

# **“The Money Magnet”- (Im)Mobility and Asian Temporary Labor Migrants in Israel**

**Robin Harper and Hani Zubida**

## **Abstract**

Two major questions occupy those interested in immigrant incorporation: “Why do immigrants come?” and “Why do they stay?” The second question is of paramount importance to receiving states, in particular because temporary labor migration regimes are designed for rotating, short-term infusions of labor. Host countries imagine great economic benefits from lower-cost migrant labor that makes few demands on the host country. Migrants imagine great riches and a speedy return home that often does not materialize. In this paper, we suggest how remittance practices both generate mobility and, simultaneously, enclose temporary labor migrants. The movement of money becomes a proxy, an unworded conversation, for the locus of their lives, their futures and their pasts. We examine how the movement of money shapes placemaking, emplacing migrants both in the receiving state and in the sending state, while displacing and catalyzing future migration. We show how, through remittances, migrants’ money is yet another form of transnationalism that exists, while the migrants themselves remain immobile. Our findings derive from analyzing the data of interviews with 22 Asian migrants in Israel. This a subset of a larger project conducted from 2010-2013 with 38 non-Jewish, non-Arab, temporary labor migrants from 11 countries, all of whom are resident in Israel.

Key Words: Remittances, Mobility, Immobility, Enclosure, Temporary Labor Migration, Israel

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## **Introduction**

As a result of globalization and the increasing ease of movement of capital and labor, every year millions of migrants seek work abroad. For many developing countries, exporting labor and moving their citizens abroad has become a major source of foreign exchange earnings. Remittances account for more than 400 billion dollars in transfers worldwide (Aga et. al., 2013). At the micro-level, the flow of remittances remains a critical component of sustenance, community investment, small business seed money, tuition fees and home improvement for families and communities; for remitters, this flow serves as a source of connection to the home community and as retirement savings (Harper and Zubida 2014a). These remittances are like magnets, attracting and repelling migrants to and from those left behind, and to and from the receiving state.

Remittances are a powerful economic motivator for migrants and their families. Money serves as a pull factor, drawing especially (although not exclusively) young, energetic people to leave home and seek ways to earn and to remit. Here, money is a means of mobility that draws individuals into migrant labor (Goldring, 2004; Guarnizo, 2003; Harper and Zubida, 2014a). However, that same money can also be a means of immobility. A significant number of migrant workers' families, villages and communities participate in enabling migrants to go abroad. Families and communities 'invest' in migrants' visas and/or travel costs, develop a network to transport migrants and provide startup money or shelter with relatives in the receiving state. This monetary and social support binds the migrant workers to the family (or community) in a socio-economic "contract" (Lucas and Stark, 1988). As part of this contract, migrant workers are expected to remit money to repay the startup and visa fees. Further, migrants may also be expected to pay someone in the home country to care for the migrants' children, parents, property or businesses while the migrants work abroad (Bénédicte De La Brière et al., 1997; Carrasco, 2010; Kankonde, 2010; Harper and Zubida, 2010b and 2014a). These startup funds are perceived as investments for the sender, but continued debt service and payment for services rendered financially tethers migrants to the home community, sometimes decades after the migrants' physical presence there has ended. As we will show, however, even as these connections create enclosure, they can also spur future mobility.

Magnets not only attract, they also repel. Ironically, both economic success and failure bind migrants to the receiving state. As one might expect, when migrants exceed financial expectations, they may remain in the receiving state. Like anyone, success is pleasurable and they want to continue to feel positive about their achievements. However, they also stay because the money is "too" good, dependable or necessary, to leave and face the anticipated financial struggle if those migrants returned

to their home countries. In contrast, when migrants are unable to remit the requisite agreed-on or expected amount of money, they may remain abroad, seeking an ever-elusive prize. Sometimes, they take out loans in the host country so that they can send the expected amount of money. The more loans they take to satisfy the needs from home or repay arrival costs, the longer they must remain abroad. The more loans they incur, the more tied they are to their lives abroad, in order to service the initial and subsequent loans (Raijman and Kemp, 2007; Semyonov and Gorodzeisky, 2008). Thus, the money intended to link labor migrants to families in the sending state now binds migrants to life in the receiving state.

Further, if the migrants form new families with members of the receiving state, they may settle. They can become tethered to the receiving state because of their children, who now experience educational trajectory and local language mastery (and lack in the native tongue), and because of the increasing "normalcy" of daily life that exists in the receiving state. Determining where 'home' is located after a protracted stay abroad becomes complicated. Although migrants think about and relate to the home country as 'home,' they observe that the locus of their lives is in the receiving country. Thus, there is a disconnect between what they believe and what they actually live. "Home" becomes less about making a living and more about making a life. Making money initiated the trajectory, but becomes a repeated step toward cementing that attachment and creating internal dissonance. To "return home," (i.e., to the home country), is perceived as a new rupture in life course with an anticipated struggle. Return would imply "going back," as if migrants could simply arrive at the place they had left, unchanged. And yet, because of time and life trajectories, migrants change. Further, the place that they left has evolved in their absence and may be unknown to children born abroad. To borrow from Green (2012:579) about borders, home is not simply a place that can be pointed to, but is the "outcome of a particular way of understanding, constructing and performing as 'home.'" "Home" is an idea and a practice, even a coping mechanism, but not necessarily a physical place. It is situated in the locus of one's life (which may or may not be where one is physically located) as well as in the practice of everyday life.

In this paper, we offer an examination of how remittances both generate mobility and, simultaneously, enclose temporary labor migrants in Israel. We examine the role of money, and specifically remittances, in generating and precluding movement and placemaking. We suggest that over time, money itself is a significant transnational factor linking and repelling migrants; generating mobility and immobility of migrant workers and their transnational families. In essence, the movement of money becomes a proxy for bodies, borders and space. Money movement becomes an unworded

conversation about the locus of lives, anticipated futures and nostalgic pasts. The movement of money emplaces and displaces migrants. Further, as a result of the movement of money, migrants themselves become emplaced, even as they displace others or serve as a catalyst for family members to move. Through remittances, migrants continue to move, even when their own physical bodies remain immobile.

**Temporary Labor Migrants in Israel**

Labor migration has been a constant fixture in Israeli life even before the founding of the state. Until the end of the 1980s, labor migrants were traditionally Arab laborers who commuted on a daily basis to Israel. After the first Intifada (Palestinian social uprising in Israeli-occupied territories in the end of the 1980s), the borders were sealed to Arab labor. Employers demanded replacement labor and the Israeli government began issuing visas to manpower companies to recruit temporary labor migrants. Policy-makers envisioned a rotating temporary foreign labor scheme, but like most temporary labor programs, the workers often become de facto permanent residents. It is estimated that as many as 350,000 non-Jewish, non-Arab “temporary labor migrants” coming from Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe are residing in Israel. About 120,000 of these migrants are legally present and working on valid visas (See Table 1). The bulk is comprised of irregular migrants with varying immigration statuses of illegal border crossing, visa overstaying, work without visas, etc. They work in agriculture, construction, caregiving (domestic work) and ethnic cookery. Israel maintains the second largest migrant labor population per capita of all states and is one of the world’s top 20 countries for sending remittances (Dilp et. al. 2011). Remittances from Israel, including from migrants, account for major flows of foreign exchange, estimated at more than \$3.7 billion (Dilp et. al. 2011).

**Table 1. 'Legal' Migrants in Israel: 2010**

Country of Origin	Total (in Thousands)
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Total	118.5
Asia Total	92.1
India	5.8
Turkey	2.7
Nepal	8.4
China	11.1
Sri Lanka	3.1
Philippines	30.9
Thailand	28.4
Other	1.7
Africa Total	0.4
Europe Total	24.7
Bulgaria	1.7
FSU	10.9
Germany	0.2
United Kingdom	0.1
Romania	10.8
Other	1.0
America Oceania Total	1.1
USA	0.4
Others	0.7
Unknown	0.2

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics

**Methods**

We conducted field research in south Tel Aviv, from 2010-2013, examining the meaning of being Israeli and how social borders had changed because of the presence of temporary labor migrants. In the process, we discovered how remittances and social remittances play important roles in community building and, ironically, destruction of home. We questioned how money, in general, and remittances, in specific, were used as a form of transnationalism and the making and unmaking of place. Our findings derive from analyzing data from interviews with 22 Asian migrants in Israel. This a subset of a larger project conducted from 2010-2013 with 38 non-Jewish, non-Arab temporary labor migrants from 11

countries, resident in Israel. We focused on Asian migrants, as they represent the dominant migrant population in Israel. To provide a biographical sketch of our interview partners, all but two were female. They had a mean age of 31. Three-fourths came from the Philippines, but also from India, Nepal and Myanmar. Their range of tenure was between 4 and 21 years, with a mean of 8.5 years. Three-fourths were domestic caregivers and the remainder worked in service professions. Initial contact was made through postings and outreach through partners at NGOs and snowballing. Interview partners were informed of their rights as research participants and gave consent before the interviews. Participants chose the language to be used for the interview (English, Hebrew). Interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed and coded according to standard grounded theory practices (Corbin and Strauss, 2007).

### **Mobility and Enclosure**

If we think of enclosure as the social processes that delimit and restrict movement of specific goods, people and ideas, and mobility as the social processes that enable and induce such movements (Cunningham and Heyman 2004), then enclosure and mobility are but two polar ends of the spectrum of movement. Migration means movement, but as Salazar (2010) aptly observes, most migrants become settled after an initial political border crossing. Migration is not an event but a process that generates important imaginary and discursive dimensions (Frello 2008). Emigration does not end the migration experience; it begins it. It is the border crossing - a one-time event - that forever redefines the individual as a migrant. This new migrant identity is constructed and reinforced by the everyday experiences as "other" and not through the unique border crossing moment that actually made them an immigrant. In this way, the argument by Cunningham and Heyman (2004: 294) that "...mobility is conceptually the inverse of enclosure..." ignores the reality that through mobility, one creates the opportunity for enclosure. As a result, it is part of the process, not an independent event at all. Further, although some processes/resources promote the ability to move, others curtail it. That is, the movement of one creates a vacuum in one place and displacement in others, setting other actors in motion; or, by filling that vacuum, one creates a new enclosure. Mobility is thus not the opposite of enclosure but an opportunity for enclosure.

Temporary labor migration is driven by the need for labor on the part of the receiving state and the need for money and employment on the part of the immigrant and his or her family. In most cases, there is a remittance function for migration. That is, the earnings are not for the exclusive use of the migrant but for his/her family and community. Money traverses borders and moves between the temporary migrant in the receiving state and the family (or community) in the sending state. Money

connects migrants to their families and/or communities. The movement of money can be viewed as a structure of social relations (Ingram, 1996); a social process, which, we argue, has the propensity to significantly impact the (im)mobility process. Increasingly, migration studies are examining the familial unit as a subject of study when thinking about migration and its effects (Bryceson and Vuorela, 2002; Zontini, 2004; Parreñas, 2005; Kasinitz et al., 2006; Carling, 2007). Carling (2007) even suggests that we rethink about remittances, not as one to one exchanges but as "intrafamily transfers." In this light, migration and its repercussions do not happen to an individual but to a web of interrelated individuals in a transnational family and/or community. The flow of remittances builds and deconstructs transnational families/communities, generating mobility and enclosure.

Hence, it is the search for money that is linked to generating mobility and then the lack of money that renders immobility. Mobility is "generated" after a migrant has enough money to share with his kin. However, this process can potentially spur a new cycle, or force the migrant to stay abroad to service the family's needs. Since the migrant has become an important asset to his family, he becomes immobile to fulfill those needs. The lack and availability (and promise of availability) of money generates mobility. And later, the lack and availability (and promise of availability) of money generates immobility.

Migration requires traversing many political, economic, social, cultural, linguistic, etc. borders. Sending money across borders is a form of transnationalism that constructs meaning beyond the obvious physical crossing. Money often serves as a proxy for presence. It is a substitute for other things, like caring, gifts, subsistence, relationship initiation and reinforcement, the promise of a future, investment, mark of attachment and even love (Cliggett, 2005; Kasinitz et al., 2006; Landale et al., 2006; Carling, 2006; Hammond, 2011). For labor migrants, remittances can serve all of these functions.

Remittances are a critical part of international, national, community and familial life. As noted, remittances are a multi-billion dollar affair (Aga et. al., 2013). Remittances are the largest or one of the largest foreign exchange earners for some states, outstripping all other forms of domestic production. As a result, from the perspective of the state, remittances raise the importance of migrants as a critical export commodity, which is as or even more important to the national economy than the export of goods (Magalit Rodriguez, 2010). Remittances provide a stream of funding for local development projects that generate local power sources, either divorced from state powers or filling in state inadequacies and thus propping up regimes (Binford, 2003; Gamburd, 2004). The remittances build the infrastructures that are the hallmarks of settlement and civilization, even when the home country cannot afford to do so. Within families, the movement of money allows for, at least at the symbolic

level, closeness and participation in daily life that belie the physical reality. The physical body may not move at all, yet through the movement of money, the labor migrant achieves the ubiquity of being both here and there at the same time.

Hence, we argue that money can and is used as a displacement agent. However, the concept of displacement commonly implies a degree of forced or involuntary migration (Malkki, 1995:495; as cited in Ballinger, 2012) and thus, by its nature, a negative experience. In contrast, we argue that 'displacement,' is not necessarily a negative event. Asian labor migrants in Israel use their money to displace their own families from the home country and improve their life chances, release themselves from financial remittance bondage and include others in their success.

It is imperative to remember that the decision to stay in the receiving state is not an independent decision. Even when migrants (and their families) choose for the migrant to remain in the receiving state, the final determination is in the state's hands. According to state policy, temporary labor migration is imagined as a delimited experience. When migrant workers decide to stay, by overstaying visas or adjusting status, migrants have little ability to influence the decision of the receiving state. In many states, like Israel, where deportation is the main mechanism to promote migration rotation and enforce state policy, labor migrants can have only the illusion of permanent existence. At any time, they may be forcibly uprooted and returned to a place they no longer know and/or belong to.

### **Money as a Mobility Vehicle**

We argue that the pull of economic opportunity for labor migrants serves as a catalyzing agent for mobility and, at the same time, enplaces and encloses. The lure of money is a powerful motivator. A female caregiver explains that it is money and the movement of money that mobilizes and continues mobility. The need for money for everyday items, as well as emergencies, is a powerful motivator to propel people into motion:

*"What will you do to buy food, to buy the luxury! If you want...to buy lipstick, if you want to... watch a movie, you want to buy a good house or good clothing and everything. But if there's no money it'll make you sad. And, your children are sick and you have no money, what will you do? You'll tell children don't worry, don't worry child at least we're happy but you don't have anything...to buy medicine... Then you will just cry and pray that to God that he will help child too, you know, to get well! But prayer is not everything...Without money, you cannot move."*

Successful emigrants who are able to accumulate wealth may serve as role models for other immigrants, enticing mobility. Family members join the migrant in the new state and now are responsible for their own affairs, as explained by a Filipina longtime resident:

*"I took care of my entire family. I have four sisters. All of them are married today but they were not back then. Three of them are here in Israel, working and married. So now I do not need to keep on sending money to my family."*

Likewise, successful migrants may also provide a connection to help form an anchor in the receiving country that helps others when they arrive in the receiving state, encouraging settlement. A migrant explains that she is the connection point, drawing her sisters and then helping them to settle and manage on their own. Her achievement allowed her to feel ready to bring her sisters to start on their own migrant story:

*"When I first arrived here I felt I can work and only then, after I histadarti (made it), I invited my sisters to come here to work."*

### **Money as an Enclosing Agent**

As time evolves, migrants find that they have less to return to and the lives that they left or thought they had been supporting in the sending country, no longer exist. This is not to say that transnationalism does not continue long after the migrant ceases having immediate family relations and land or business ownership in the sending country. People do long for their former lives and to return "home." However, relationships change over time and "home" may no longer exist, while beloved family and friend relationships change: people die, move or divorce; children leave home and start new lives; and sometimes, over time and space, people simply become estranged. Similarly, businesses fail or thrive; houses get built or redecorated; and land becomes useless or highly productive. Even extreme changes can happen: governments do fall and natural disasters can transform 'home' beyond recognition. The loss of immediate connections through natural and extreme changes further encloses the migrant in the receiving state and less physically in the lives of those left behind. Thus, as migrants become less economically present in the lives of their families and communities, they become less attached and in some cases detached. Hence, money both leads and follows the attachment/detachment. A caregiver, resident for almost two decades, explains that her connections with the Philippines are based on memory and culture, but not in daily life and thus she has loosened her ties to the Philippines and is establishing herself in Israel:

*"...the big difference...we will go there (to the Philippines) only to visit... It would be very different and very hard (to go to the Philippines) because I told you already, we don't have anything in the Philippines. We brought our family here. We don't have a business. We don't have a house in the Philippines. So we are relieved. We will stay in Israel."*

Further, through earnings accumulation in Israel, migrant lifestyle has changed and the ability to return to a lower standard of living is disconcerting and perhaps undesirable. A longtime caregiver who has children in both the Philippines and Israel observes that she has become attached to the receiving state in order to provide an improved standard of living for her family in both countries. In essence, migrants must leave to make any improvement and then, they must stay away in order to maintain that improvement. The new life standard that was created as a result of their mobility is now maintained as a result of their enclosure:

*"...and when they go home what kind of jobs will they have? Nothing. Who will take this old people?...There's a lot who already here fifteen years twenty years, spent most of their life here. They already have back pain! And everything, it goes up. It's more than you can afford, so we need to go out of the country so we can give more luxury, so we can afford to buy every needs for our family. If (someone) doesn't go outside of the country... we cannot do anything...so we stay here."*

Migrants note that the location of "home" is complicated: Migrants imagine "home" as the sending country, the place where their family of origin resides, but the place they live with their children or their surrogate communities is also home, even if the country in which that nuclear family home is located remains a foreign, sometimes foreboding, place (Harper and Zubida, 2010a). For those with children, the sending country becomes either an elusive place they cannot afford to return to, or a place that they long to visit, but not return to permanently, due to economic considerations. In this way, home becomes less an actual-physical place and more an idea. A Filipina caregiver notes that "return" means only a possible visit:

"You know when the school starts to finish, (my daughter) is asking me "Mommy, when we go to the Philippines?"...I told her maybe someday we will go (to visit), if we have good money...The life there, it is not easy like here...It is easier here to earn money... I started to live here with my family and we don't have anything in the Philippines...Only here..."

In contrast, those who send all of their disposable income and are not involved in the planning or use of the funds appear to be able to separate themselves from Israel more easily. Since there are no financial ties, no improvement in personal economic standing and no change in relationships or decision making over the disbursement of remittances, there is no reason to stay in Israel once they have achieved the familial economic goal or repaid familial and/or visa-based debts. Typical of those who sent all of their disposable income, an Indian caregiver explains that she has no control over how the money is spent nor is she interested in any control. She works to pay off debts, provide money for her family and then be released from obligation:

"I only send money. I don't care. I do not tell them what to do. They do what they want. They do whatever they want. I only want them to be happy. I didn't save one shekel. I will leave Israel with nothing. But, I am going to start my second shift. I am going to India to work next...I want to work there for me...in movies..."

Among the Asian migrants we interviewed, those who remitted (virtually) all disposable income and maintained little to no involvement in the disbursement of remittance funds intended to return to their home countries or continue on to other countries for labor migration. Those who maintained an ongoing dialogue about the use of funds or changed remittance patterns did not intend to leave Israel in accordance with their visas or initial plans. The contrast can be seen in the words of two caregivers. One, who sent all of her money to her family in the home country and will return to "India...without money!" She asserts that she will leave Israel because "I have nothing here." The other, who for years sent remittances but who lately has started to save for herself and her new family, sending only sporadic remittances, asserts that she will not return to her home country (Philippines) because "I have nothing there." This juxtaposition was seen regardless of the ethnic origin.

### **Generating Surrogate Communities**

In seeking work abroad, migrants often reside and interact with other migrants from vastly different ethnic backgrounds. They develop a social support network that is often based on economic fragility and similar needs. They help each another like family, although there is no kinship relationship. This need not be limited to the co-ethnic group and often stretches among Asian migrants. The migration setting allows the creation of surrogate communities or families that may substitute for the people left back home - as a longtime caregiver explained:

*"Yes, yes, yes, because we have a community in the church. We are helping. For example, there is, because here in Israel, not only in Israel, everywhere. There is something coming for example, there is one Filipino that is suffering from sick or illness or suffering from any problems, we are helping them. We are helping not only, we are helping them also with money. We are giving them money. And we are visiting them. We give our time...We have a lot of friends from Nepal also from India. We get along with each other and there are no problems because we are not always together. We just meet them in the park. We know them because we are neighbors in our in the same place. We live in the same place where we work so we just talk and just uh, say 'hi, hello.' Something like that and nothing else, but they are good to us because first you will feel a person if he has or she has something in mind against you. So, that's all."*

Asian migrants frequently commented that they found fellowship among those from Asian countries in ways that they did not find among non-Asians. A caregiver from India observes that:

*"... (If I see the migrant people, we are feeling very good that we are like us. They are not Israelis. This is the first feeling. Same work. Same feeling what I feel here. And whatever I have a problem, she has also. If she is not ready to share with anybody, I can say, it's like a little bit different but we have the same problems, same problems. Same situations. We are thinking the same and we are from Asia, Asian countries, so our emotions and out way of thinking is same. Same."*

Whether this sense of community and similarity would have been experienced before meeting in Israel, or if they would have felt a pan-Asian experience if they had not been treated as "workers" rather than as individuals or according to some other criterion like nationality or religion, is unclear. It is, however, clear that through their shared search for economic wellbeing and remittances, they were placed in similar situations that led to the possibility of becoming emplaced (and potentially enclosed) in a surrogate community.

### **Labor Market Changes**

Due to life cycle and other changes, for some it becomes impossible to return to a place and way of life that only exist in memory. A caregiver explains why people cannot return, even when they want to, as

the jobs that they would have taken are no longer available and they are not trained for the jobs that are available. They have spent their lives in Israel and therefore are unable to move back:

*"...and those people...are very afraid to go home, most of them because they don't have any option, when they go home, professionals or un-professionals whenever you go this is something already in yourself, when you go home you can still work in your profession! But these people...they're not educated so when they go home,...they do not have any more jobs and they already old, what job can they take? They cannot be a saleslady or anything! ...They already spent most of their time here in Israel...They cannot go back."*

### **Money as a Release from "Remittance Bondage"**

Temporary migrants may individually plan to return but, as families become accustomed to high standards of living due to remittance flows, they pressure migrants to stay in the receiving country and continue to remit (Harper and Zubida, 2014a; Cliggett, 2005). Many are expected to remit to pay for houses, education, healthcare, weddings, business startups, dowries, etc. Some temporary migrants accept these demands as their 'destiny' and keep working abroad, with the assumption that they are unlikely to get back to their home country; others attempt to get out of this enclosure and mobilize another family member to replace them and release them from settlement.

A female caregiver from India explains that her sister came to Israel seven years prior. She was the first family member to come to Israel for work. The sister does not want to return to India, as she asserts that she can make better money in Israel and has more freedom. For the first four years, the sister paid remittances, including \$10,000 for her own passage and then an additional \$4,000 for her sister's passage – illustrating the 'money magnet' phenomenon. Our research partner explains that her sister brought her to Israel to release her from "remittance bondage." She notes:

*"Since I was just made to come to Israel, so I came here. I have no idea of what I have to do. (My sister) told me, she told me before that I have to take care of one lady, old people, but I don't know what that is, even details. Nothing. And within one month, I was not prepared mentally, but I am here. My sister says now she helps to my family maybe four years and from three years she is not giving money to family she is keeping for herself... She bought apartment there in India and it's ready now and she paid 20 lakhs (thousand) for apartment and she is keeping on saving money for a business ...She bought an apartment in India but it remains empty. She will not stay in India, even after she gets married. She*

*will come back (to Israel)."*

One interview partner from India was brought to Israel to replace her older sister, who now wanted to save for her own future. The older sister was responsible for continuing remittances until the younger sister came and released her from her obligation. Family need did not end once the sister paid off debts and provided tuition for younger siblings. However, the responsibility could only be relinquished once someone else came to take the original person's place. The pull of remittance draws siblings (and others) to the receiving state. The desire to accrue savings after having paid off debts, or to provide for continuing family needs, means ever longer sojourns abroad and immobility. The continued search for money displaces and encloses family members who want to replace the soon-to-be-missing remittance income. All participate in the remittance cycle in order to support the family. In some cases, migrants take care of their immediate family members and eventually abandon support for extended family members. Still others discontinue remittances all together, regardless of whether they return to the sending country or stay in the host country.

### **Migration, Money and Transnationality**

Globalization, or the development of an integrated global economy marked by the movement of labor and capital, exerts tremendous pressure on individuals, families, communities and states. It provokes, distorts and cements new ways of life for all involved and all they touch. Yet, it is not just a question of continued physical mobility; it is rather marked by a restructured economic world order with a set of new movement rules. "This economic trend rests in turn on a range of social and political processes that lead to migration and displacement, including immigration policies and patterns of migration that produce spatially dispersed family networks." (Goldring 2004: 801). Rather than thinking about the individual seeking work abroad in the globalized world, we think of the migrant as a part of a "transnational family," in whose service he ventured abroad. Transnational families have been described as "families that live some or most of the time separated from each other, yet hold together and create something that can be seen as a feeling of collective welfare and unity, namely 'familyhood', even across national borders" (Bryceson and Vuorela, 2002: 3). Our data reveals that the process of transnationality is not solely based on a physical notion of movement. It is also, significantly, based on the movement of money, mainly remittances. Movement and enclosure result from the circulation of money among transnational family members.

Migrants are more concerned with their social status in their community of origin, rather than the one they have in their new residence. One way to maintain status is through the way remittances are used (Lucas and Stark, 1988). Hence, migrants are likely to send regular remittances, either to pay off debts, send immediate infusions to needy families, provide investment capital or care for those left behind. Lucas and Stark (1988:472) suggest that these infusions are related to identity, writing "there are numerous indications that, for quite a long period of time after moving to the urban sector, migrants retain a strong degree of identification, allegiance, and social connectedness with their village of origin." Over time, immigrants' social status emanates from their standing in the sending country. For their own self-esteem, migrants continue to send funds and to interact with the family/community in the sending state (Harper and Zubida, 2014a). Therefore, it is up to the remaining family in the home country to maintain the migrant worker social-status while he or she is away. This allows families back home to maintain their economic and social status while the migrants are abroad (Mobrand 2012; Mazzucato 2012). They do this through consumption (Lucas and Stark 1988), thus forcing a stream of remittances to maintain status.

However, this mobility-enclosure dyad is not simple. As people develop transnational affiliations, the locus of their lives becomes unmoored. As a result, remittance patterns can change. For example, what happens when a younger sibling tells the older how to manage money? How does the relationship transform when the parent is dependent on the child? How is the family power structure affected when a female is suddenly in an economic power position, whether by virtue of sending money or being the recipient with control over how to spend? And, of course, what happens when funds are not used as intended? Or when they are misused? These kinds of scenarios may create a fundamentally new power structure within the family and can alter who is the head of household and the "location" of the household. That is: is the home the locus of familial interaction? If so, then the spatial dispersion of earner and recipient spreads home over borders and time.

Longer stints abroad are correlated with reduced spending of remittances on larger investments, like housing or productive economic ventures (Mooney, 2003). A lack of need for visibility is also related to remittance curtailment (Harper and Zubida, 2014b), as are changes in family structure (Harper and Zubida, 2014a). As money moves less, physical transnationalism transpires less frequently, even as symbolic and occasional bursts of transnationalism continue. Migrants may long for return to the home country. But, migrants also expect to see the fruits of their years of remittance. Even when the family used the funds for whatever purpose the migrant may have designated (build a house, buy a business, send children to school, etc.), the family still needs funds to meet the higher living standards

to which they have become accustomed. As a result, new migrants must go abroad to supplement the family income (Hammond, 2011; Semyonov and Gorodzeisky, 2008).

Remittance practices set movement and enclosure in complex transnational relations. The moving between dispersed stationary individuals, families and communities develops interwoven social and economic histories that shape mobility and immobility (Vertovec, 1999; Brettell, 2003, Semyonov and Gorodzeisky, 2008; Paerregaard, 2009; Hammond, 2011). Through remittances, the migration experience is shared; families and/or individuals become part of the (im)mobility web. Through the development of these connections, and specifically, those emerging from the movement of money, goods and services, these stationary individuals, families and communities can be dislodged and swept into transnational movement (Guarnizo, 2003, Massey and Akresh, 2006).

Migrants do not always choose to leave or stay of their own volition. The state plays a major role in this decision with various visa/citizenship related public policies. Magalit Rodriguez (2010) reveals that states design national labor export regimes similar to previous national goods exports, encouraging mobility. Governments design labor import policies for their own political reasons, some of which have nothing to do with a need for labor (Rajjman and Kemp, 2007).

Other non-state actors also can pull and repel migrants. Manpower agencies have a vested financial interest in continuing to collect placement fees (work contract fees in practice) to bring workers to Israel (Bartram, 1998; Rosenhek, 2006). Similarly, employers accustomed to lower wage migrant workers would also like to keep the migrants in motion. However, in some cases, money is the key component to engender enclosure. Migrants can become shackled by debts, debts to serve debts and familial pressure for more money, goods, investments and even the wish to maintain a rising standard of living. These issues cement migrants to their host locations, preventing the ability of movement. Over time, migrants can accumulate great debt as they accrue increased financial burdens. Migrants may become the sole providers of income for the families in the sending country. They may further have to pay off the cost of coming to Israel (i.e., work permit, travel costs, start-up costs, etc.) They may stay in order to make enough money to pay off debts or to secure their families once debts are paid off. In such cases, some migrants overstay their visas and fall out of status. Although they know that they risk arrest, prison, fines and ultimately deportation, they lack the ability and/or willingness to move because of financial obligations to their transnational family members. To return home before paying off debts would assure that the family remains in penury. If the migrant stays, the migrant may forgo remittances in order to pay off debts. Here, it is very likely that the family will attempt to replace the money source and send additional members abroad to secure the family's

financial situation. Money is a significant variable for the mobility and immobility of migrants, their families and their transnationality.

Temporary labor migration is often described as a time of extreme self-abnegation, in which migrants sacrifice and not infrequently are abused or cheated by unscrupulous employers, all suffered in the name of some higher goal. But, we observe that it can also be a time of personal struggle, growth and liberation. Migrants can become "addicted" to the higher incomes and their elevated position (vis-a-vis their families), and also, disconcertingly, to their positions of subservience (vis-a-vis their employers and the dominant culture in the receiving state). As migrants get attached to these changed positions, their families are also attached to high incomes, feelings of freedom to make decisions and changing roles. The need for consumption and the promises of an upwardly mobile future can develop into what has been called a migrant "syndrome," if local conditions do not improve or opportunities do not materialize (Reichert, 1981; Binford, 2003). This situation further cements the migrant's immobility in the receiving state.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Drawing on the experiences of Asian temporary labor migrants in Israel, we examined how the transnationality of money encourages or discourages the movement of people and place-making. We found the following mechanisms to be related to (im)mobility: money as a mobility vehicle, money as an enclosing agent, surrogate communities, labor market changes and finally money as a release from "Remittance Bondage." These findings encourage a more holistic view of transnationalism; to look beyond an individual's transnationalism and include both the transnationalism of the family and money itself. This transnational experience for the family results in the making and unmaking of place, from the family in the sending state, shattered and scattered, to the migrant wistfully thinking of "home" while living a life among others abroad.

For "temporary" migrants, remittances serve as a proxy for the conversations about presence and return, participating in daily life even when physically they are absent. Further, success can draw other family members into motion, as can the decision to cease regular remittances. Sometimes, temporary migrants become de facto permanent residents, despite all hopes to the contrary. Failure in the new state may also cement a migrant into settlement, hoping for a better outcome or fearing retribution and in some cases disappointment from not living up to expectations. Further, even those who fail may become immobile and settled because of the need to support the rightness of their decision to seek work abroad (Hirschman 1970). Secondly, the money itself is transnational, even when

the physical bodies do not move. In traversing borders, the money serves as a proxy for the migrants, conveying meaning about enclosure and mobility and place.

In all of these cases, the initial search for funds and the flow of remittances spark changed relationships and spatial reorganization of the transnational family. Money and its capacity influence people's experiences of place and the spatial relationships between families. Money moves when family members remain still, and it remains still when family members move. It is the money that is as, if not more, transnational than the migrants searching for it. We note that time may also play a role, and that with the dissolution of a way of life in the sending country and the emergence of a settled life in the receiving state, migrants may see little need to return to the sending country beyond occasional vacations, pilgrimages and symbolic visits. More research should be done to examine how the flow of remittances, amounts of money and timing of infusions affect movement and enclosure. Further examination should also delve into how both the accumulation of savings and the long-term lack of accumulation affect the decision to remain in the receiving state.

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