

# Mobile to Work Overseas But Stuck at the Host Family: Enigma of Transnational Home Helpers' Mobility in Hyper-Modernizing Ageing Societies

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Most Asian societies follow much of global ageing momentum. But due to (female) labour shortage and the preferred caring for the elderly at home, the import (and mobility) of guest nursing/domestic helpers becomes an attractive social yet immigration policy option. The flexible labour regime in East Asia enables foreign home helpers (FHH) to take care of the elderly: over 240,000 FHH are working in Kong Kong, whilst Taiwan employs around 150,000 FHH to serve the frail aged; Japan experiments it thought to a very limited scale of less than a thousand. Hence, FHH serve the aged 24-hour as they live-in, paralleling the 24-hour global production regime under globalization! Examining the implications of a flexible labour regime for caring the ageing population and the emergence of new, nomadic, sub-classes of social citizenship and temporal residency, in a globalizing world, this paper provides illustrations from Asian communities to highlight the new labour process of home helping; ending with critical remarks on non-governmental organizations' transnational advocacies for FHH's socio-economic rights.

**Key Words :** Ageing Society, Domestic Helpers, Elderly Care, Flexible Labour Process, Migrant Workers

## 1. Modernization-driven Asia's Demographic Transitions: Global-Asian Ageing

Demographic transitions become a global challenge, as the ageing momentum is at its high speed in recent decades, problematically juxtaposing the economic liberalization of the globalization project (Lai 2008a/b; *The Economist* 2009). To put the ageing dynamism in its historical place, the United Nations estimates in 2007 (UNPD 2007) noted that the societal ageing ratio (percentage of those age 65 or above in the total population), in the developing countries, was a low at 6% in 2005, but was forecast to rise to 7.5% in 2020 and 14.6% in 2050. The most recent estimates by the United Nations (2009) confirm such trend too (see Fig.1, Fig.2 and Fig.3). Hence, their elderly ratio was forecasted to double in

around 30 years.

Since the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, global ageing challenge is not just noted by the United Nations' institutions, UN Population Fund, World Health Organizations and alike; but recently, it has repeatedly stressed by the U.S. Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS 2009) as having a strategic significance for human survival if the problem is not probably dealt with. According to the United Nations' World Population Prospects (U.N., 2009, p.x) predictions, from 2009 to 2050, the number of persons aged 60 or over is expected almost to triple, globally, increasing from 739 million in 2009 to 2 billion by 2050. For the same period, a correspond increase from 65% to 79% of the world older person live in the less developed regions. Here, the demographic challenge is not only

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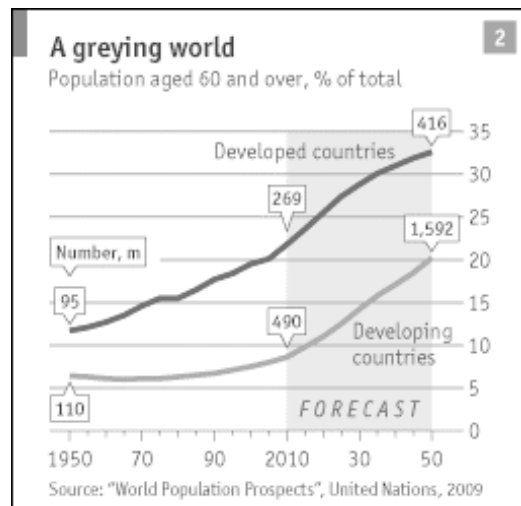
for the developed countries with a decline birth rate and prolonged longevity, but also for the NIEs which follow similar, though at a speedy rate, of the ageing trend, as the ageing momentum is at its highest in recent decades, East Asia in particular (Lai 2007, 2008a). China is one of such examples that, due to its one-child policy since 1978, it has over 12% of the population aged 60 or above in 2009; but will gradually rise to 33% in 2050 (*Xinhua News Agency*, 4.July 2009). The critical problems for ageing society in developing economies are many, not least are the ‘cash’ – the financing (in terms of health care and pension system) and ‘care’ of the fragile aged (CSIS 2009, Jackson, et al. 2009).

**Fig.1: Global Ageing Table** (aged 65 or above as % of the total population) **2009**

Japan	23%
Italy	20%
Sweden	19%
Germany	18%
Norway	17%
Spain	17%
Austria	16%
France	16%
Swiss	16%
U.K.	16%
Netherlands	14%
USA	13%
Australia	13%
Canada	13%
<b>Hong Kong</b>	<b>12%</b>
<b>Taiwan</b>	<b>11%</b>
<b>South Korea</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Singapore</b>	<b>19%</b>
<b>China</b>	<b>10%</b>

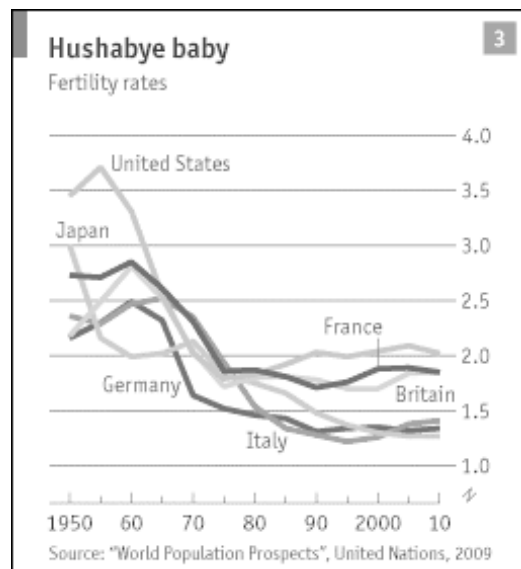
(Source: Lai 2008a, authors' updates)

**Fig.2: A Greying World**



(The Economist, 27.June 2009, Special Report, p.4)  
[http://www.economist.com/specialreports/displaystory.cfm?story\\_id=13888045](http://www.economist.com/specialreports/displaystory.cfm?story_id=13888045)

**Fig.3: Global Fertility Drops**



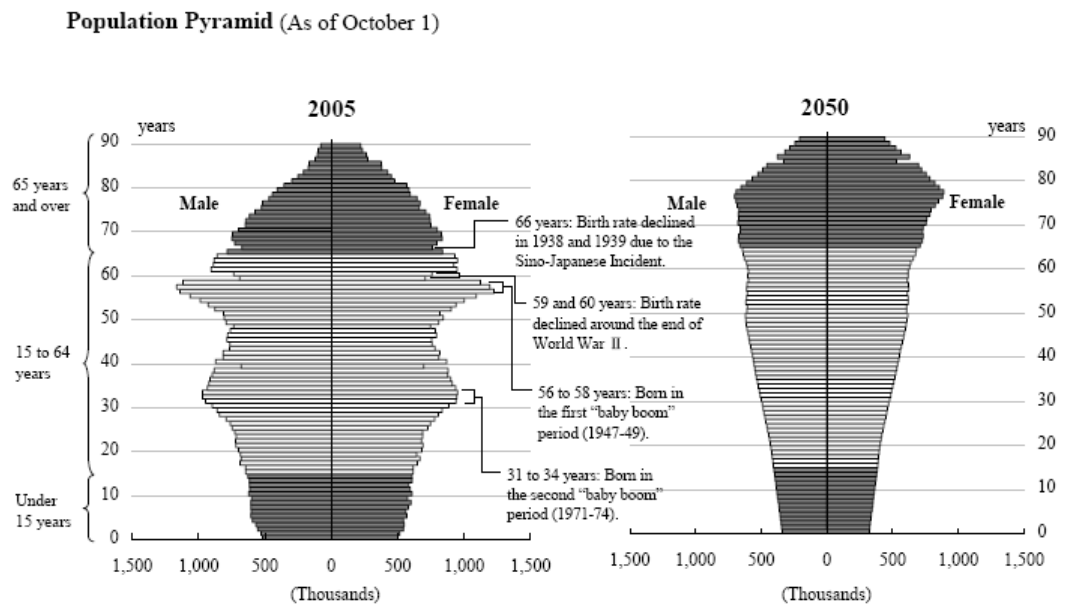
(The Economist, 27.June 2009, Special Report on Ageing Population, p.5)  
[http://www.economist.com/specialreports/displaystory.cfm?story\\_id=13888118](http://www.economist.com/specialreports/displaystory.cfm?story_id=13888118)

Compared with ageing process in the Western developed economies, demographic transitions began much later in East Asia than in the West (Mason and Kinugasa 2008), the momentum is more dramatic with a hyper and speedy one (Lai 2008a, Tsuno and Hooma 2009). In less than 30 years, demographic transitions occurred in Japan and all Asia's NIEs: South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore. These countries have been transformed from the high birth and death rate population model to a low birth rate (less than 2 in terms of Total Fertility Rate, TFR) and ageing one. Japan had 22% of the total population aged 65 or above, whilst Korea achieved

11% in 2009 (Birdsall, et al. 2001; Rostow 2000; Lai 2007, 2008a; NIPSSR 2009).

Historically, Japan led the post World War II rapid economic development in East Asia, from mid-1960s to 1980s, and later followed by South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore in the 1980s to 1990s. They are undoubtedly representatives of the phenomenal *East Asian Economic Miracle*, a term coined by the World Bank (World Bank 1993). Here, the positive role of the baby boomers at the post World War II industrialization is important, supplying sufficient labour force for economic development (See Fig.4 and Fig.5).

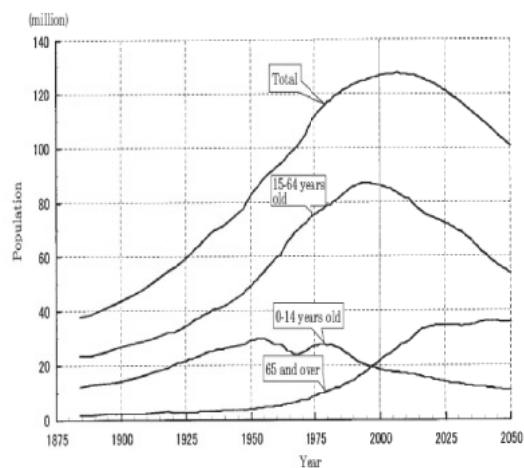
**Fig.4: Japanese Ageing Society** (Population Pyramid, 2005, 2050)



Source: Statistics Bureau, MIC; Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare.

(Source: NIPSSR 2006)

**Fig.5: Demographic Challenge for Japan and likely for Asia NIEs**



(Source: NIPSSR 2006)

The demographic transitions in Japan (since 1960s), South Korea and Taiwan (since 1970s) towards ageing society have been very much due to natural growth – all three countries are a “closed” population system with minimal immigration (less than 1.5% of the population). Whilst the population systems in Hong Kong and Singapore are somewhat relatively “open”, with large immigrants throughout the second half of 20<sup>th</sup> Century. In spite of the differences in the population systems, all economies experience demographic transitions towards ageing, with a decline of fertility and mortality (Mason and Kinugasa 2008).

As demographic transitions developed, there is, and will be, shortage of manpower to take care for the ageing family members; especially to fulfil the virtue of caring the aged in Asian familial-cultural ethos.

## 2. The Thousand-Year-Old Calling for Filial Piety in 21<sup>st</sup> Century?

Confucianism defines socio-cultural ideals for East Asia; China, Korea and Japan in particular. One of the key virtues of Confucianism is *Filial Piety* (FP) – taking care of the ageing parents in one’s life course. The obvious virtues are shown in the Chinese classics, the *Twenty-Four Paragon of Filial Piety*. Here, social reciprocity and familial loyalty, following Confucian norms, attribute to Filial Piety (FP) as both virtue and behaviours (Meyer 2000).

With blood-tie, the sense of belonging and

togetherness and the synergy of time, space and the upward oriented inter-generational social reciprocity, define FP. The most obvious, or the extreme manifestation / demonstration of FP, presents in funeral activities – customs, ritual and rule; yet the customization of funeral can easily move into a service industry. More specifically, funeral ceremony marks the end as well as the new beginning of FP (Lee 2003, Suzuki 2000).

Yet, there is a global trend of lowering fertility rate as rapid economic development: all Asian NIEs have been experiencing a significant drop of total fertility rate (TFR) to less than 1.5 per woman (K-S.Chang 2003, M-C.Chang 2004, Eu 2003, Golini 2003, Tu 2003, Yap 2003). Hence, the supply side of FP (sons and daughters) is sharply reduced following the drop of TFR. In this section, socio-economic familial changes will be discussed in relation to the FP practice – caring the elderly.

### 2.1 Work-Family Time / Space / Intergenerational Caring: Burnt Out and Overloading?

Traditional role model for caring the aged within the realm of FP has its limits, if not withering away: a nation-wide survey by the Japanese Ministry of Health and Welfare in 1994 found that 60% of the care-givers thought their burden was too much. Furthermore, the ever-increasing demand for paid job performance and the service for family life are making heads of family (women in particular) overloading, if not burnt out; the burnt out tendency will be much increased if the duty of FP is included in the consideration.

This is in strong contrast to the early 1970s that women were willing to scarify for FP; Salaff (1995) has rightly pinpointed, and it has been well researched by feminist literature, that the down-side of FP in Asian societies and family (in the case of Hong Kong) during industrialization era, has been exploiting the women’s life chance.

To cope with external demands that the family members are differentially exposed to the burden of responsibility, women (the never-married daughters and/or daughters-in-law) are mostly positioned to bear the FP responsibility (Sung 2003, Zhan & Montgomery 2003). For Chinese patriarchy culture, which is contradictory in nature, the women mostly have to be scarified for familial goals (Meyer 2000).

Under a more flexible, globalizing, production regime, workers have to moving into different localities for job and to engage in a 7-day-and-24-hour working cycle – people are more nomadic yet less available for taking care of the

ageing parents.

More specific, the modern societal and economic demands for family (and its members) are more than ever under the conditions of labour market restructuring and uncertain economic outlooks. Women participation in economy becomes a norm yet this undermines the time-space arrangement for managing work-family life. Except family gifted by economic and cultural assets, most families in present economic conditions (ups and downs of business cycle) are under stress, though most families can still be functional but not healthy.

## **2.2 People (Women) choose their own Life Course: FP as withering Old Virtue?**

For younger generations, the ideas of planning and choosing how to write his/her own biography in many ways fits into the neo-liberal economics of consumer sovereignty: people have the idea that their own actions determine their own success or failure – definitely this orientation is exactly the spirits (ideology) of *Asian Miracle* and its instrumentalism for welfare development (Kwon 2005). But the built-in effect of this orientation is the repetitive planning (for planning sake) without the moral calling (have to get married and give birth) for actual experiencing the social reality on the one hand, and the procrastination of the social life-task (responsibility) in the name of continuing learning, life-long education. All these increase the tendency for de-standardization of life course, developmental tasks and moral obligations that have not been taking up by younger generation – these are the inertia for those kid-adults to moving on to take up social (citizenship) responsibility, as well as the familial one of FP (Lai & Abe 2005).

More specific, economic restructuring fosters a sense of uncertainty, particularly in labour market: job security and career development for people; particularly for the younger generation. This sense of uncertainty is paradoxically anchored with the ever-increasing calculative, rational planning for possible future work and familial engagements (FP against which job, where to live, with whom for courtship and marriage, etc.).

The systematic calling for planning future is not just affecting the younger one, the middle-age workers are called upon for retraining, as well as their continuing education (Beck 2000). The choice biography concept implies not just young people, but also the ageing ones, to plan for their own (not historically defined, standardized life course). All these exercises are not just cognitive-mental one,

but are being institutionalized into everyday life that people are engaged in the projection, planning and evaluation of their own life course – the biographization of life course (Vinken 2004, Mayer 2004).

Helping the biographization of life course of younger generation are the state policy and new family wealth and outlook in late 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Both the state and the upwardly mobile, better-off family (in comparison with their previous cohort) dynamics reinforce the delaying and exit strategies of the younger generation to take up formal socially expected role for adulthood, fatherhood / motherhood... as well as FP. On the other hand, the apologetic and sympathetic attitudes of the parents upon their adult-kid (who have married) help the formulation of the alternative FP (as service) delivery. Furthermore, the developmental state's further extension of higher education (postgraduate level), equal opportunities for men and women, and the promotion of progressive rights for women, also reinforce the personalized, individual choice for alternative life course.

In short, the global system-demanded high mobility (working across-borders) and flexibility (working at home and off-hour over time work) of the labour is the embryo for disruptive family life cycle: late marriage, never marriage or co-habitation, or no FP duties, reflecting the individualistic lifestyle orientation, as well as the lifestyle options-seeking and experimentation for both sexes (particularly the case for those who want to be 'career' women).

## **2.3 Professionalization of Elderly Care: Short-Cut to, or Short-Circuit of, FP?**

Thanks to economic growth, professionalization of nursing care for elderly seemingly is a way of FP sub-contracting: the state funded welfare agencies sometimes reinforce this trend – perhaps the more extreme form is the so-called 'Social Hospitalization' (cf. Lai 2001, Wu 2004, MHLW 2008).

Adjusting and adaptive to the ever-increasing care-burden (short cut to, and short-circuit) of FP will become a permanent feature of caring the aged, in our hyper-modern life course. In reality, professional care protocols (regulations on visitors) are more often than not, unintentionally limit the extent of FP. Or, in its variations, professionalism legitimises a regime of FP sub-contracting; for instance, mobile-ambulance (day/time) caring regime in the so-called community caring regime. In short, the state intervention shapes the very different, mostly with unintended consequences, form of caring regime and therefore FP can be negotiable and

adaptive, even following the logic of marketization (Lai 2007, Lan 2000).

Distancing from their traditional role of familial carer, in a highly competitive society, women have to work and be independent – that is the new form of the (Western state) sponsored feminism. They gain money from paid work, and renegotiate the caring role with the husband or their parents. Yet, daughters-in-law turn to the employment of waged caregivers not only because of their shortage of time and to lessen the burdens of labour, but also to retrieve some autonomy from the authority of their mothers-in-law (Lan 2002, Kim, et al. 1991, Kim & Kim 2003, Liu, et al. 2000).

For caring the ageing population, in Asian societies excepting Japan, the use of guest/foreign domestic labour is more than obvious. More recently, in Hong Kong, it is not uncommon that in private middle-class nursing home, foreign home helper (FHH) are also assisting the more formal case, though the children and relatives of the aged do visit them regularly; isn't it a new version of caring regime powered by mobile guest workers or outsourcing and/or subcontracting of elderly care?

The caring regime for out-sourcing and sub-contracting regime is seemingly functional and coupling with the state-advocated familism, which emphasizes on the quality of care and less-resources for better-quality of family life, in open (labour) market where efficiency and timeliness are the key for success. Yet, the adoption of FHH in family and/or community life is becoming a norm in Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan, for this, Japan is timely considering this option to cope with labour shortage in the long term care for ageing population.

#### 2.4 The Borrowed (?) Filial Piety in Taiwan

To highlight the new modus operandi of caring the ageing population, we take the case of Taiwan as example.

The recent (2008) estimates for the aged (65 or above) population were 10% of the total population, with the long term nursing care service need for the ageing population is ca. 396,000 senior adults, and it is projected in 2028, the aged (65 or above) population will reach 22.5% of the total population, with the nursing care needs of 811,000 elderly (*United Daily News*, 13.July 2009). The responsibility for caring the frail (396,000) aged persons is unequally divided by three major human labours, of the local (semi-)professional agencies (caring 50,000 elderly), 168,000 FHH-supported home stay and the family members' supported home stay for 180,000 aged

persons. (*United Daily News*, 29.May 2009).

Since 1992, with the regime for the certified nursing care needs by the health authority or professional, the importation of guest nursing helper (the FHH equivalent) has been the major source (a form of FP outsourcing) of human resources taking care of the fragile aged, and in 2008, the total numbers of FHH were 168,000.

For many reasons known, the quality of elderly nursing care by the FHH has been questioned, that those aged persons under the FHH care have high prevalence for hospital admission and poorer quality of health (*United Daily News*, 31.May 2009).

The latest migrant workers statistics available in June 2009 (see Fig.6) showed that out of the total 335,665 migrants population, the (mostly female) nursing care workers accounted for 172,393, with the majority origins from Indonesia (117,200), Vietnam (31,000) and the Philippines (22,400).

But the labour rights of the guest workers are not protected within the labour law in Taiwan – their official social rights are minimally attached to the norms of labour market. This neglect of, or the abuse on, guest workers are among hosting societies in Asia (Law 2002, Lyons 2005). Hence, they are the sub-classes of semi-normal citizenship in their host countries. More critically and in spite of the global recession which has stopped the inflow of guest workers to Taiwan, the demand for guest migrants-embedded nursing care for ageing population has never been matched, and the trend for increasing migrant nursing care worker from overseas is more than prevalent (see Fig.7).

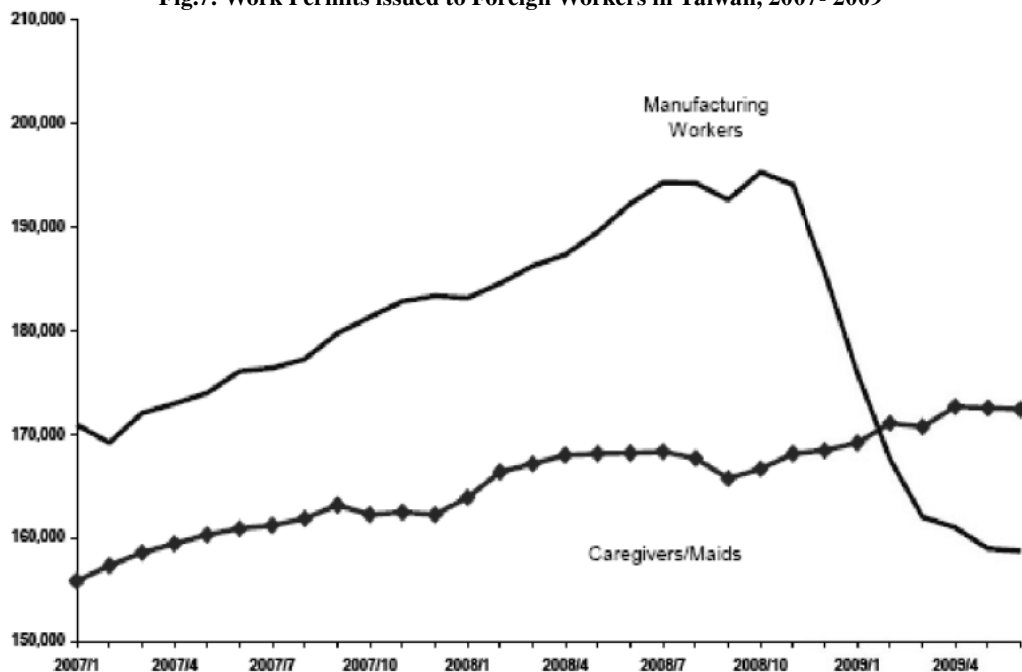
**Fig.6: Work Permits Issued by Taiwan by Industry and Share of Four Main Countries of Origin of These Permits, 2007-2009**

	November 2007	November 2008	June 2009
<b>Caregivers/Maids</b>	<b>162,472</b>	<b>168,113</b>	<b>172,393</b>
Indonesia	62%	66%	68%
Vietnam	22%	20%	18%
Philippines	15%	14%	13%
Thailand	1%	1%	1%
<b>Manufacturing Workers</b>	<b>182,813</b>	<b>194,052</b>	<b>158,728</b>
Indonesia	6%	7%	8%
Vietnam	18%	25%	28%
Philippines	33%	31%	28%
Thailand	43%	37%	36%
<b>Construction Workers</b>	<b>8,696</b>	<b>6,388</b>	<b>4,544</b>
Indonesia	1%	1%	1%
Vietnam	9%	10%	12%
Philippines	7%	4%	3%
Thailand	84%	85%	84%

Source: Taiwan Council of Labor Affairs.

(Source: Fix, et al. 2009, p.55)

**Fig.7: Work Permits issued to Foreign Workers in Taiwan, 2007- 2009**



Source: Taiwan Council of Labor Affairs.

(Source: Fix, et al. 2009, p.54)

### 3. Familial Responsibility Outsourcing under Flexible Regional Divisions of Labour

The ideologically driven neo-liberal global project, i.e., the creation of global free market and the dominance of Anglo-American capitalism within world's economic regions, has been cemented by networks of Transnational Corporations (TNC). In addition, free market capitalism is reinforced within the frameworks of global economic institutions, like WTO, IMF, World Bank and G8, which enable the further deregulation, privatization, structural adjustment programs, and limited government. The globalization project is by default a regime of migrating (free flow of) labour supplies. But the globalization processes hence have put state-society at very peculiar position, as both exposed to the challenges of 'external' forces: capitals, goods, labour (and jobs) are more mobile than the previous regime of global order.

#### 3.1 Contradictions of the Globalization Project – Social Dualism in the Locality

Globalization processes are problematic and tend to polarize socio-economic life chance of people – this has been confirmed by the *Report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization* (WCS DG 2004). Two contesting views on the globalization project: globalization is regarded as a benign and automatic force that fosters better economic benefits for everyone, even the poorest group can be better off. This is in strong contrast to the political extremes of the Left and Right, that for the Left: unbridled capitalism does produce effects of exploitation of the weak and socio-ecological degradation, and for the Right: the malignant forces of globalization engender xenophobia, the demising local people's jobs, culture, language and hence identity (Milanovic 2003).

Since early 1990s, most of the nation states have to champion its project for economic liberalization, for embracing the global free market capitalism. They adopt the international financial institutes (IFI, the World Bank and IMF) recipe for reform in macro economic policies, in order to make their economies more competitive. Their strategies are the deregulation of international capital flows and trades, and the re-making of (the once protected or socially guaranteed) labour market into a deregulated (less rigid, more dynamic and more flexible) one. The socio-economic consequences of these reform initiatives are widely different among different countries. With the exception of

the Asian Industrializing Economies (South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore) and China, most developing economies are not adjusting well with the globalization project. On the other hand, most of the developed capitalist economies were suffered from the sluggish economic growth, ironically resulting from the deregulation of capital markets - which weakened the relationship between banking and industry (Navarro, et al. 2003, Huber and Stephen 2001).

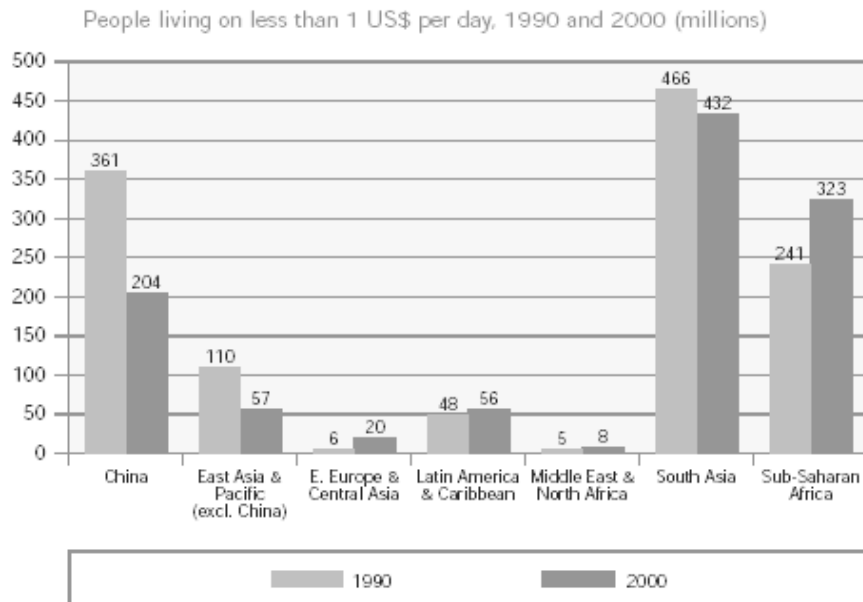
Taking the globalization discourse seriously has also reinforced the political ideologically driven reform in the so-called welfare state in the developed economies, but most of the reforms are not successful as judged by their fellow citizens. Whilst for most part of the developing economies, the globalizing forces have not helped them much either. With the exception of China, global poverty has not been improved during the globalization era in 1980s and 1990s. The number of poor (less than US\$1 per day) has fallen in Asia, but risen elsewhere: it is roughly doubled in Africa – the figure is about one in three now (see Fig.8); this is in line with the trend of widening global inequality (see Fig.9)! At this historical conjuncture, the calling for a more human and fair mode of globalization is timely.

#### 3.2 Migrant Foreign Home Helpers as Sub-Class of Nomadic (Global) Social Citizenship?

Welfare rights in welfare state have been much theoretically anchored upon TH.Marshall's concept of social rights – an extended, 20<sup>th</sup> century capitalist state financed basic welfare provisions, yet integrated part of citizenship rights from civil and political rights won in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (Holmwood 2000). This logic of upgrading welfare citizenship is, to a large extent, confirmed by the first Asian modernization countries, Japan. The fully developed welfare state in the post-war era highlights the state's project for full social protection against developmental risks of human society: despite the decommodification of various sectors and services available for individual citizens with heavy state's funding, social security measures retain and enhance individual's ability to work (for the reproduction of labour), stabilize economic cycle and crisis, constituting nationhood with people solidarity – the very notion of citizenship – cum- social contract.



**Fig.8: Global Poverty**



Source: World Bank, *Global Economic Prospects 2004*.

(Source: WCSDG, 2004, p.45)

**Fig.9: Global Inequality**

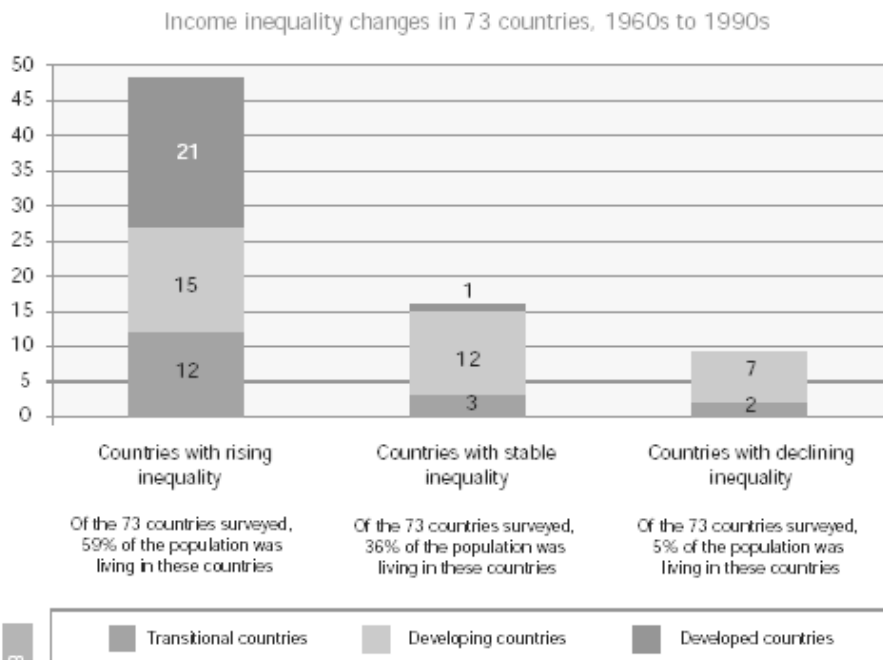


Figure 18

Source: Giovanni Andrea Cornia and Sampsa Kiiski, "Trends in Income Distribution in the Post-World War II Period: Evidence and Interpretation", WIDER Discussion Paper No. 89, UNU-WIDER, Helsinki, 2001.

(Source: WCSDG, 2004, p.44)

The welfare state perhaps once worked highly efficient for one's nation! In most cases, when the nation state has a somewhat closed system of demography, static and territorial bound socio-economic development, social citizenship is a taken-for-granted as a basic way of life for most residents/citizens. Yet, in the operationalization of nation state's citizenship, it is much a historical shaped, time and space (in terms of race-ethnicity, birth place and/or residence) specific socio-political relationship between nation state and the individuals.

On the other hand, the *East Asia Miracle* demonstrates the alternative to social development that socio-economic progress with people's loyalty and hope for the future – the legitimacy of the governing state, can be derived from social contract without a fully developed social (welfare) citizenship regime. Hence welfare citizenship could be decoupled from the labour market social contracting, as long as social contract(s) between the labour (workers) and capital (the firms / government as employer) can work-out a synergy in the 'compressed' modernization phase of rapid economic growth (Chiu & So 2005). But the challenge for the *East Asia Miracle* emerges when the rigidities in labour market (the social contract) are tearing down by globalization forces.

More specifically, when the influences of global market (hyper-mobility of capitals, goods and jobs) in general and competitive labour forces in particular are essential for one nation state's survival in global capitalism (shifting from fordism to post-fordism, as well as the global factory network of production), the once accepted derivation of economic benefits for the welfare state is mostly questioned and weighted against the burden of welfare (high costing), rigidity of the (labour) market and inflexible production mode (in 1970s). In short, social citizenship has since then become obsolete, if not totally buried, in the welfare state reform, driven by the globalization processes (Paehlke 2003).

The reform driven emerging managerial efficiency and nominal accountability gains in health and welfare sectors -- as derived from business regime of governance with labels of ISOxxxx, audit and accounting practices -- become the iconography for the retrenchment of welfare capitalism; the mission of nation state is to be more economic and strategically place for pro-market reform and critically engaging in global capitalism.

In other words, the enhancement and globalization processes of market forces, under the auspices of IMF, the World Bank and WTO, demand the transformation of welfare state into pro-market

economic engine. More chaotic is that the challenges come as the historically defined concept of citizenship is highly contested by hyper-mobility capital (change of bilateral taxing regime), goods (in/out of the market and the regulation on them), and people (as labour, migrant workers and visitors). Among all three, the regulation of the mobility of the last category (namely, people) is more problematic; the forced or self-motivated migrants and migrant workers have to be newly recognized in terms of the historically rigid defined (national, civic, political and social) citizenship.

With no exception in a globalizing world, the higher rate of globalization links to: the higher rate for both legal and illegal migrants, as well the migrant-workers; the higher will be the socio-economic disparity and differential in one locality. How to treat this heterogeneous yet mixed category of the nomads-of-globalization, the newly 'borrowed' sub-citizenship of globalization (minorities? ethnic groups? people-in-transits?), within and beyond the territorial boundary of nation/local state, is a critical social policy challenge.

Globalization with flexible production regime has also reshaped the landscape of social security in two ways. Firstly, it cannot generate more revenue for financing social security, the mobile production units (hence the source for taxing) have limited the ability and bargaining power of nation/local states over the producers. On the other hand, perhaps the more critical one, is the emergence of 'un-exploitable' groups (of unemployment, downsizing and redundancies) resulting from plant reallocation and/or industrial upgrading, which ironically call for more social assistance – for the state financing of the economic restructuring. In other words, under the globalization processes, the (welfare) state cannot and will not deliver the political goods (welfare) for social contract.

Labour market restructuring has been influential in exerting pressure for state provision of public services. The globalization forces reinforce the momentum of labour mobility, the geo-mobility of labours at both top and bottom ends of the production spectrum demand very differential requirements for the state to cope with: upper class elitist way of life and the lower class basic social services – the lower one is more heterogonous in terms of ethnic and socio-cultural differences. In mainland China context, the further loosening of the *Hukou* (household registration) system will have strong impact on the mobility of people across different spatial localities in China. How to deliver the scare political goods of welfare remains to be seen (Fix, et al. 2009).

Traditional networks and families expose to modernization demands. Under the labour market restructuring, the unsecured tenure for labour class has exerted tremendous pressure on the family system – families under high growth economies have been stretched to their limits for caring those family members with special care, against the context where families are heavily ‘taxed’ by home mortgage and oligarchic retailing networks.

In reality, lower class and socio-economic deprived migrants are discriminated against not just by their host communities, but also by the systematic neglects (sometime even policy targeting) of the government. In mainland China, millions of migrant workers lack the parity of living chance, vis-à-vis their counterparts in cities; over 230,000 migrant domestic helpers from SE Asia working in Hong Kong’s families lack adequate social protection, over 170,000 of migrant domestic nursing-care workers in Taiwan have been problematically surviving.

How to integrate these mobile and sub-classes of new comers needs to be addressed not just in social citizenship (security) terms but also in terms of human rights to respect multicultural – diversity – yet the social protection system against the developmental risks is poorly developed in the localities they reside.

#### **4. Envisioning the Rejuvenated Filial Piety in Transnational Labour Regime?**

Socio-culturally, the “outsourcing” and “sub-contracting” of the traditional custom, filial piety (FP, respect and taking care of the seniors), confirms the change of home care regime in 21<sup>st</sup> Century. FHH are the main carriers for the (withering) cultural virtue of FP, yet they are at best a nomadic sub-class in terms of social citizenship following T. H. Marshall’s evolutionary conceptualization on social citizenship from political and civil ones. But the demand for guest workers’ FP-compatible job performance is contradictory to their nomadic social (sub-) citizenship (enabling minimal social inclusion) – FHH are both outsiders and insiders of the socio-cultural norms making!

Our case studies illustrated above highlight some contradictions of the rapidly ageing Asia and its caring regime, human resourced by flexible migrant (predominantly female) workers, though enabling some form of the assisted ageing – a good indication towards a rejuvenated regime of filial piety? But to what extent can the mobile, migrant labour force in shaping global ageing future? A brief critical remark to end this paper is provided here.

#### **4.1 Contracting-Out-Sourcing of Filial Piety in New Labour Migration Regime?**

Like other regions, the elderly care in Asia is a 24-hour caring service industry, mostly staffed by low-paid female workers and/or the FHH. This is within the context of the regional labour migration that the capacity of caring service might be substantially upgraded with a new regime of elderly care outsourcing / subcontracting and mobile labour force: it seems that nursing home in Hong Kong and Taiwan, if granted more flexibility for ‘visitors’ and ‘labour’ (co-nursing FHH workers), their experimentation will give insights for Japanese and other societies to learn for coping with their ageing population (See Fig.10 and Fig.11).

The Japan’s trade talks with South Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines for Free Trade Agreement (FTA) highlights the trend toward a more mobile labour regime for nursing care workers: a few thousands caring workers are planned for policy experiment. More specifically, Japan wants the Philippines to give greater investment and services trade opportunities to Japanese businesses in the proposed FTA, while the Philippines wants Japan’s job market opened to Filipino nurses and lawyers. For Thailand, to lower tariffs on Japanese auto parts, and Bangkok’s insistence that Japan open its markets to Thai rice, chicken and other agricultural products, and to ease its foreign labour rules so Thai physical therapists can work in Japan. In actuality, around a few thousands guest nursing care workers from Indonesia, Thai and the Philippines are now in training in Japan -- the importance of guest professionals, para-professionals and guest home helpers are more than obviously demanded by Japan’s aging population. Coping with aging population in regional terms, the regime of flexible labour migration is evolving; though it cannot solve the fundamental shortage of nursing worker supplies (which are at the range of nearly half a million).

From the supply side of migrant workers, we can also see paralleling trend of the importance of female ones in the overall migrant-workers’ mobility (see Fig.12 and Fig.13). Recent migration studies also show the feminization of migration in Asia region (Piper 2008, Ed., 2008; Yamanaka & Piper 2006). Hence, the female guest workers tend to assume the socio-cultural role of caring agency not just within the familial boundaries, but also extending to the transnational and cross-borders trading of commercialized or commodified transaction of filial piety.

**Fig.10: Labour Migration in Asia**

Figure 3.4.19 International Migration in East Asia

(One unit = 1,000 people)

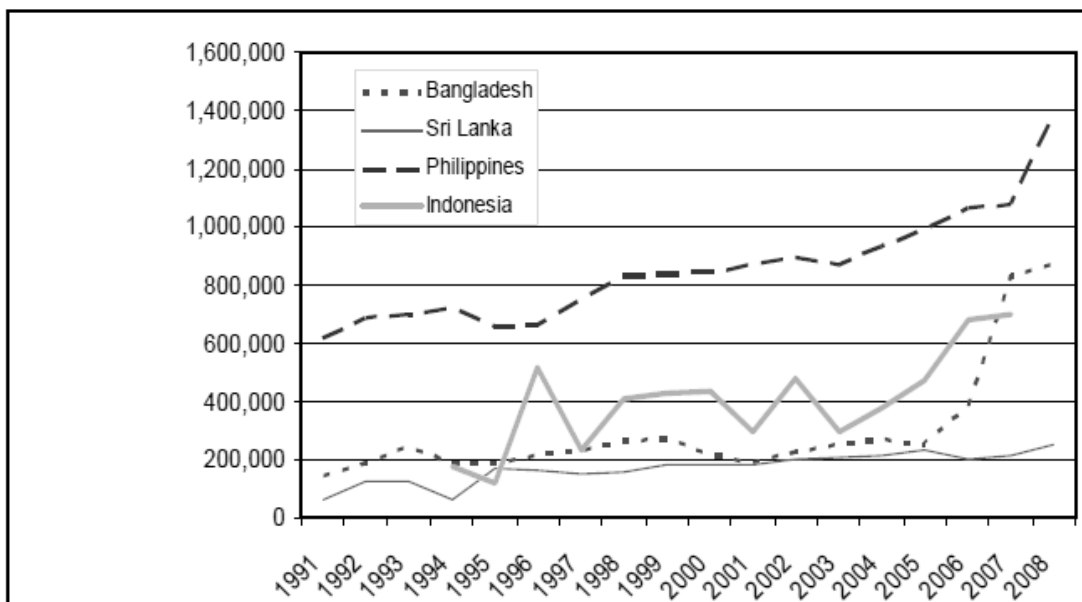
Countries and regions	Labor force			Flow						Stock					
				Inflow of foreign workers			Outflow of national workers			Foreigners working domestically			Nationals working abroad		
	2003	2000	1997	2003	2000	1997	2003	2000	1997	2003	2000	1997	2003	2000	1997
Japan	66,666	67,660	67,870	142	130	94	-	55	62	790	710	660	181	61	134
Korea	22,196	21,950	21,604	-	37	32	(251)	251	237	373	285	253	-	-	[56]
China	760,750	739,920	705,280	-	-	-	770	426	334	-	63	82	-	-	-
Hong Kong	3,500	3,370	3,216	(83)	20	16	-	-	-	(237)	217	171	-	-	[50]
Taiwan	10,076	9,784	[9,210]	-	-	-	-	-	-	304	321	[251]	-	-	[120]
Singapore	2,150	2,192	1,876	-	-	-	-	-	-	590	530	530	(44)	-	[15]
Malaysia	10,240	9,616	9,038	-	231	-	-	-	-	1,163	880	1,472	-	(200)	[200]
Thailand	35,310	33,973	33,560	-	103	48	(158)	191	184	1,007	1,103	901	-	-	[550]
Indonesia	100,316	95,651	91,325	20	15	21	(480)	435	427	(33)	33	35	2,000	-	[1,000]
Philippines	35,120	30,908	30,265	-	-	[6]	868	841	748	(11)	-	21	-	4,940	4,700
Vietnam	41,900	38,643	-	473	-	-	-	37	22	(3)	-	-	-	300	-

Notes: ( ) indicates data from the previous year, [ ] indicates data from the following year. Because of data restrictions, definitions of countries may not be consistent.

Source: Past editions of the annual *Databook on International Comparison of Labor* (The Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training, former Japan Institute of Labor Reference Materials) distributed at the Workshop on International Migration and Labor Market in Asia 2005 (The Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training).

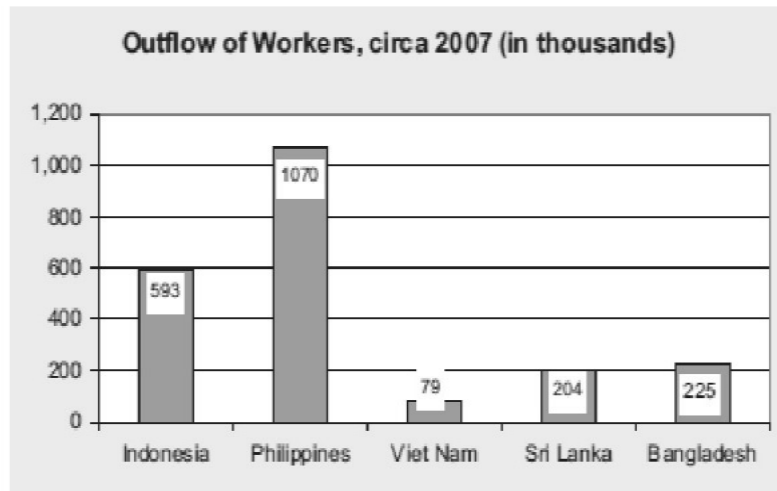
(Source: METI 2005)

**Fig.11: Annual outflows of migrant workers from selected Asian countries**

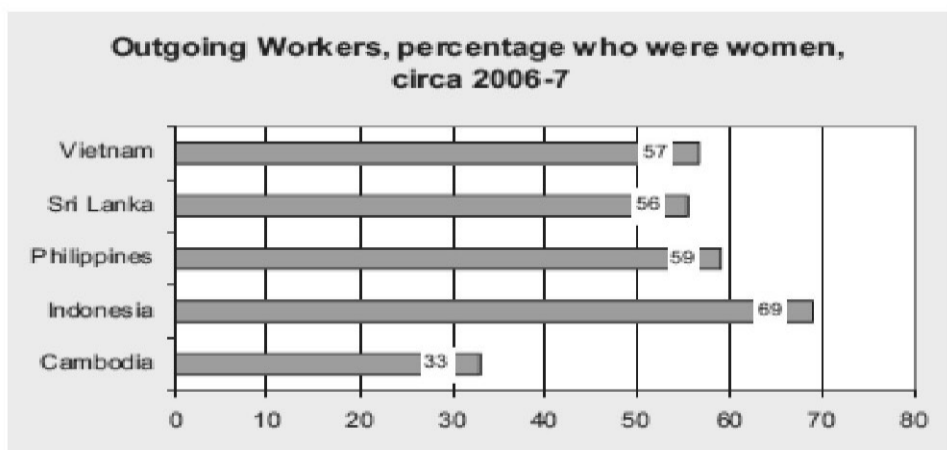


Source: National agencies in each country in charge of overseas workers' deployment.

(Source: Abella & Ducanes 2009)

**Fig.12: Outflow of (Migrant-)Workers, 2007**

(Source: Stalker 2008)

**Fig.13: Outgoing Female (Migrant-)Workers, 2007**

(Source: Stalker 2008)

For Asian societies confronting globalizing forces, the difficulties in rejuvenating the pro-family value(s), like FP, are more than obvious. But we should challenge the mainstream economic logics, by re-orienting social and economic policy towards the harmonization of work and family life; three obvious issues need to be addressed.

First and foremost, the pro-family policy re-orientation should not be targeting to the

individuals and families by various types of high profile campaign (using mass media and hence wasting people's time and resource to entertain such events), but we should change the policy and business practice that will enable more freedom and time for family members to interacting among themselves: work-life balance in terms of inter-generational care is crucial for socio-familial development.

Secondly, global ageing is a challenge for

every developed economy. We have shown that the back-side of active FP might produce the burnt-out of caregivers, which is prompting to elderly abuse (Yan & Tang 2003). With the demographic trends of fewer children and an ageing population, coupled with the economic problems Japan (and Asia) is experiencing, attitudes toward supporting elderly parents and aged relatives are also changing significantly. It is becoming increasingly difficult to expect that families will provide full support for their elderly, and the problems of illness and long-term care have been identified as the greatest concern of the elderly (Lai 2001, cf. Ornatowski 1996).

Lastly, it is not just the disparity of life chance between the rural and urban sector, between the rich and the poor; but also the de-humanization of work, the disharmony (if not conflicts) between work-family life. To cope with the overwhelming demands for caring both the young and older generations by the working class, public policy should re-orientate itself towards an intergenerational care friendly one: the enabling of FP and parental duties, by granting such kind of leaves at work place, is one of the possible initiatives.

Under the economic uncertainties, younger generations have to face the less secure job tenure, and to be ready for more mobile job locations, and the dual roles of women in the family and the workforce ...all these make them to think about whether or not to living together with their parents and supporting their parents in need of care as separate issues. In the past, living together with parents has implied caring for them, but now many younger people, especially daughters and daughters-in-law, are looking to ways of providing care for their parents that do not involve co-residence.

As a social (and political) virtue, many Asians (even Westerner) support the ideal for filial (piety) duty. But in a turbulent reality of flexible production regime, a mixing of work-and-family life, as well as the nomadic life experience for job (insecurity) and survival, the individual's contribution to FP is quite another thing – all these are contextually negotiated in the de-standardized life course. On the other hand, the ageing population (the more educated one, like us) is seemingly, fatalistically yet realistically, accepting the non-FP reciprocity and they (we in future) do not expect nor blame much about non-fulfilment of filial duty (K-S Chang 2003, cf. Hwang 1999, Jang, et al. 2000).

Under economic liberalization regime and high mobility capital, labour and goods, labour force can be mobile, flexible and adaptive not just to the manufacturing of goods, but also helping to caring

the aged as a form of service-for-foreign-currencies (an outsourcing of FP for elderly care). Recently, the remittances from guest workers overseas back home are important for the local development; this is particularly the case for Asian migrant workers' exporting countries, like Bangladesh, Indonesia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam (Fix, et al. 2009; Piper 2009; see Fig.14).

This new regional labour migration regime enables the shifting of FP burden (who and where to take care of the parents, how and how much?) from blood-tie and familial one to foreign guest workers. In actuality, the change of labour regime is being championed by regional and international governmental bodies, for the globalization project.

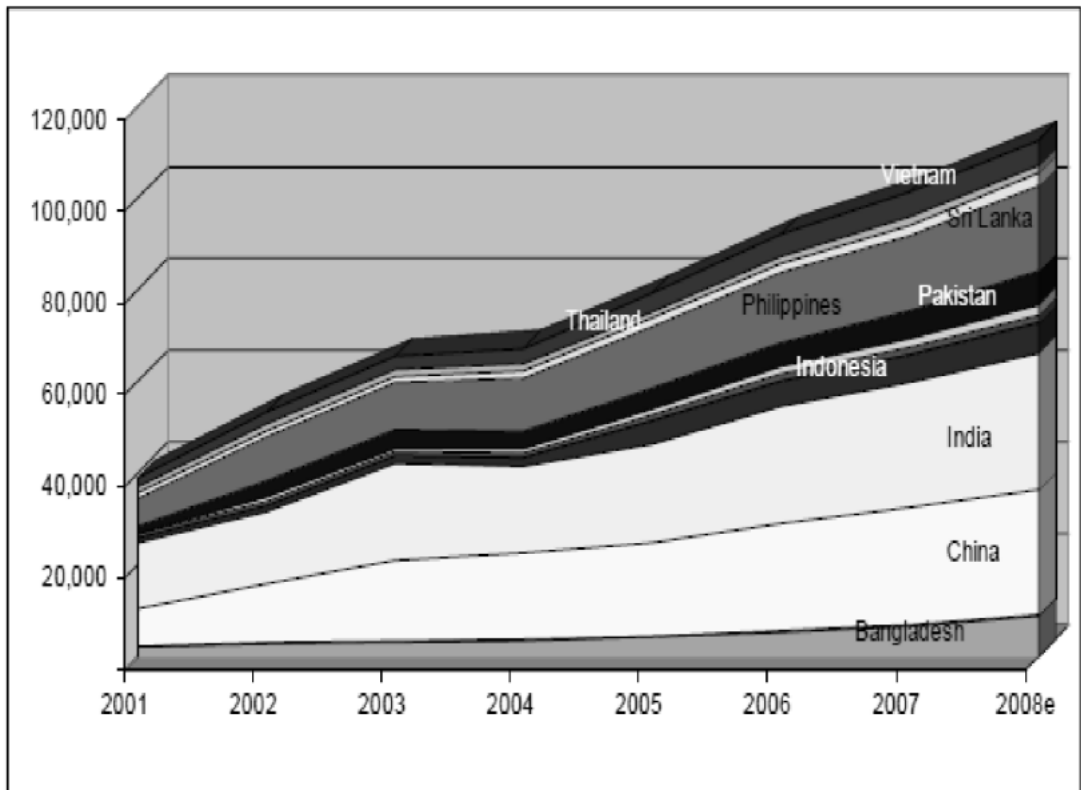
Based upon our illustrations on the practices for rejuvenating filial piety in Asia, under a liberalized mobile labour regime, the co-evolution for consensual policy (language) building project for a rejuvenation of socio-cultural norms of filial piety is expressed in terms of the migrant nursing care regime for ageing society.

#### **4.2 FP in Hyper-Modernizing Asia: Migrant-Labours embedded Opportunities Structure**

Historically, the doubling of the elderly ratio (from 7% of the total population age 65 or above) used to occur at a steady pace. In the developed countries, it took 105 years in France, 85 years in Sweden, but in Japan, only 24 years. The Japanese case is in fact the fore-runner for Asian newly industrializing economies, like South Korea (Eu 2003), Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore, as well as the rapidly ageing China (after 2030). In all cases of ageing population, they are structurally linked to the rapid industrialization, hyper-modernization and urbanization, at a time of high and sustained economic development – the ideal case for the globalization project, championed by neo-liberal agencies like the IMF, WTO and the World Bank!

All these result in the geo-spatial relocation (or dislocation) of socio-familial inter-generational reciprocities that younger generation can no longer living with their ageing or aged parents, even if they wish to do so – this shapes the forms of inter-generational communication, hence challenging the practice for the virtue of filial piety.

Distancing from their traditional role of familial carer, in a highly competitive society, women have to work and be independent – that is the new form of the (Western state) sponsored feminism. They gain money from paid work, and renegotiate the caring role with the husband or their parents. Yet,

**Fig.14: Migrants' remittances to Asian countries of origin, 2001-2008**

(Source: Abella & Ducanes 2009)

daughters-in-law turn to the employment of waged caregivers not only because of their shortage of time and to lessen the burdens of labour, but also to retrieve some autonomy from the authority of their mothers-in-law (Lan 2002, Kim, et al. 1991, Kim & Kim 2003, Liu, et al. 2000).

For caring the ageing population, in Asian societies excepting Japan, the use of guest/foreign domestic labour is more than obvious. More recently, in Hong Kong, it is not uncommon that in private middle-class nursing home, FHH are also assisting the more formal case, though the children and relatives of the aged do visit them regularly; isn't it a new version of caring regime powered by mobile guest workers or outsourcing and/or subcontracting of elderly care?

The caring regime for out-sourcing and sub-contracting regime is seemingly functional and coupling with the state-advocated familism, which emphasizes on the quality of care and less-resources for better-quality of family life, in open (labour)

market where efficiency and timeliness are the key for success. Yet, the adoption of FHH in family and/or community life is becoming a norm in Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan, for this, Japan is timely considering this option to cope with labour shortage in the long term care for ageing population.

In future, the elderly care will become a 24-hour caring service industry, mostly staffed by low-paid female workers and/or the FHH. The capacity of caring service might be substantially upgraded with a new regime of elderly care outsourcing / subcontracting and mobile labour force: it seems that nursing home in Hong Kong and Taiwan, if granted more flexibility for 'visitors' and 'labour' (co-nursing FHH workers), their experimentation will give insights for Japanese and other societies to learn for coping with their ageing population.

Global ageing is a challenge for every developed economy. The destiny of any country's economy depends on longevity: the demography driven demands to shape community and service market

(Beck 2000; Milanovic 2003).

Exposed to the globalizing 'external' forces, capitals, goods, labour (and jobs) are more mobile than the previous regime of global order. Obvious impacts of globalization are on social and familial restructuring, affecting all people at large (WCSDG 2004). For individuals, the living chance of local communities is contingent upon the ups-and-downs of global business cycle, with a flexible regime of labour productivity and mobility.... Here, younger people are more nomadic and mobile for paid occupation, whilst the aged one is mostly community and locality-fixated. All these are likely shaping social-familial changes, challenging the very basic ideas of good virtue and customs (say, filial piety) of familial and inter-generational reciprocity (Hwang 1999, Meyer 2000).

Comparative studies have shown that the cultural virtues, say, filial piety, might produce the burnt-out of caregivers (Sung 2003), which is prompting to elderly abuse (Yan and Tang 2003; Lai 2007). Japan is no exception to other societies, particularly in Asia. The functional necessity requires young labour mobility, which in turns threatens the social fabrics, withering inter-generational physical contacts and communication at the worst. Yet, the mobile regime of labour flexibility in the region could have the positive contribution to rejuvenate FP though family members might be geo-physically separated or divided.

In spite of the fact that the ideal for filial piety is not practical in a turbulent reality of flexible production regime, compressing work-and-family life, as well as the nomadic life experience for (most of us are some form of) migrant workers, various studies on the so-called sojourns' mobile communication, using mobile phone for cross-border yet intra-familial communication highlight the liberating aspect of the benefits of being in the information age: in what Pei- Chia Lan (2006) describes as the global *Cinderella* with a mobile phone. The icon of the nomadic Cinderella represents migrant workers' mobile communication with their distant family members in the information age.

Through mobile phone, migrant workers can enjoy not just inter-generational communication, but also the encrypted informative instruction texting for managing family wealth; the (instruction and the digital proof for) remittance of fund back to the home becomes a way of life (*Migrant Remittances* 2005). As world remittance market is having exponentially growth with flexible global workforces recently, coupled with the ever-increasing mobile

phone user by migrant workers, Vodafone and Citigroup launch a Vodafone-branded mobile-based international money transfer service targeting the global remittance market worldwide. (Citigroup, 2007). The new (sojourns-targeted) service provides senders and receivers of money with a simple, easy to use, secure, transparent and convenient method for sending money home with mobile phone or via the internet. Hence this new sojourn experience and mobile communication practice can, and will, enable their elders or parents to be readily ageing-in-place, with both communicative and financial supports from remote distance relatives.

After much deliberation on the new practices for FP in practice, it is more than evident that the enhancement of the quality of (24-hour ubiquitous, borderless) inter-generational communication and care, empowered by new technologies, and a flexible migrant nursing carers, can be a new way to foster the virtue of, and good practice for, filial piety for global ageing population for individual families in the information age.

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