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Table 1: Descriptive statistics, by nationality

Demographic characteristics	Percentage of Filipinos (%) (n = 749)	Percentage of Indonesians (%) (n = 431)
Age at first migration		
20 and below	6.8	28.1
21–30	70.2	62.0
31–40	21.5	8.8
41+	1.5	1.2
Marital status at first migration		
Never married	48.3	50.1
Widowed/separated/divorced	6.0	9.5
Married	45.7	40.4
Had children prior to first migration	61.6	47.3
Highest educational level*		
Some primary	3.0	55.5
Some high school	33.5	42.0
Some vocational training/diploma	18.6	0.9
Some college	44.9	1.6
Employed prior to first migration	68.6	52.7
Decade of first departure		
1990s	17.4	15.8
2000s	48.1	59.1
2010s	34.6	25.1
Had at least one overseas contact prior to first migration	84.1	55.0

*Percentage distributions for highest educational level are out of 746 for Filipinos, as three Filipino respondents did not provide their educational attainment levels.

Differences between Indonesian and Filipino pre-migration networks

A greater proportion of Filipino respondents reported having possessed at least one pre-migration overseas contact as compared with Indonesian respondents (84 per cent compared with 55 per cent) (see Table 1). Amongst the subset of Indonesian and Filipino domestic workers who had possessed a pre-migration overseas network, there were also distinct differences between their networks in terms of size, geographic dispersion, and occupational composition (see Table 2). Despite more than half of Indonesian respondents possessing an overseas contact prior to their migration, the modal number of pre-migration overseas contacts possessed by these respondents was one (that is, 51.5 per cent of Indonesian respondents possessed only one pre-migration overseas contact). In contrast, the modal number of pre-migration overseas contacts for Filipino respondents was three or more.

In addition to size, the relationship that respondents had with their overseas network connections differed drastically (see Table 2). While just over a third of Filipino and

Indonesian respondents had overseas network contacts who were close relatives, 73.8 per cent of Filipino respondents with overseas contacts also had distant relatives overseas, in contrast with only 35.4 per cent of Indonesian respondents with overseas connections. (Close relatives were defined as siblings, parents, children, and partners, while distant relatives were defined as all other relatives, including grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and in-laws.) Meanwhile, 53.6 per cent of Indonesian respondents with overseas contacts had friends who were overseas, in contrast to only 35.1 per cent of Filipino respondents. These differences between the two nationality groups speaks to how, in the Philippines, most households can point to at least one relative (either close or distant) who is currently working overseas or had done so in the past, while this is not yet the case in Indonesia.

Table 2: Characteristics of pre-migration networks, by nationality for respondents with at least one contact

	Filipinos (n = 630) %	Indonesians (n = 237) %
Number of overseas contacts		
Only one contact	28.3	51.5
Only two contacts	28.7	27.0
Three or more contacts	43.0	21.5
Closeness of relationship with overseas contacts[1]		
Close relative	33.5	35.0
Distant relative	73.8	35.4
Friend	35.1	53.6
Acquaintance/neighbour	02.5	05.1
Occupational category of overseas contacts*		
Blue-collar	96.0	98.7
White-collar	22.1	02.5
Contacts' top occupations*		
Domestic worker	87.5	94.1
Factory/industrial worker	07.6	05.5
Nurse	07.5	00.4
Customer service/sales	12.5	01.3
Engineer	01.8	–
White-collar professional	11.1	00.8
Construction worker	02.5	02.5
Location of overseas contacts*†		
Asia	83.2	96.6
Middle East	26.4	08.9
Australasia	04.6	00.4
North America	26.8	00.4
Europe	11.9	–

* Percentages do not add up to 100 because respondents could indicate that they had multiple overseas contacts of different kinds.

† Overseas contacts who are seafarers not based in any country were not counted for any region. There were also no contacts mentioned living in South America/Africa. Israel is counted as part of the Middle East.

The differences between the two groups of networks extend to the occupational categories in which survey respondents' overseas contacts tended to be employed, with Filipinos more likely to possess white-collar contacts overseas (22.1 per cent of Filipino respondents compared to 2.5 per cent of Indonesian respondents). The vast majority of survey respondents of both nationalities – 94.1 per cent of Indonesian respondents and 87.5 per cent of Filipino respondents – who had pre-migration overseas contacts had known people who were also employed as foreign domestic workers. A roughly equal proportion of Indonesian and Filipino respondents – 7.6 per cent of Filipinos and 5.5 per cent of Indonesians – also had had pre-migration contacts who were factory workers. For both Indonesian and Filipino respondents who reported having pre-migration overseas contacts, 2.5 per cent had contacts who were construction workers. But the similarities stopped there. A small but significant number of Filipino respondents had also possessed overseas contacts in several white-collar occupations, including nursing, and engineering. More than 7 per cent of Filipino respondents had nurse contacts overseas and 11.1 per cent of Filipinos also reported having had overseas contacts who held other white-collar professions such as teaching, consulting, and medicine. In contrast, less than 1 per cent of Indonesian respondents reported overseas contacts holding such occupations.

There were also stark differences along nationality lines in the geographic spread of respondents' pre-migration networks. The pre-migration networks of both nationality groups were concentrated in Asia, with 96.6 per cent of Indonesian respondents and 83.2 per cent of Filipino respondents with pre-migration overseas contacts having had at least one of their contacts living and working in an Asian country. However, Filipino respondents were also connected to migrants in other parts of the world. Just over a quarter of Filipino respondents with pre-migration overseas contacts had had at least one contact in the Middle East, 26.8 per cent had had contacts in North America, 11.9 per cent had had contacts in Europe, and 4.6 per cent in Australasia. In contrast, the only other region of the world where Indonesian respondents had had a significant pre-migration connection was the Middle East with 8.9 per cent of respondents with overseas connections reporting that they had had at least one overseas contact in that region. Given the importance of pre-migration overseas networks in feeding information about the world at large and shaping prospective migrants' destination hierarchies, it seems likely that prospective Indonesian domestic workers would have a very different view of their destination options and construct different destination aspirations as compared with prospective Filipino domestic workers (see Paul 2017). But clearer answers about the geographic dispersion of pre-migration networks would require a more representative survey of Indonesians and Filipinos in their home countries rather than in particular destination markets, in order to see if there are any regional differences in how these networks are distributed. Until that occurs, it is still not clear if the preponderance of pre-migration contacts in Asian destination markets is due to

the fact the surveys were only conducted in Singapore and Hong Kong, rather than this being reflective of the actual distribution of Filipino migrants around the world.

Regression Models

Given the differences between Indonesian and Filipino respondents' pre-migration overseas networks – in terms of their prevalence, size, spread, and composition, the next question is: What is the cause of these differences? Do they stem from the differences in pre-migration educational attainment levels, age, marital status, and employment status between these two populations? Or are they related to the different histories and experiences of migration that prevail in these two countries?

Table 3 shows the effect of nationality and individual-level characteristics on the four dependent variables: *HadNet*, *SizeNet*, *WhtColNet*, *CtryNet*, and *RgnNet*. Models 1 and 3 are probit regression models, while Models 2, 4, and 5 use ordinary least-squares regression models. The first three models demonstrate the statistically significant positive effect of nationality (in this case, being Filipino) on overseas pre-migration network characteristics, even after controlling for individual-level demographic characteristics. Model 1 (*HadNet*) examines the factors influencing the predicted probability that a migrant domestic worker possessed an overseas migrant network prior to her first migration, and demonstrates that the respondent's nationality does have a statistically significant effect (β = .8897, p-value = .0000). The margins command in Stata reveals that Filipino domestic worker respondents had a predicted probability of possessing an overseas migrant network prior to their own first migration that is 27.75 percentage points higher than that of Indonesians (p-value = 0.000), holding all other demographic variables constant at their means. Model 1 also shows that the year in which a migrant makes her first migration journey has a statistically significant effect on the probability of having a pre-migration overseas contact, with each additional year that the migrant waits increasing the predicted probability of her having an overseas contact by 0.85 percentage points, holding all other variables constant at their means. This demonstrates the impact of the growing diaspora of both Filipino and Indonesian migrants through cumulative migration processes. More recently-departed Filipino and Indonesian migrant domestic workers are able to tap into expanded overseas co-ethnic networks that did not exist in such numbers in the 1990s and 2000s. No other factors were found to have a statistically significant effect on the probability of a respondent possessing an overseas migrant network prior to their migration.

Table 3: Modelling the effect of nationality on respondents' pre-migration overseas networks

Independent variables	Probit Model 1 (HasNet)	OLS Model 2[1] (SizeNet[2])	Probit Model 3[1] (WhtColNet)	OLS Model 4[1] (CtryNet[3])	OLS Model 5[1] (RgnNet[3])
Nationality (Filipino)	0.8897**** (.1173)	0.5221*** (.1965)	0.7350** (.2135)	0.1619 (.1370)	0.5126**** (.0000)
Age at first migration (in years)	-0.0002 (.0519)	-0.0302 (.0912)	0.0327 (.0840)	0.0714 (.0624)	0.0228 (.581)
Age at first migration^2	-0.00002 (.0009)	0.0005 (.0016)	-0.00007 (.0015)	-0.0010 (.0011)	-0.0002 (.776)
Pre-migration marital status (0=single)					
Widowed/divorced/separated	-0.2300 (.1984)	-0.2239 (.3196)	-0.4550 (.2869)	-0.0415 (.2096)	-0.05446 (.694)
Married	-0.1445 (.1393)	0.0747 (.2041)	-0.0797 (.1588)	0.2502 (.1300)	0.2092 (.015)
Parent pre-migration	0.1392 (1389)	0.3199 (.2021)	-0.0414 (.1549)	0.0702 (.1266)	-0.0180 (.830)
Employed pre-migration	0.0751 (.0888)	0.3541* (.1470)	0.3390** (.1300)	0.2529** (.0970)	0.1316* (.041)
Pre-migration educational attainment level (Scale 0–3)	0.0035 (.0301)	0.0979* (.0440)	0.1532*** (.0349)	0.0726** (.0280)	0.0068 (.713)
Year of first migration	0.0274**** (.0076)	-0.0116 (.0122)	-0.0007 (.0103)	-0.0092 (.0079)	-0.0037 (.476)
Location (Hong Kong)	-0.1360 (.0851)	0.3994** (.1362)	-0.5122*** (.1147)	-0.0174 (.0890)	0.0527 (.371)
Constant	-55.4768 (15.0978)	23.5991 (24.2627)	-2.1680 (20.4186)	18.3618 (15.5860)	7.2681 (.481)
N	1,171	863	863	566	566
Pseudo/Adjusted-R^2	10.21****	6.98****	15.11****	5.61****	12.73****

Notes: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$, **** $p < 0.0001$

1. Only includes those respondents with at least one pre-migration overseas contact.

2. *SizeNet* which measures the size of a survey respondent's pre-migration overseas network is constructed on a reduced scale of 1–10.

3. One respondent only had pre-migration overseas contacts who were seafarers and so did not have an overseas country or region connected to their contact.

Starting with Model 2, respondents who had reported having had no overseas network contacts prior to their first migration were dropped from the analysis, bringing the sample size down to 863. Model 2 (*SizeNet*) looks at the factors that influence the size of a migrant domestic worker's pre-migration overseas network. Once again, Filipino domestic workers who had at least one pre-migration overseas contact were significantly more likely to possess a larger network compared with Indonesian domestic workers (β = .5221, p-value = .008). But other factors were also found to have a significant effect on the size of a respondent's overseas network. As predicted by the broader networks literature, respondents who had been employed (as opposed to unemployed) in their home country prior to their first migration also experienced an increase in their overseas network size by 0.3541 (p-value = .016). An increase in the respondents' educational attainment level also correlated with an increase in overseas network size (β = .0979, p-value = .026). Interestingly, respondents in Hong Kong also enjoyed a significantly larger pre-migration overseas network (β = .3994, p-value = .003).

Model 3 (*WhtColNet*) explores the factors that affect the predicted probability that a migrant domestic worker had at least one pre-migration overseas contact holding a white-collar profession such as nursing, engineering, or teaching. The probit results show that, once again, Filipinos had a significantly higher probability of having at least one pre-migration white-collar contact in their overseas network as compared with Indonesians (β = .7350, p-value = 0.001). Having been employed in their home country before their first departure, and possessing more formal education also significantly increased the probability of a migrant domestic worker having a white-collar contact. Once again, location also had a significant impact, but this time migrant respondents in Hong Kong had a significantly lower predicted probability of possessing a white-collar overseas contact in their pre-migration networks, compared with migrants in Singapore, holding all else constant (β = -.5122, p-value = 0.000).

Model 4 (*CtryNet*) considers the factors influencing the country spread of a migrant domestic worker's pre-migration overseas network. This model (and Model 5) operated on a further reduced sample (n = 566), only considering those migrant respondents who had two or more pre-migration overseas contacts. Surprisingly, the OLS results showed that nationality was not a significant predictor of the country spread of pre-migration overseas networks (β = .1619, p-value = 0.238). Instead, respondents who had been employed (as opposed to unemployed) in their home country prior to their first migration reported a higher total number of countries in their pre-migration overseas network (β = .2528, p-value = .022). An increase in a respondent's educational attainment level also correlated with a greater overseas network size (β = .0726, p-value = .010). There was no statistically significant location-based difference.

Finally, Model 5 (*RgnNet*) operationalizes the geographic spread of respondents' pre-migration overseas networks in terms of the number of world regions they collectively reside in. Among those migrants who had two or more pre-migration contacts, Filipino domestic workers were significantly more likely to possess a geographically dispersed overseas network compared with Indonesian domestic workers (β = .5126, p-value = .0000). Migrants who were married at the time of their

first migration were also more likely to know people spread across more world regions (β = .2092, p-value = .015). And being employed prior to their first departure was also positively linked with knowing people spread across multiple world regions (β = .1316, p-value = .041).

Discussion

Filipino migrant domestic workers enjoy significant overseas network advantages over their Indonesian counterparts, even before they begin their migration journeys. Being Filipino (as opposed to Indonesian) is significantly and positively associated with having pre-migration overseas connections, and an overseas migrant network that is larger, more geographically dispersed, and containing at least one white-collar contact. This network advantage has twin implications for Filipino migrant domestic workers in terms of their day-to-day migration experiences overseas and their destination aspirations.

With respect to their daily migration experiences, Filipino migrant domestic workers are able to access a wider pool of contacts who can provide emotional and financial support during times of need, answer questions they might have about the migration process, and assist in other ways with the migrant's first departure from her home country. Given that among survey respondents who had pre-migration overseas contacts, Filipinos had an average of one additional pre-migration overseas contact compared with Indonesian migrant domestic workers (mean_{Fil} = 3.07, mean_{Ind} = 2.03), and that their overseas networks were more likely to include white-collar workers earning higher wages and therefore enjoying greater savings, they should be able to shield themselves from the vagaries of low-wage labour migration better than Indonesian migrant domestic workers. Research on immigrants in the United States has shown that the process of integration into American society is smoother for those immigrants who settle down in communities with well-established migrant networks that provide emotional ballast, employment opportunities, housing aid, and cultural support (Hagan 1998). Though the contexts of reception are significantly different for live-in domestic workers on temporary contracts, a parallel can still be drawn in terms of the greater emotional and psychological support Filipino domestic workers with overseas network contacts will be able to gain, in comparison to Indonesian domestic workers who may feel more isolated once they are overseas.

At the same time, for those Indonesian and Filipino respondents who had at least two pre-migration overseas networks, there were no statistically significant difference in the number of countries their contacts were located in. Possessing overseas contacts in more than one overseas country can influence Filipino and Indonesian respondents' onward migration and destination aspirations, encouraging both groups to take up stepwise international labour migration between the various overseas markets where they have contacts, or simply consider the possibility of working in multiple locations over the course of their migratory lifetimes (Paul 2017). While the survey did not collect information about the strength of the ties respondents had with their pre-migration overseas contacts, or the frequency of their communications with these

contacts, even the knowledge that they had family or friends in various locations can open respondents' minds to the possibility of working in multiple overseas countries over the course of their migratory lifetimes. Studying Indian live-out domestic workers in Delhi who were rural–urban migrants, Neetha N. (2004) finds that migrant networks (and particularly family ties) in Delhi were critical to the chain migration of migrant women from villages to the urban centre. In addition, Neetha (2004: 1685) notes that networks are important 'also in looking out for future jobs', allowing a domestic worker already in Delhi to move her employment to a new locale and a new employer within Delhi. A parallel can be drawn with Filipino and Indonesian domestic workers with networks in multiple markets, feeding destination and employment information to the domestic worker and setting the stage for their potential adoption of a stepwise migration trajectory.

However, as Model 5 demonstrates, the overseas migrant networks of Filipino domestic workers did have significantly greater geographical spread, spanning multiple world regions and not confined to only Asia. This more-diverse network of overseas contacts could also have consequences for migrants' destination aspirations. Filipino migrant domestic workers in Asia are more likely to express an interest in working in a Western country at some point in their future, while Indonesian domestic workers tend to restrict their destination aspirations to within a single region, Asia. Model 5 shows that this nationality-linked difference in networks can help explain the greater openness of Filipino domestic workers (in contrast with Indonesian migrant domestic workers) to the idea of stepwise migration to the *West*, as well as of settling down overseas (Paul 2017). Even if these networks do not translate into new jobs or tangible assistance, the example set by these overseas network contacts and the aspirations they fuel can create an openness to work stints in more far-flung destinations.

Meanwhile, the findings on the individual-level characteristics that influence network size and composition align with the general predictions from the networks literature. In most of the five models, migrants who were married, possessed greater education levels, and migrants who were employed in their home country before their first departure from their home country enjoyed increases in their overseas network size, geographical spread, and occupational composition. While these factors do not influence the likelihood of an individual having an overseas network prior to their own migration, they do influence the 'quality' of the network if they do have one. To my knowledge, this is also the first time that these broader theories about the factors influencing network composition have been applied to a specific subset of an individual's overall social network: their *overseas* connections. Thus, this article opens up interesting questions for future researchers to investigate, such as the mechanisms through which individual-level factors are linked to more extensive overseas networks. Does this occur through the workplace, for instance, with future-migrants who are employed in the home country being introduced to overseas migrants through colleagues at work, or having co-workers who migrate first? It is also possible that the temporal flow of causality could have worked in the opposite direction, with overseas migrant connections remitting money, gifts, and ideas that enable future-migrants to remain longer in the formal education system before they engage in labour migration

as well. With Asian labour migrants, and migrant domestic workers in particular, there is a rich vein of network data that has yet to be tapped in order to answer these questions.

The observed location-based differences in migrants' networks are at least partly driven by differences in the barriers-to-entry into each market and the relative status of these two markets within the global labour market for migrant domestic workers. Migrant domestic workers in Hong Kong were significantly more likely to report larger pre-migration networks compared with domestic workers in Singapore, regardless of nationality. Given the higher placement fees (and longer duration of salary deductions) associated with securing a job in Hong Kong, it is possible that migrants who have more network connections are able to leverage their overseas social capital to cover some of these costs and gain access to the Hong Kong market. In other words, migrants in Hong Kong are being positively selected in terms of their social capital, defined as the size of their pre-migration overseas networks. This could explain why there was no statistically significant difference between the two locations in terms of respondents' possession of at least one overseas network connection (Model 1 – *HasNet*), but there was a location-based difference in the size of these overseas networks (Model 2 – *SizeNet*). Surprisingly however, there was a statistically significant negative relationship between survey location (being in Hong Kong) and the presence of white-collar contacts in respondents' pre-migration overseas networks. Why relatively more domestic workers in Singapore with pre-migration overseas connections would possess overseas white-collar contacts as compared with domestic workers in Hong Kong is harder to explain and future research is required to confirm if this relationship continues to hold true. More information also needs to be collected to gain a fuller picture of how individuals' overseas networks are constructed, how they change over time, and how they influence migration processes and destination aspirations. In addition, network scholars should ideally use province-level migration rates (where available) to test for neighbourhood effects on network size and composition as this study studied ~~this~~the mechanism at the country-level which is a relatively crude way to study this particular causal mechanism.

Conclusion

This article represents a first attempt at quantitatively answering questions about the relative characteristics of Filipino and Indonesian domestic workers' pre-migration overseas networks. It complements the rich ethnographic work that already exists on Filipino and Indonesian migrant domestic workers' embeddedness in overseas networks, by operationalizing pre-migration overseas social capital in five different ways: presence, size, white-collar composition, country spread, and region spread. By testing for such a varied set of definitions of overseas social capital, this article is able to highlight the multiple network-driven ways in which Indonesian migrant domestic workers are disadvantaged compared with Filipino domestic workers prior to their first departure from their homeland. Also, by introducing controls for various demographic factors, from education to marital status to employment status pre-migration, this article

is able to conclusively show that these network differences exist at the national level and are not simply driven by demographic differences between the two populations.

By highlighting the various ways in which the pre-migration networks of Filipino and Indonesian migrant domestic workers are unequal, and what drives these inequalities, migration scholars can gain new insights into the divergent migration experiences and destination aspirations of these two groups. Indonesian migrant domestic workers' greater homeward orientation vis-à-vis Filipino domestic workers and their lack of interest in seeking work in Western countries can also be explained by considering their lack of network contacts in these countries and their relatively smaller overseas networks (Paul 2017). Although more research is required, especially on the mechanisms through which these network differences affect migratory aspirations and behaviour, this quantitative analysis provides a complementary set of evidence for qualitative researchers to use as they compare the role of overseas networks in migration processes.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1. Source for Philippine estimate: http://www.iesingapore.gov.sg/Venture-Overseas/Browse-By-Market/Asia-Pacific/Philippines/Country-Information. Source for Indonesia estimate: Muhidin and Utomo (2013) and http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL.
2. In 2000, 88 per cent of Indonesians were Muslim in comparison with only 5 per cent of Filipinos. In contrast, 81 per cent of Filipinos were Roman Catholic and the rest belonged to various other Christian/Protestant denominations. Source: United Nations (http://data.un.org/).
3. However, the minimum wage guaranteed all workers in Hong Kong is set at a higher rate than the 'minimum allowable wage' guaranteed migrant domestic workers.

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