Home, Work and Community: Skilled International Migration and Expatriate Women in Singapore

Brenda S.A. Yeoh* and Louisa-May Khoo**

ABSTRACT

While skilled labour migration across international borders is a phenomenon of increasing significance in the age of globalization and an important component in the production of global cities, it has not been given sufficient attention in traditional migration analyses.

Recent research has focused on institutional mechanisms regulating the patterns of skill transfer rather than the individual experience of being part of the international labour circuit. Women, in particular, have usually been relegated to the role of "trailing spouses" and are generally invisible in the migration process.

Using a questionnaire survey and in-depth interviews, this article attempts to reinstate the importance of women's roles by portraying them as active agents who adopt a range of strategies in negotiating the move and coming to terms with the transformations wrought by the move in the domains of home, work and community. It argues that skilled labour migration is a strongly gendered process, producing different sets of experiences for the men and women involved in it.

While international circulation often represents "career moves" for expatriate men, their spouses often experience a devalorization of their productive functions and a relegation to the domestic sphere. As an adaptive strategy, expatriate women often turn to the social and community sphere to reach for grounding in their lives.

* Department of Geography, National University of Singapore.
**Urban Redevelopment Authority, Singapore.

Published by Blackwell Publishers Ltd.,
108 Cowley Road, Oxford OX4 1JF, UK, and
350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148, USA.

International Migration Vol. 36 (2) 1998
ISSN 0020-7985

The article also points to the diversity of "expatriate experiences": while "western" expatriates tend to recreate a more exclusive world by drawing on strong institutional support, "Asian" expatriates find that they have to navigate much finer social and cultural divides between themselves and the host society.

INTRODUCTION

According to Berger (quoted in Rapport, 1995), migration is increasingly portrayed as "the quintessential experience" in a globalizing age. The internationalization of manufacturing activities and service industries and the globalization of transnational corporations has brought about a New International Division of Labour (NIDL) (Frobel et al., 1980). Driven by the relentless energies of economic activities on a transnational scale, contemporary society is increasingly marked by the rapid movements of capital, technology and labour across international frontiers. While this is commonly signified by the emergence of low-waged export processing zones in the Third World (Dicken, 1992), there is also an increasing trend towards the development of new geographies of skilled professional and managerial workers "whose outstanding characteristic is their readiness to move from one country to another and back again", a migrant group which has been called "transilients" (Richmond's term, quoted in Findlay, 1988: 402) or "skilled transients" (Appleyard's term, quoted in Findlay and Garrick, 1990: 177). Skilled international migration is distinguished from low-status labour migrants in a number of ways, including "its periodicity, the number of dependants, its housing and social conditions" (Gould, 1988a: 383) as well as its disproportionately large economic significance and potential political consequences on the host communities (Salt and Findlay, 1988: 161).

In this context, world cities, characterized by the concentration of corporate activities and cluster of producer services, are important locations for highly skilled international migrants. The availability of social and cultural facilities also render cities particularly attractive to these professionals as places in which to work and live (Beaverstock, 1994). In turn, transnational corporations depend on the world cities for their global reach, capitalizing on advantages such as the availability of a diverse pool of highly skilled labour, including expatriate skills. Skilled international migration as a process therefore contributes to the production of the global city (Findlay et al., 1996: 50).

As a form of migration tightly interwoven with the expansion and sustenance of the global economy, skilled international migration is likely to increase as Third World economies develop and the demand for international expertise expands. Yet, as Findlay et al. (1996: 50) note, it has "tended to slip through the net of traditional migration analysis" and that to date "an adequate evaluation

of the characteristics of the professional, managerial and entrepreneurial migrants who work in global cities" is still lacking. Recent works which have attempted to fill this gap have drawn upon a number of explanatory frameworks and mechanisms, including labour market restructuring within world cities and the demand for highly skilled professional and managerial staff (Beaverstock, 1994); a "migration channels" approach focusing on the role of the internal labour markets of multinational corporations, international recruitment agencies and international skill transfers by small- and intermediate-sized firms (Findlay and Garrick, 1990; also Gould, 1987; Findlay, 1988; Findlay, 1990); the links between companies' personnel strategies and transnational production (Cormode, 1994); the nature of "career paths" and internal labour markets (Salt, 1988); business culture and definitions of "international expertise" (Findlay et al., 1996); the impact of government policy in host countries (Gould, 1988b); and high-status migrant settlement in cities (Findlay and Samha, 1985; White, 1988). In general, the literature focuses on the "range of institutional mechanisms controlling and promoting the new patterns of skill transfer which have emerged" (Findlay and Gould, 1989: 5) rather than the individual experience of being part of the international circuit. As Gordon (1995: 139) has argued, structuralist approaches to migration which generally locate "choices and constraints within an understanding of wider institutional and market processes" have been "most fully developed in relation to international labour migration, where the roles of direct long-distance recruitment and the interconnection between migration, investment and production strategies within a changing global division of labour have been most evident".

Taking into account global shifts in the world economy, the changing gender division of labour, and the emergence of gender-differentiated mobility on an international scale (Chant and Radcliffe, 1992: 21), there has been some work in recent years on the gendered nature of the migration experience where low- and unskilled labour migration is concerned, focusing primarily on the mobilization of women into "global factories" and domestic service (see Heyzer and Wee, 1994; Huang and Yeoh, 1996; Lim and Oishi, 1996, on female Asian migrants, for example), lending weight to the phrase "feminization of labour migration". In contrast, recent literature on high-status international circulation has tended to neglect families in general and women in particular, treating the latter at best as "trailing spouses". This silence on the household and gender dimensions of skilled international migration in explanatory schemes is unwarranted. While overseas deployment of skilled workers is clearly a company-based strategy and migrants in part subscribe to "objectives relative to the goals of the transnational and local companies which employ them" (Findlay et al., 1996: 50), decisions to migrate and experiences while abroad also need to be considered at the micro-level of the household. Not only does migration contribute to household maintenance strategies, household and family considerations, particularly children's education and spouses' careers,

but often represent obstacles to professionals' mobility (Willis and Yeoh, forthcoming). Similarly, not only do some women cross international borders in their own right as autonomous economic migrants with "international expertise" as opposed to being accompanying spouses, but the bulk who do fall into the latter category also have different priorities and constraints, given that gender identities inevitably intersect with the broader economic, social, cultural and political concerns which form part and parcel of the migration experience (Buijs, 1993). As Zlotnik (1995: 269) notes, "despite what migration statistics would have us believe, women do not belong to the category of 'dependant'".

In an attempt to reinstate women as active negotiators in the process of skilled international migration rather than truants from the web of transnational economic flows, this article explores the experiences of "expatriate women" (defined later) who have set up temporary home in Singapore, a city ranked in the second tier of the world hierarchy and an aspirant for superleague status (Perry et al., 1997). A major recipient of foreign direct investment,[1] and since independence having adopted a liberal policy towards the employment of skilled foreign labour as a means to sustain its competitive edge, Singapore is a world city with a substantial expatriate population. To provide an overall context, the article first discusses demand for foreign skilled labour in the economic development of Singapore. This is followed by a brief methodological note before an analysis of expatriate women's migration experiences organized along three themes: women's role in household decision-making in moving across international borders; their negotiation of productive and reproductive responsibilities in a new environment; and the significance of social networks and community work in the adjustments and adaptations women have to make. The broad aim is to examine how women assert or redefine gender identities in the strategies they adopt in order to come to terms with transformations wrought by the move in the domains of home, work and community.

EXPATRIATES IN A GLOBAL CITY

The word "expatriate" is derived from the Latin term "*ex patria*", meaning "from the homeland". Contemporary definitions such as Tan's (cited in Chang, 1995: 141) define an expatriate as "a highly skilled individual who by his [*sic*] qualifications is employed by a foreign country or sent by his employers from his home to perform certain specialized functions on a contract of at least six months". In Singapore, a skilled worker generally regarded as belonging to the category "expatriate" is differentiated from an unskilled worker in that the former is issued with an Employment Pass, while the latter obtains a Work Permit. To qualify for an Employment Pass, the applicant should possess a recognized diploma, degree, or professional qualification, and he or she should earn a basic monthly salary of no less than S$1,500, revised to $2,000 as of

1 May 1996 (Hui, 1997).[2] Unlike unskilled workers, they are permitted to marry locals or bring their immediate "dependants" to Singapore.

The economic policies that guided Singapore's progress since independence in 1965 account largely for the high number of expatriate personnel in Singapore. Faced with shrinkage of the domestic market after its separation from the Malayan Federation to become an independent city state, in addition to the stagnation of entrepôt trade and the scheduled withdrawal of British troops, Singapore turned to an export-oriented industrialization strategy focused on the manufacture of labour intensive products (Murray and Pereira, 1996). Multinational companies were lured with generous investment incentives, and political and labour controls were instituted to create a favourable investment climate. The strategy proved successful partly because it coincided with a world trade boom and the emergence of a NIDL whereby labour-cheap developing nations were incorporated into the global economy as sites for labour intensive activities. As a consequence of both local and global industrial restructuring practices, a substantial number of foreign professionals and highly skilled technicians were relocated in Singapore to manage and supervise such labour intensive operations. This signified the beginning of a growing pool of expatriates in Singapore.

By the end of the 1970s it was realized that the first economic revolution had left Singapore with a pool of low paid, low value-added economic activities which could prove detrimental to economic growth in the long run (Lim, 1980: 137). Singapore's economic planners thus encouraged two processes: *moving up* to higher value-added, technology intensive activities; and *moving out* low income assembly work, thereby halting competition on the basis of low production costs (Perry, 1991: 140). With the increase in number of high technology based multinational firms relocating in Singapore, the number of foreign professionals sent by these firms correspondingly increased. Furthermore, the tight labour situation in Singapore in the 1980s resulted in a more liberal issue of employment passes to skilled foreign individuals employed in local, state or foreign-owned companies. The number of foreign skilled workers increased to a new level (superseded since), with an estimated 1,600 new employment passes issued every month (*The Business Times*, Singapore, 15 April 1984).

The economic policies of the 1990s further enhanced growth of the expatriate community in Singapore. The "regionalization drive", spearheaded by the Government, encouraged Singapore companies to set up operations in the emerging economies of the Asia-Pacific region to transcend Singapore's domestic constraints of land and labour as well as to capitalize on rapid economic development and industrialization in the region (Yeoh and Willis, 1997). Given that this strategy required a skilled human resource base, Singapore's economic architects recommended the enhancement of human resources

in a number of ways, including the attraction of international talent. Under its International Manpower Programme, the Economic Development Board assists companies through overseas recruitment missions and facilitates entry of skilled foreign personnel through various financial and immigration schemes (*The Straits Times*, 29 March 1990). Increased labour constraints also led to the adoption of a long-term immigration policy involving intake (estimated at around 0.4 per cent per annum of the population) of high quality professional and skilled persons to augment existing low growth rates in the labour force, as well as to refresh the higher echelons of the talent pool in Singapore (Ministry of Trade and Industry, 1991: 15-16). At the same time, economic restructuring, rising unemployment and recession in some developed nations have resulted in Western European, North American and Japanese companies relocating their operations and staff in Asia. Indeed, immigration department officials (personal interview, 15 March 1996) estimate that around 500-600 applications for an employment pass are received in a day. As the city-state looks towards the twenty-first century, its political leadership has signalled the need for more foreign talent if Singapore is to remain competitive, creative and cosmopolitan. A recent announcement that government levies for skilled foreign workers will be reduced (at the same time as those for the unskilled will be increased) is a move in this direction (*The Straits Times,* 5 November 1997).

The expatriate population in Singapore is an estimated 80,000.[3] The British (6,000) and Americans (6,000-8,000) have had a long presence on the island, the former from the days of Empire when Singapore was a British trading post and then colony; the latter since the formation of the American Association in 1917 to foster the interest of US citizens stationed in Singapore. Other Europeans (including the Dutch, French, German, Italian and Swiss) constitute another 5,000, and Australians about 3,000. The largest single nationality among expatriates, however, is the Japanese (20,000) who overtook the American community in the mid-1980s (*The Straits Times*, 25 August 1985, 26 June 1987). The remaining migrants are from neighbouring countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia and relatively new sources linked to the growth of South and East Asian economies such as India, China, Taiwan and Hong Kong, and the fall of communism in Eastern Europe. In the light of Hong Kong's return to China in 1997, attractive residence and citizenship incentives were offered Hong Kongers (*The Straits Times*, 14 May 1988), while immigration criteria were liberalized in July 1989 following the exodus of Hong Kong and Chinese citizens after the Tiananmen incident (Hui, 1997).

METHODOLOGY

The research strategy combines both quantitative and qualitative techniques. A questionnaire survey was conducted to solicit the views and concerns of expatriate men and women. As one aim of the study was to examine the

changing nature of the reproductive sphere vis-à-vis the productive, the questionnaire was administered only to *married* expatriate men and women. Of the 350 forms distributed, 194 (116 women and 78 men) were returned (response rate 56 per cent). Holland Village, the main expatriate enclave with shopping, eating and entertainment facilities in Singapore (Chang, 1995) was selected as the primary site of data collection on weekends. However, it soon became apparent that the place served mainly American, British and other European communities, and to a lesser extent Japanese and other Asian nationalities. Consequently, the survey was targeted at various foreign schools (such as the Japanese school), clubs and associations, the universities (which employ substantial numbers of Chinese and Indian expatriate research staff) and charitable and social organizations (such as "Friends of the Museum") to ensure a fair representation of expatriates of different nationalities (Table 1, page 183). To further understand how expatriate women project and anchor themselves in everyday social realities of the move to Singapore, in-depth interviews lasting between one to three hours were conducted with a selected sample of 20, split evenly between "western" and "Asian" categories. These women ranged between 27 and 47 years of age; nine were engaged in full-time paid work, three had taken up part-time work, and the remaining eight were housewives; all except six were accompanied by their children in Singapore.

NEGOTIATING THE MOVE

As Chant and Radcliffe (1992) and Zlotnik (1995) have argued, failure to take into account household dynamics in the migration process has led to neglect of women as active migration participants. Yet the decision to migrate cannot be reduced to individual responses to economic opportunities. The complexities of choice and relations between genders need to be unravelled by exploring women's perceptions as to how the decision to relocate was made.

Seventy-seven per cent of the women indicated that the move was initiated by the demands of their spouse's employment; the equivalent figure for men was only 5 per cent. At one extreme, some women abdicated responsibility for the decision on the basis that their husband, as head of the family, would make decisions which were also in their best interest:

> Oh... I leave it [the decision] to my husband...Anyway, it is his job [career]!... I know he will do what's best for the family (Maizu,[4] 42-year-old Japanese).

While migration decisions were primarily responses to men's priorities and opportunities in the economic sphere rather than women's (cf. Snaith, 1990), most women asserted that they had a role to play in the move and exercised a degree of choice; that even though their husbands initiated the move, their affirmation was vital to the whole enterprise:

> The move is definitely a "we" decision. My husband would have rejected the position in Singapore, even though it is a good career opportunity for him, if I had said "no" (Jane, 37-year-old Canadian).

This "choice" for many women was difficult precisely because the decision to leave home was conflated with notions of the gender division of labour; while "leaving" for the menfolk was understood simply as heeding the call of the outer world of work to which they belong, for women it meant loss of their more localized social networks centred on the home and community:

> For me it was a difficult decision, for him [husband] it was easy ... because for him it's a job, whereas for us women... it's leaving behind my friends and family and starting from scratch again... so that is a little unsettling (Rebecca, 35-year-old British).

> The hardest part was to leave my son [15-month-old left in the care of an aunt in China]... it's only been four months but I feel like I haven't seen him in a lifetime... I'm terrified that he won't even recognize me when I get back... yes, I spend a lot of money on phone calls to my sister but I can't help it.... My husband tells me that there is nothing to worry about but I need to know that everything is all right (Xiaofang, 27-year-old Chinese).

In the same way that the gender identities women traced in their daily lives made "leaving" difficult, gendered notions of "the good wife" also became inextricably woven into women's rationalizing as to why they left. Most argued that that despite the ruptures they personally experienced, they needed to lend support to their husbands' career moves:

> Although I was a little scared and reluctant [to move] at first, I went on the "look-see" tour sponsored by James' [husband] company... I knew the move to Singapore meant a lot to him... (Maureen, 37-year-old American).

It is also instructive to examine the small number of "tied" migration, where the women were the ones sent out to work while their husbands had the choice of "accompanying" them. While statistics on male "trailing spouses" are not available, the number of "expatriate husbands" is small but growing (*The Straits Times*, 11 February 1996). Alison (34-year-old Australian), offered a job in the broadcasting industry in Singapore, was well aware of what she called "social perceptions as to who should bring home the bacon". She thus negotiated a package with the firm that provided employment for both spouses, making her husband's employment a condition for accepting her new overseas job. Kala (35-year-old Indian) was in Singapore attending a business meeting when she was unexpectedly offered a coveted position in a top accounting firm. While wishing to be supportive of her decision to relocate, Kala's husband, also a professional, had difficulties accepting the change, a situation compounded

by the problems he faced in obtaining a job measuring up to his expectations and also occupying himself socially. Support groups and clubs organize activities for "expatriate wives" but have yet to recognize the need to cater for "expatriate husbands" (*The Straits Times*, 11 February 1996). Even in cases of apparent role reversal, the social infrastructure undergirding skilled labour migration – social norms, expectations and facilities – continue to entrench gender roles and identities along well-worn paths.

REWORKING THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SPHERES

Migration constitutes a significant rupture to the stream of human experience. While existing literature has measured the impact of migration on women in terms of material gains and losses (Snaith, 1990; Lim, 1995), migration also means the opening of liminal space (albeit temporary) where people, freed from old ties, rework the premises upon which they attempt to manage their material and social existence, adopting or rejecting new values and where necessary retaining or even stretching the old.

One of the most enduring ideas to understanding unequal gender relations and women's subordination is the "separation of spheres": the relegation of women to the "private" sphere of home, family and domestic concerns and the relative freedom of men whose lives are centred on the "public" sphere of waged work and formal political activity (McDowell, 1983; Sharistanian, 1987). To what extent do expatriate women confronted with moving to a new environment re-negotiate their gender identities, challenging or inflecting the boundaries between the "public" and "private" spheres?

Paid work

While 81 per cent of expatriate women surveyed had been engaged in paid work in their own countries, only 44.8 per cent had secured a footing in the local labour force in Singapore. This implies that about half the women experienced a loss of productive roles as a consequence of relocation (compared with "no change" in the case of the men surveyed, since all were gainfully employed before and after the move). Among those who had taken up paid work in Singapore, less than half were engaged in full-time work; the remainder were involved in part-time or flexi-work.

Unlike migrant women employed in domestic service or on the production line, paid employment for a large proportion of the expatriate women did not represent an economic necessity, as their move to Singapore usually meant an improvement in living standards that came with their husbands' expatriate packages. As Aikiko (36-year-old Japanese) enthused:

> Many Japanese ladies in Singapore do not work... we need not work... Here we can live in a large house... we can employ a part-time maid, and everything is so cheap when compared to Japanese prices.... so we can play golf, tennis... Why work? Why not enjoy our comfortable life?

For some like Mindy (42-year-old American), the move to Singapore represented, at least initially, "a sort of enforced luxury", an opportunity to temporarily escape the hectic work routine back home:

> I had no problems giving up my job ... it [the move] was like a pleasant extended vacation, and I would have been silly to fret over it!... I was looking forward to the time I would have to catch up on things I wanted to do.

However, she acknowledged that later,

> I wondered what I could do with all the time on my hands, and I considered looking for a part-time job.

Like Mindy, other expatriate women were keen to take up part-time work that allowed them to effectively combine domestic responsibilities and paid work. However, part-time work is in short supply in Singapore unlike in Britain where three-quarters of British women work part-time because such work resolves the competing pressures of domestic obligations and the desire to be in paid employment (Sheng et al., 1992). Rebecca's views echoed the frustration of many expatriate women:

> It is impossible to find a part-time job here!... I tried for three months, after that, I gave up!

Administrative barriers governing immigration, often predicated on the gender division of labour, also present hurdles obstructing women from entering the labour force. Expatriate women accompanying their spouses are automatically issued "dependants' passes" which do not permit gainful employment. Many expatriate women, particularly (but not restricted to) those without the requisite qualifications, experience considerable difficulties obtaining employment passes. An Australian expatriate woman wrote to the press out of frustration that she had sent hundreds of job applications to companies in Singapore only to be rejected on the basis that she was not a Singaporean, or at least a Permanent Resident (*The Straits Times*, 4 November 1995). Others also found themselves in a Catch 22 situation: companies were not keen to employ them unless they possessed an employment pass, while immigration authorities would not issue such passes without proof of employment. Some expatriate women, particularly the Japanese, experienced further difficulties because of language barriers.

Added to their marginalization as foreign nationals, some women argued that racial and sexual discriminatory practices in the labour market conspired to restrict women's work opportunities. Although she was highly qualified, Deila (43-year-old Indian) recalled that despite an intensive search strategy involving many applications over a year, she was unsuccessful in securing job interviews, suggesting the presence of "discrimination in the hiring practices". Only when a friend introduced her to the job circuit did she receive job offers. Kala related another difficulty for women in the "lead" role in "tied" migration: she had to pay for her children's education fees totally (S$25,000 per annum) as her company provided educational subsidies only to male expatriate staff.

In general, it was far more likely for Asian expatriate women, particularly those from China and India, to be involved in paid work (67.3 per cent) than their western counterparts (26.6 per cent). This is linked to the relatively lower financial status of the former, as measured by household income (Table 2, page 184, the Japanese being an exception), thus constituting a greater economic need for employment. In the face of global competition and rising Asian skill levels, more companies are using Asian expatriate managers and cutting expatriate perks. There is now a "growing band of expats who are localizing [meaning converting to local pay packages without housing allowances and education allowances to pay international school fees for the children] ... as the gravy train recedes" (*The Straits Times*, 14 June 1997). While this is affecting the expatriate scenario across the board, more Asians appear to be susceptible: for example, 34.6 per cent of the Asian women surveyed were living in Housing and Development Board flats compared with only 7.8 per cent of their western counterparts. According to one report, those who had taken advantage of a "cheap housing scheme" allowing expatriates to rent reserved flats in a public housing estate came from "as far away as Poland and China, with Malaysians and Indians forming the largest groups" (*The Straits Times*, 22 September 1987). When Liying, a 30-year-old Chinese engineer whose "expatriate" husband was employed on "local" terms, encountered administrative obstacles to obtaining an employment pass, she opted to give Chinese tuition to supplement the household income during the nine-month wait before her pass was approved. It was also observed that more Asian expatriate women were relatively "free" from domestic mothering responsibilities because they were younger (more than half the Chinese surveyed were below 30) and had no children; or because they were not accompanied by their children, having relied on extended family ties back home for transnational childcare arrangements.

While the additional wage which expatriate women could command was often accorded secondary importance for those whose husbands enjoyed expatriate terms, work provided other benefits. Most of the women confessed to feeling

"lost" and overwhelmed initially by the large amount of time they had on their hands. Employment represented a strategic means of coping socially and psychologically with the pressures of being in a new and often alien environment:

> Working keeps me occupied... it makes me feel good about myself... besides, it allows me to meet more people and get involved in the local way of life (Silka, 33-year-old German).

Others acknowledged that work outside the home was "a great morale booster", both to their personal sense of well-being and their perceived abilities to cope with the realities of living in a new environment:

> It's easy getting to work in Singapore... I just take the MRT (Mass Rapid Transit) and walk the rest of the way to my office... At least I don't feel so trapped any more.... I used to rely quite a bit on my husband's car... now I just get on the bus and go wherever I want to... yes, I'm more confident now.

While some expatriate women found personal freedom in waged work, the systemic institutionalization of conventional gender roles within migration mechanisms and economic organizations served to confine expatriate women to largely secondary roles in the productive sphere. Many women said that their primary role was to shore up the domestic front and recreate the semblance of home; "work" in the form of a paid job remained secondary. Coupled with administrative difficulties and language barriers in some cases, many abandoned the idea of "working" altogether.

Domestic work

The sexual division of labour, and in particular women's responsibility for the home, is said to be "endemic cross-culturally" and "remarkably resistant to macro-level economic circumstance" (Sanchez, 1993: 454), a finding also supported by a recent global survey on the sexual division of labour by the International Labour Organization (*The Straits Times*, 8 October 1992). Despite rapidly changing circumstances during the 1980s and 1990s, and regardless of whether or not they join the labour force, Singapore women have continued to bear the main brunt of domestic responsibilities, although increasingly by drawing on the services of foreign domestic workers (Huang and Yeoh, 1996). Nor have their expatriate counterparts escaped the gender-specificity of housework and accompanying ideas that place women at the heart of domestic life.

Of the expatriate women surveyed, 84.5 per cent stated that they were primarily responsible for domestic work in the home compared with 1.3 per cent of their male counterparts. In addition, of the 80 (69.0 per cent of the sample) women

who had children with them in Singapore, 80 per cent were the children's primary caregivers (Table 3, page 184). That *women* had the main responsibility for housework and childcare came as no surprise; however, the high percentage of expatriate women of whom the majority were *highly educated* (all had at least secondary school education and more than half were university graduates; see Table 1) relegated to the domestic sphere required further explanation. In addition to barriers encountered in finding paid employment, the women's status as *foreigners* reduced the number of childcare options open to them. First, expatriate women are not eligible for state-sponsored childcare centres unless they are "Permanent Residents who are economically employed" (Social Integration Management Service, n.d.); nor can they avail themselves of childcare subsidies offered to female citizens in full-time employment. Hong Rong (28-year-old Chinese), mother of a two-year-old son, had her hopes of entering full-time employment dashed when she was unable to place him in a childcare centre. The more affordable state-sponsored centres were not open to her, while private centres were either too expensive (compounded by the fact that she was not entitled to any subsidy) or had long waiting lists. Demand for childcare facilities is very high given the number of Singapore women in the workforce.[5] Removed from community networks in their home countries, few could depend on relatives, friends and neighbours for childcare help, or tap the local grapevine for babysitters. While foreign maids[6] were frequently employed in expatriate households, they were not perceived to be responsible for childcare. Many interviewees echoed Maureen's thoughts on this issue:

> Housework is fine... but I feel uncomfortable with the idea of having someone, someone foreign, take care of my children... it is my motherly role and it would be totally irresponsible of me to relegate my duties to someone else.

The relegation of "motherly duties" became even more difficult to accept when the transfer – ironically to other foreign women – was perceived to transcend differences in language, culture and nationality.

Of the minority of expatriate women with children who had ventured into paid work outside the home (one-fifth of 80), juggling productive and reproductive roles required innovative strategies. Parents of an 18-month-old daughter, Alison and her husband (both working for the same broadcasting company) negotiated an adjustment in their work shifts so that one of them would always be home to take care of their daughter. Thus, Alison would start work at seven in the evening after her husband returned home to relieve her of parenting duties and would not herself reach home until one in the morning. Deila relied on "importing relatives" to assist her in childcare when she was at work, ensuring that either her mother or mother-in-law from India was staying with her in Singapore at any one time. Others like Eri (37-year-old Japanese) restricted themselves to part-time work, combining a few hours of work

during the children's school hours (seen as a "luxury") with the main task of looking after the home. While Eri believed that her children (aged ten and twelve) were capable of fending for themselves when left alone, her husband wanted her to "stay home and look after the children". Part-time work nonetheless provided Eri with a measure of satisfaction that was essential to her personal well-being.

For many expatriate women, relocation in Singapore led to a significant reworking of public-private domains of their lives. Given the barriers to entering the local job market, and lack of childcare alternatives, these women found that the lines that divide the public world of work from the private world of home in a new environment had hardened, resulting in their relegation to the latter. While some managed to negotiate a balance between home and work, most had to reconcile themselves to new parameters in redefining their lives. Coupled with a sense of social dislocation and demands wrought by changes in the environment, most had to tussle with multi-faceted ramifications relating to self-identity and sense of well-being. As Priscilla (32-year-old American) said of her "new" homemaker role:

> I felt lost and angry... feeling like a servant and a chauffeur... I felt the disintegration of my intellectual faculties... I needed to find an avenue to channel my energies, and preserve some of my sanity.

In similar vein, a newspaper report (*The Straits Times*, 4 January 1987) on "expatriate wives" living "a life of leisure" in Singapore found that "they not only [could] not work here, they [were] unable to articulate their frustrations", quoting a French woman:

> My life revolves around my children. I have no hobbies and during the weekends I do whatever my four sons do.

Caught in a bind, many expatriate women seek alternative strategies to adjust to a new social world.

SOCIAL TIES AND COMMUNITY WORK

As already noted, relocation for many expatriate women not only implies the devalorization of productive life and relegation to the domestic sphere, it also means being cut adrift from the social moorings secured by the affective ties of family and friends, as well as community and place. Just as expatriate women constantly re-worked productive and reproductive roles in the face of systemic constraints, strategies were also necessary to rebuild the social and community fabric in which their lives were embedded.

Many expatriate women, particularly those who found themselves newly established as homemakers (three-quarters of the western expatriates and one-third of the Asian expatriates), testified to an initial period of social isolation and insecurity, depending largely on their husbands' business and social circles to provide some initial sources of social contact. This usually meant wives of colleagues working in their husbands' organizations. Only a few were able to rely on prior social contacts such as friends and relatives who had been in Singapore prior to their arrival. Annette (47-year-old Dutch) reminisced:

> I wouldn't have known what to do if not for Sonja [also Dutch]... I would have felt so lost!... She's been here two years before me, and she took me shopping, told me where to get this and that, introduced me to some friends... even listened to me complain about the weather!

Many felt sapped by the constant pressures of having to make themselves fit in socially, a situation compounded by high turnover rates in the expatriate community in Singapore, as Sarah (38-year-old British) explained:

> It's very tiring to keep making new contacts... good friends need time to build, usually a year... but who is to know who's going to leave first ... then, the whole process has to start again... at times, it's rather depressing.

The socio-political climate in Singapore also accounted for some difficulty in building informal social networks. Sarah compared her experiences in Singapore with her previous expatriate stint in the Philippines:

> [In the Philippines,] once you picked up the phone and said "I'm new here", doors would automatically open for you... In Singapore, however, it is difficult, because the *need* for such support is nearly non-existent...

This "need" ironically referred to the fear of crime, political turmoil and the prospect of natural hazards, conspicuously absent in Singapore, but which in the Philippines had in fact knitted the expatriate community more tightly together. Sarah's compatriot Rebecca concurred with this view, adding that the diversity of the expatriate population in Singapore also made it more difficult to meet people with "similar" taste and inclinations.

Few chose the more difficult course of initiating linkages with local Singaporean society, either because few opportunities to do so presented themselves in their daily routines (particularly for those living in selected private condominium housing catering largely to a foreigner market), language barriers (particularly in the case of Japanese women) or because of perceived differences between "us" and "them". Western expatriate women might feel extremely self-conscious, as Maureen explained, drawing from her personal experience:

> [Among locals,] I just feel too tense to move around... all I can see is that I am white, twice the height of an average Singaporean... for the first time, I knew what it feels like to be a minority...

Even among Asian expatriates who were racially similar to the dominant local groups, social integration with the local community was not easy as the "distance" between "insider" and "outsider" appeared irreducible, as Hong Rong lamented:

> I don't know why it's so difficult for me to make friends here... it's not a language problem since many Singaporeans speak Mandarin... they [locals] just maintain their distance... I am treated more like an outsider... I didn't expect it to be so hard.

For most expatriate women social ties had to be assiduously cultivated over time and with effort, and with other expatriate women. Most started from opportunities afforded by the daily course of life. Given women's primary involvement with childcare, their children's schools and Parents-Teachers Associations provided the natural meeting ground for making contacts with other expatriate women:

> Schools are a perfect source because you are more likely to meet someone you can talk to... you would have various things in common to start with... probably a similar age group, nationality... you are probably both housewives, and therefore have the same concerns such as children, grocery shopping, emergencies...

Formal organizations such as recreation clubs and other social institutions provided another avenue through which expatriate women sought to extend their social networks. As Maizu commented:

> Most of the friends I have here, I met at the Japanese Association... there, I can learn Japanese art and craft... I can also talk to my friends... then I'm not so bored in Singapore.

Of the expatriates surveyed, 56.9 per cent of the women and 35.9 per cent of the men were members of at least one social club or association, but membership was not evenly distributed among the different nationalities. Two-thirds of western and Japanese expatriate women belonged to specific social organizations whereas very few Asian (other than Japanese) counterparts were in a similar position. Hong Rong commented regrettably that no "Chinese" association existed to meet the social needs of Chinese expatriates like herself in Singapore. Moreover, hampered by the high cost of social recreational clubs, she had not been able to utilize existing organizations as a means of contact to build social relations with either locals or other expatriates. Ironically, while western and Japanese expatriates could claim "minority" status by dint of

"race" or language, therefore justifying recourse to exclusive social organizations catering to specific needs, Chinese and Indian expatriates were neither so completely "outside" local society as to require their own set of organizations, nor "inside" enough to fit into local grassroots organizations.

Among western and Japanese expatriates, the majority of both men and women were involved in organizations which catered specifically to the social and recreational needs of the different nationalities such as the Singapore American Community Action Council (SACAC), the Japanese Association, the British Association and the Hollandse Club and the Swiss Club. SACAC, for instance, organized seminars on adjustments to Singapore life and also offered counselling services and support groups to meet the needs of Americans in Singapore. Likewise, the Swiss Women's Association (an arm of the Swiss Club) provides for newcomers, as well as to Singaporeans, "a friendly environment where they can meet other ladies" and organizes treks, cooking demonstrations and carpet appreciation classes (*The Straits Times,* 29 July 1984). Women were involved in a much broader spectrum of activity groups including those which served the general population but with strong presence of expatriate participation such as Friends of the Museum (a non-profit organization and support group associated with the National Heritage Board) and charity institutions such as the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty against Animals, the Salvation Army, the Samaritans of Singapore and the St. Andrew's Association.

Beyond social networks centred on schools and nationality-based associations, community work also featured prominently in the lives of many expatriate women. According to Milroy and Wismer (1994), community work is a collective term used to refer to the work women (and men) do outside their homes and paid working hours, which, whether politically or publicly motivated, acts as "social glue" that holds a community together and at the same time provides both personal benefits as well as goods and services to a broader group of people. Community work could take the form of "hands-on" volunteer work in charity organizations or involve responsibilities of a more organizational nature, such as planning and committee work for non-profit organizations. June (32-year-old Briton) was a committed volunteer with the Salvation Army and the Samaritans of Singapore. Her Fridays were spent caring for the needs of old folks in a Salvation Army home, and on two afternoons a week she would take her position at the "helpline" telephone service provided by the Samaritans of Singapore, putting her training in counselling gathered from her previous work as a nurse to good use. For her, involvement in volunteer service seemed "the logical step" which provided the direction she was looking for when she switched from "career woman" to "housewife" as a result of her move to Singapore:

> I've always wanted to be more involved in volunteer work... back in England I could never find the time, since I was working... here, it's a great opportunity...

> it allows me to do the things I've always wanted, and at the same time, it helps me adjust... it opens doors and provides some direction in my life...

For Aikiko, this direction came through her engagements as a steering committee member of a non-profit organization for promoting culture and heritage:

> My work at [name of the organization] makes me very happy... I make sure that the Japanese tours [around museums] run smoothly, sometimes I organize talks for the Japanese women to learn more about Singapore... yes, it can be a lot of work, but I enjoy it... it gives me the chance to meet people, to learn new things myself and help others...

Madame Claude Bailly, a French Canadian who gave up a university lectureship in Montreal to accompany her husband to Singapore, combined a packed diary of social engagements with charity work:

> I'm not a housewife, I'm not interested in housekeeping and I don't want to have to bother with servants or food. I have too many things to do everyday... Here, I party in the morning, in the afternoon and in the evening. I hold talks every month at the hotel [where her husband works] for the ladies [other expatriate women]. I also visit the old folks' homes and the children's home (quoted in *The Straits Times*, 4 January 1987).

In a similar vein, while the Italian community in Singapore is only 400-strong, their womenfolk are noted for their active role in "charity, culture and good deeds" (*The Straits Times*, 4 November 1989). The significance of community work in helping expatriate women reach for social grounding during their sojourn was also clear from survey findings: 15 per cent of the women indicated that their involvement in social and charity work gave them the greatest meaning in life in Singapore, second only to those who cited "familial responsibilities" as their main anchor. This supports Milroy and Wismer's (1994) view that the nature and extent of women's involvement in civil action should be given more attention if we are to understand women's positions and experiences. Proposing a re-theorizing of the relationship between women and work, they suggested the inclusion of community work as a third sphere in addition to the conventional conceptions of the public/private formulations in women's lives. This means that community work is not merely an arm of domestic or traded work, but an important arena in its own right that cannot be totally absorbed into either sphere. In our analysis, expatriate women's lives certainly exemplified the importance of this third sphere.

Social organizations and community work also featured more prominently in the absence of productive-wage responsibilities: few respondents who were engaged in paid employment also took an active part in community work. This implies that community work became a viable substitute in place of the

advantages and anchorage that waged work offered. Thus, given lower levels of productive employment among the western and Japanese expatriate women compared with their Chinese and Indian counterparts, the significance of community work as a third sphere was more clearly reflected in the lives of the former, providing an added strategy to extend the scope of their own identities beyond their roles as mothers, wives and homemakers. As Sarah acknowledged, a third sphere that provided opportunities for achievements beyond the confines of the home was important in helping her adjust to a new environment, particularly in the absence of waged work:

> Such [community] work not only keeps me occupied, it makes me feel good about myself ... particularly since I have no real job... at least when I return to Britain, I can look back proudly and say "these are the things I've done in Singapore."

CONCLUSION

According to Warnes (1992: 186), while "migration theories and empirical investigations have their securest foundation in aggregate data analyses", their insights "have been strengthened by the result of behavioural studies". Ethnographic work which takes into account human perceptions, interactions and experiences within and across cultures, and investigates the multiple "ways of seeing" as increasingly diverse peoples come to share common territory in the age of migration, provides a starting point for understanding the migrant's experience as a complement to macro-level analyses of international migration. By giving weight to women's voices and casting them as active agents carving out their own identities vis-à-vis systemic constraints embedded in the socio-economic infrastructure which underpin international migration, this article set out specifically to give flesh to what has been noted as the "trailing spouse syndrome" in literature on skilled labour migration.

Both existing theories of migration and the mechanisms that facilitate international flows of skilled labour, are built on gendered notions as to who constitutes the significant individual and who the "dependant". Yet at the world level, not only are there large numbers of women international migrants, but their numbers are not so significantly different from those of men as to justify their general invisibility (UN Secretariat, 1995: 61). Indeed, women constitute the other half of the migration story and more attention needs to be paid to the female migrant's grasp of everyday social realities in the process of migration and the premises upon which they attempt to manage their material and social existence. This article has shown that the reproductive sphere has to be considered alongside productive functions because it often constitutes the core elements of women's experiences in the country of employment or residence.

The arena of social ties and community work takes on a stronger significance for women involved in skilled labour migration compared with men, providing scope for adaptive strategies.

In understanding Singapore as a global city, it must be remembered that global space is not made up only of men's business connections and economic activities, but also incorporates women's participation, sometimes in the economic sphere alongside men and often in the social and community spheres. In aiming to become a cosmopolitan and creative city of the twenty-first century with a world-class labour force, Singapore must provide an inclusive environment to accommodate both men and women of diverse nationalities. As skilled international migration increases in scope and complexity and draws from both Asian and western sending countries, the diversity of the expatriate experience must be recognized. While expatriates in the traditional western model tend to recreate their own familiar lived worlds in more exclusive settings, drawing on a range of institutional support such as schools and clubs, Asian expatriates have to navigate much finer social and cultural divides between themselves and the host society. By looking at the lived experiences of expatriate women in the arenas of work, home and community, the dynamics of being "inside" or "outside" the host society become much clearer.

NOTES

1. The Singapore economy attracts over 10 per cent of all foreign direct investments (FDI) received by destinations outside the OECD. Measured by FDI share of Gross Domestic Product (89.5 per cent in 1987), Singapore is among the most internationalized economies in the world. According to Economic Development Board estimates for 1996, around 2,000 organizations have a regional office in the city state (Perry et al., 1997: 15-17).
2. In this paper, "expatriate women" are defined in relation to their husbands' status as expatriates, or in terms of their own employment status meeting the criteria specified.
3. This estimate draws on press clippings and telephone interviews with relevant personnel from the various expatriate clubs and associations. It is most likely an under-estimate given that newspapers tend to ignore minority groups and also because not all expatriates will be registered with an association. Again, women in the role of "dependant" may also become "invisible" on these registers. According to *The Straits Times* (31 August 1997), there are 50,000 foreigners on employment passes in Singapore; no details of the number holding dependants' passes are available.
4. Pseudonyms are used throughout the paper to protect interviewees' anonymity.

5. According to the 1990 census, the labour force participation rate for Singapore women as a whole stands at 50.3 per cent while the equivalent figure for married women is 43.2 per cent.
6. In Singapore, another group of migrant women – low skilled contract workers from the Philippines, Indonesia and Sri Lanka – generally undertake domestic service.

REFERENCES

Beaverstock, J.V.
1994 "Re-thinking skilled international labour migration: world cities and banking organisations", *Geoforum,* 25(3): 323-338.

Buijs, G.
1993 "Introduction", in G. Buijs (Ed.), *Migrant Women,* Berg, Oxford: 1-20.

Chang, T.C.
1995 "The 'expatriatisation' of Holland Village", in B.S.A. Yeoh and L. Kong (Eds), *Portraits of Places: History, Community and Identity in Singapore*, Times Editions, Singapore: 140-157.

Chant, S., and S.A. Radcliffe
1992 "Migration and development: the importance of gender", in S. Chant (Ed.), *Gender and Migration in Developing Countries*, Belhaven Press, London: 1-29.

Cormode, L.
1994 "Japanese foreign direct investment and the circulation of personnel from Japan to Canada", in W.T.S. Gould and A.M. Findlay, *Population Migration and the Changing World Order*, John Wiley & Sons, Chichester: 67-89.

Dicken, P.
1992 *Global Shift*, Routledge, London.

Findlay, A.
1990 "A migration channels approach to the study of high level manpower movements: a theoretical perspective", *International Migration*, 28(1): 15-22.

Findlay A.M.
1988 "From settlers to skilled transients: the changing structure of British international migration", *Geoforum,* 19(4): 401-410.

Findlay, A.M., F.L.N. Li, A.J. Jowett and R. Skeldon
1996 "Skilled international migration and the global city: a study of expatriates in Hong Kong", *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 21(1): 49-61.

Findlay, A.M., and L. Garrick
1990 "Scottish emigration in the 1980s: a migration channels approach to the study of skilled international migration", *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 15: 177-192.

Findlay, A.M., and M. Samha
1985 "The impact of international migration on the urban structure of Amman", *Espace, Popul. Soc.,* 3: 93-98.
Findlay, A.M., and W.T.S. Gould
1989 "Skilled international migration: a research agenda", *Area*, 21: 3-11.
Frobel, F., J. Heinrichs and O. Kreya
1980 *The New International Division of Labour*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
Gordon, I.
1995 "Migration in a segmented labour market", *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 20: 139-155.
Gould, W.T.S.
1987 "Recruitment agencies and British international migration", *Area*, 19: 374-376.
1988a "Skilled international labour migration: an introduction", *Geoforum*, 19(4): 381-385.
1988b "Government policies and international migration of skilled workers in sub Saharan Africa", *Geoforum*, 19(4): 433-445.
Heyzer, N., and V. Wee
1994 "Domestic workers in transient overseas employment: who benefits, who profits?", in N. Heyzer, G. Lycklama, A. Niejholt, N. Weerakoon (Eds), *The Trade in Domestic Workers: Causes, Mechanisms and Consequences of International Migration*, Zed Books, London: 31-102.
Huang, S., and B.S.A. Yeoh
1996 "Ties that bind: state policy and migrant female domestic helpers in Singapore", *Geoforum*, 27(4): 479-93.
Hui, W.T.
1997 "Regionalization, economic restructuring and labour migration in Singapore", *International Migration*, 35(1): 109-128.
Lim, C.Y.
1980 *Economic Development in Singapore*, Federal Publications, Singapore.
Lim, L.L.
1995 "The status of women and international migration", in *International Migration Policies and the Status of Female Migrants*, United Nations, New York: 29-55.
Lim, L.L., and N. Oishi
1996 "International labor migration of Asian women: distinctive characteristics and policy concerns", in G. Battistella and A. Paganoni (Eds), *Asian Women in Migration*, Scalabrini Migration Center, Quezon City: 23-53.
McDowell, L.
1983 "Towards an understanding of the gender division of urban space", *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 1: 59-72.
Milroy, B., and S. Wismer
1994 "Communities, work and public/private sphere models", *Gender, Place, Culture*, 1(1): 71-91.
Ministry of Trade and Industry
1991 *Strategic Economic Plan – Towards a Developed Nation*, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Singapore.

Murray, G., and A. Pereira
1996 *Singapore – The Global City-State*, China Library, Folkestone, Kent.
Perry, M.
1991 "The Singapore growth triangle: state, capital and labour at a new frontier in the world economy", *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography*, 12(2): 138-150.
Perry, M., L. Kong and B. Yeoh
1997 *Singapore: A Developmental City State*, John Wiley, Chichester.
Rapport, N.
1995 "Migrant selves and stereotypes: personal context in a postmodern world", in S. Pile and N. Thrift (Eds), *Mapping the Subject: Geographies of Cultural Transformation*, Routledge, London: 267-282.
Salt, J.
1988 "Highly-skilled international migrants: careers and internal labour markets", *Geoforum*, 19(4): 387-399.
Salt, J., and A.M. Findlay
1988 "International migration of highly-skilled manpower: theoretical and development issues", in R. Appleyard (Ed.), *The Impact of Migration in Developing Countries,* Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Paris: 159-180.
Sanchez, L.
1993 "Women's power and the gendered division of domestic labor in the Third World", *Gender and Society,* 7(3): 434-459.
Sharistanian, J.
1987 "Introduction: women's lives in the public and domestic spheres", in J. Sharistanian (Ed.), *Beyond the Public/Domestic Dichotomy: Contemporary Perspectives on Women's Public Lives*, Greenwood Press, New York: 1-10.
Sheng, X., N. Stockman and N. Bonney
1992 "The dual burden: east and west (women's working lives in China, Japan and Great Britain)", *International Sociology*, 7(2): 209-223.
Snaith, J.
1990 "Migration and dual career households", in J.H. Johnson, and J. Salt (Eds), *Labour Migration*, Fulton, London: 155-171.
Social Integration Management Service
n.d. *Becoming a Singapore Permanent Resident: Privileges*, pamphlet, *The Straits Times,* Singapore.
UN Secretariat
1995 "Measuring the extent of female international migration", in *International Migration Policies and the Status of Female Migrants*, United Nations, New York: 56-79.
Warnes, T.
1992 "Migration and the life course", in T. Champion and T. Fielding (Eds), *Migration Processes and Patterns Vol. 1: Research Progress and Prospects*, Belhaven Press, London: 175-187.
White, P.
1988 "Skilled international migrants and urban structure in western Europe", *Geoforum*, 19(4): 411-422.

Willis, K., and B. Yeoh
"The social sustainability of Singapore's regionalisation drive", *Third World Planning Review,* (forthcoming).
Yeoh, B., and K. Willis
1997 "The global-local nexus: Singapore's regionalisation drive", *Geography*, 82(355): 183-186.
Zlotnik, H.
1995 "Migration and the family: the female perspective", *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, 4(2/3): 253-271.

TABLE 1

PROFILE OF EXPATRIATE WOMEN SURVEYED
(N=116)

Characteristic	No.	%
Nationality		
Americans/Canadians	14	12.1
British	22	19.0
Other Europeans (e.g. French, Germans)	18	15.5
Australians/New Zealanders	10	8.6
Chinese (from People's Republic of China, Taiwan, Hong Kong)	22	19.0
Japanese	22	19.0
Other Asians (e.g. Indians, Filipinos)	8	6.8
'Asian' category	52	44.8
'Western' category	64	55.2
Age		
20-29 years	24	20.7
30-39 years	54	46.6
40 years and above	38	32.7
Educational Qualifications		
Secondary education	16	13.8
Pre-University education	24	20.7
Polytechnic/Vocational training	16	13.8
University education	60	51.7
Type of Residence in Singapore		
Housing and Development Board flats	28	24.1
Private condominiums and dwelling houses	84	72.5
Boarding houses	4	3.4

TABLE 2

HOUSEHOLD INCOME OF EXPATRIATE WOMEN BY NATIONALITY
(N=116)

Nationality	Less than S$5,000		S$5,000 - 10,000		S$10,001 - 15,000		More than S$15,000	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Chinese (n=22)	16	72.7	4	18.2	2	9.1	0	0.0
Japanese (n=22)	0	0.0	16	72.7	6	27.3	0	0.0
Other Asians (n=8)	4	50.0	4	50.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Americans/Canadians (n=14)	4	28.6	2	14.3	0	0.0	8	57.1
British (n=22)	0	0.0	12	54.5	4	18.2	6	27.3
Other Europeans (n=18)	2	11.2	6	33.3	6	33.3	4	22.2
Australians/ New Zealanders (n=10)	2	20.0	4	40.0	2	20.0	2	20.0
'Asian' category (n=52)	20	38.5	24	46.2	8	15.4	0	0.0
'*Western' category* (n=64)	8	12.5	24	37.5	12	18.8	20	31.3
TOTAL (N=116)	28	24.1	48	41.4	20	17.2	20	17.2

TABLE 3

CHILDCARE OPTIONS OF EXPATRIATE WOMEN
(N=80)

Childcare Options	No.	%
Self	64	80.0
Spouse	1	1.3
Relatives/Friends	2	2.5
Live-in Maid	3	3.8
Private Daycare Centre	3	3.8
Child is Independent	7	8.8
TOTAL	80	100.2

FOYER, EMPLOI ET COMMUNAUTÉ : MIGRATION INTERNATIONALE DE TRAVAILLEURS QUALIFIÉS ET SITUATION DES FEMMES EXPATRIÉES À SINGAPOUR

Bien que la migration internationale des travailleurs qualifiés soit un phénomène qui prend de plus en plus d'ampleur en cette ère de la mondialisation, et un élément de premier plan dans la production des villes d'importance mondiale, les analyses de type classique ne lui ont pas accordé jusqu'à présent l'attention qu'elle mérite.

Les recherches récentes portent sur les mécanismes institutionnels qui déterminent la structure du transfert des compétences plutôt que sur l'expérience individuelle de ceux qui font partie du circuit international de la main-d'oeuvre. Les femmes en particulier ont généralement été confinées dans le rôle d'"épouses en remorque" et restent donc normalement invisibles dans le processus de la migration.

Au moyen d'une enquête par questionnaire et d'entretiens approfondis, les auteurs de cet article se sont efforcés de faire ressortir l'importance du rôle des femmes en montrant que ce sont des agents actifs qui savent mettre en jeu toute une gamme de stratégies lorsqu'il faut négocier le déplacement et s'adapter aux transformations qui en découlent au niveau du foyer, de l'emploi et de la communauté. L'article fait valoir que la migration de travailleurs qualifiés est un processus fortement différencié selon le sexe, engendrant des séries différentes d'expériences pour les hommes et les femmes qui y participent.

Si, chez les hommes qui s'expatrient, les déplacements internationaux sont souvent effectués pour des "raisons de carrière", leurs épouses connaissent fréquemment une dévalorisation de leurs fonctions productives et sont reléguées à la sphère domestique. Comme stratégie d'adaptation, les femmes qui s'expatrient se tournent souvent vers le domaine social et communautaire pour trouver des bases nouvelles à leur existence.

L'article attire aussi l'attention sur la diversité des "expériences chez les expatriés" : si les expatriés "occidentaux" ont tendance à recréer un monde plus exclusif en ayant largement recours aux appuis institutionnels, les expatriés "asiatiques" constatent qu'ils doivent apprendre à suivre des lignes de partage sociales et culturelles beaucoup plus fines entre eux-mêmes et la société qui les accueille.

HOGAR, TRABAJO Y COMUNIDAD: MIGRACIÓN INTERNACIONAL CALIFICADA Y MUJERES EXPATRIADAS EN SINGAPUR

Si bien en la era de la globalización la migración laboral calificada a través de las fronteras internacionales es un fenómeno cada vez más considerable y un importante componente de la producción en las ciudades globales, hasta ahora no se le ha concedido atención suficiente en los análisis tradicionales de las migraciones.

Recientemente se han investigado los mecanismos institucionales que rigen las características de la transferencia de aptitudes, más que la experiencia individual de formar parte del circuito laboral internacional. Las mujeres, en particular, se han visto generalmente relegadas al papel de "esposas remolcadas" y suelen permanecer invisibles en el proceso migratorio.

Basado en encuestas por cuestionarios y en entrevistas detalladas, este artículo trata de restablecer la importancia del papel de las mujeres presentándolas como agentes activos que adoptan una serie de estrategias en la negociación del desplazamiento y en la adaptación a las transformaciones consiguientes a éste en lo que respecta al hogar, al trabajo y a la comunidad. Defiende la idea de que la migración de trabajadores calificados es un proceso en el que el género de las personas adquiere gran importancia, que somete a distintos tipos de experiencias a los hombres y a las mujeres implicados.

Mientras que la circulación internacional representa con frecuencia un "desplazamiento favorable a la carrera" del hombre expatriado, es asimismo frecuente que las mujeres sufran una devaluación de sus funciones productivas y se vean relegadas a la esfera doméstica. Como estrategia adaptativa la mujer expatriada se suele refugiar en la esfera social y comunitaria en busca de una base para su vida.

El artículo señala asimismo la diversidad de las "experiencias de expatriación": mientras que los expatriados "occidentales" tienden a recrear un mundo más exclusivo obteniendo un fuerte apoyo institucional, los expatriados "asiáticos" se encuentran con que han de transitar por estrechas fronteras sociales y culturales entre ellos mismos y la sociedad de acogida.