

# SC 2217 TRAVEL MATTERS

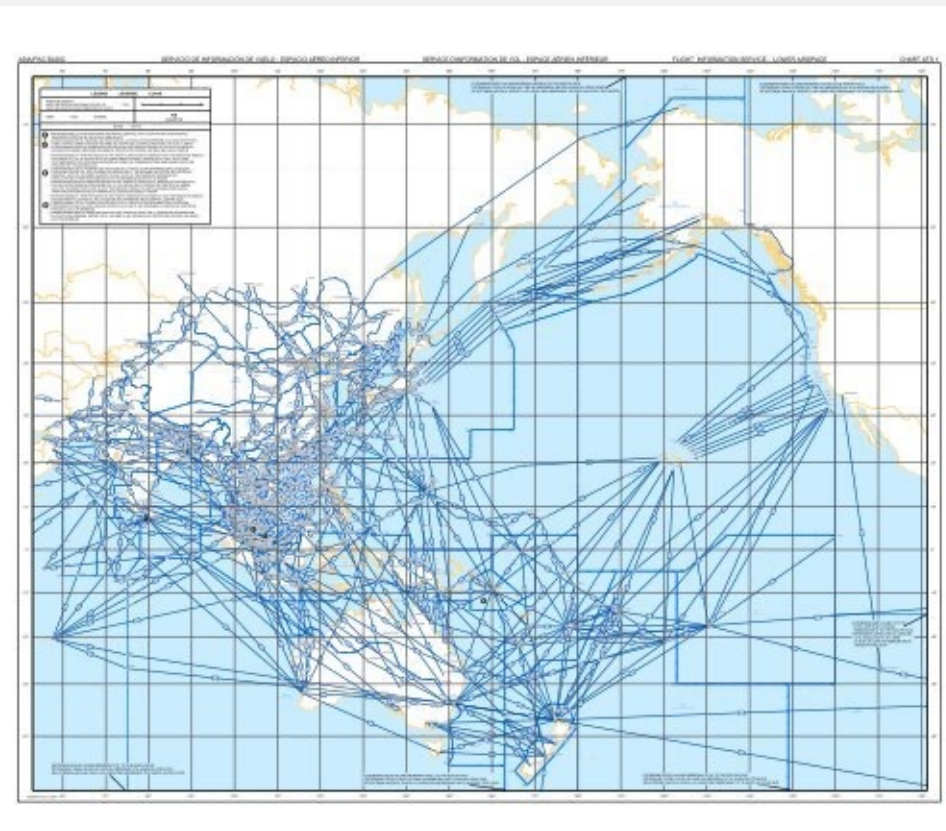


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# TRAVEL ECONOMIES

# PUZZLE



Since the late 1990s, international low-skilled labor migration across Asia has become both **EASIER** and **MORE COMPLICATED**.

- WHY
- HOW TO EXPLAIN THIS?

## EASIER

- More people have gained legal access to overseas job opportunities (e.g. data from China & Indonesia)
- Job opportunities have grown with globalization
- Journeys are quicker and safer

## MORE CUMBERSOME

- Social process of migration has become formalized and commercialized
- Increased regulations can become barriers for migrants as it introduces more actors mediating
- More mediation means higher costs to migrate
- Regulation is almost entirely at the migrating end

## MIGRATION INFRASTRUCTURES (Xiang Biao & Johan Lindquist)

The notion of migration infrastructure – the systemically interlinked technologies, institutions, and actors that facilitate and condition mobility – opens up such spaces of mediation to analysis. (p. 124)

# **Migration Infrastructures**

Commercial (recruitment intermediaries)

Regulatory (state apparatus and procedures for documentation, licensing, training etc.)

Technological (communication, transport)

Humanitarian (NGOs, international orgs like IOM, ILO)

Social (migrant families, networks, media)

# INFRASTRUCTURAL APPROACH

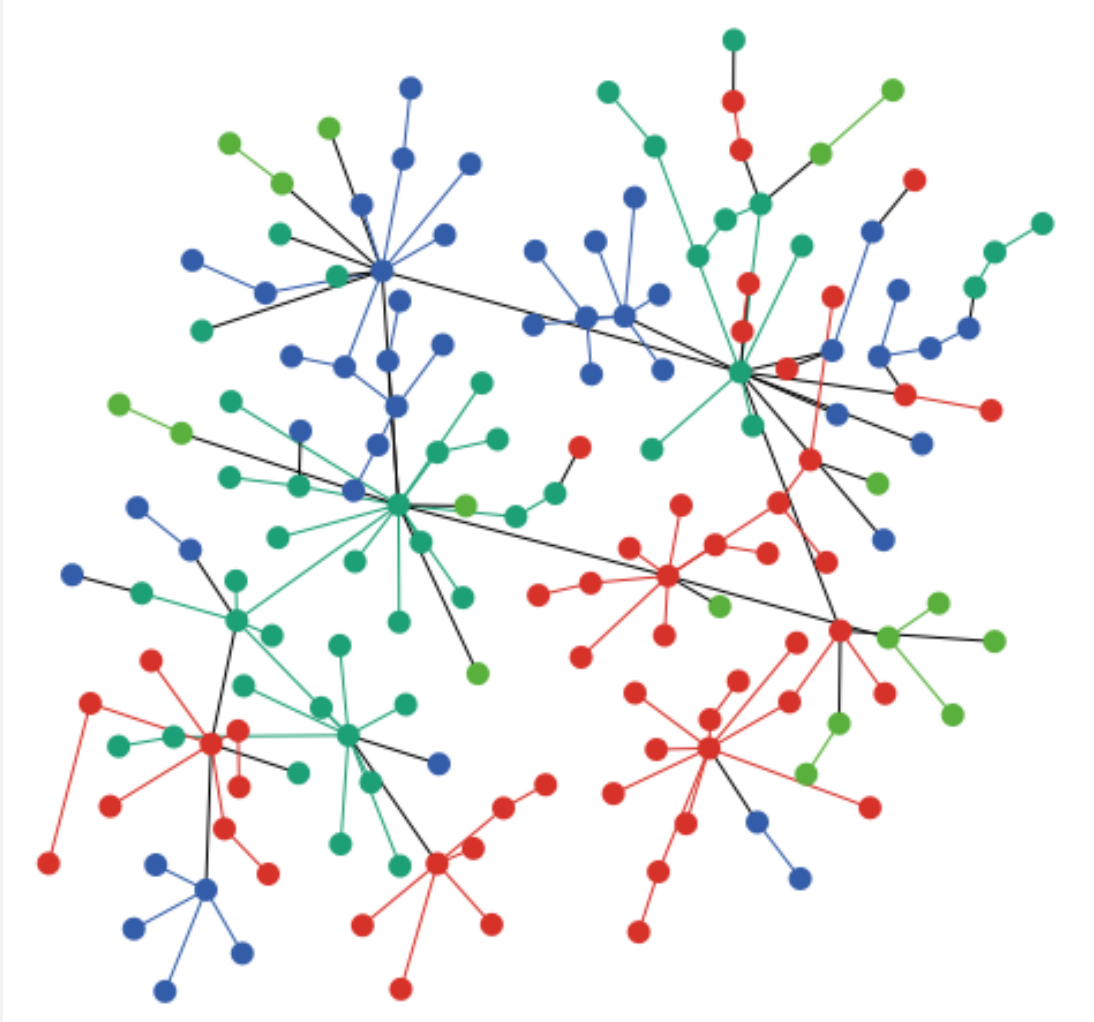
## TURN AWAY FROM --

- Borders between nation-states as primary site of regulation
- Systems approach sees migration as a connection/flow between two places, shaped by hegemonic power relations

## TURN TOWARDS

- Expansive forms of mediation and infrastructure
- Systemic approach can miss how uneven and shifting migration patterns are – how to explain and capture those?
- How do different kinds of mediation interact with one another?
- Social networks serve as infrastructures





“We cannot understand how migrants move unless we examine how they are moved by others, including brokers, bureaucrats, transport companies, medical clinics, and international organizations.”

(p. 131)



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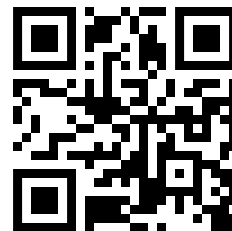


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## EXAMPLE OF DIFF KINDS OF LOGICS IN MIGRATION INFRASTRUCTURE INTERACTING



Humanitarian

X

Regulatory

X

Commercial

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO RATIFY AND EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENT ILO CONVENTIONS NOS 97 & 143 ON MIGRANT WORKERS?



International  
Labour  
Organization

100  
1919-2019

### Ratifications of ILO Migrant Workers Instruments



## MIGRANT WORKER GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYERS



Promoting Respect for the Human and Labour Rights of  
Migrant Workers through Ethical Recruitment and  
Deployment, Responsible Employment and Safe Return

 **IOM**  
UN MIGRATION

# I. CHINA: REGULATION THROUGH LIBERALIZATION

- Liberalization means removing heavy state involvement & making movement/travel easier through the 1990s
- Companies (commercial element) given task of licensing, recruiting, criminal & health checks, data collection
- Removal of state control over recruitment increased its overall regulatory capacity & role

# COMPLEX INTERPLAY BETWEEN REGULATORY & COMMERCIAL INFRASTRUCTURES

## REGULATORY INFRASTRUCTURE

- Cares about order/law
- More regulation = more mechanisms of control including data reporting, approval procedures, monitoring

## COMMERCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

- Cares about profit
- Since companies were held responsible for many of the steps, there developed layers to distribute liability, e.g. in case of disputes
- Ground level intermediaries/brokers become powerful and tap into social networks



## 2. INDONESIA: FORMALIZATION & INCORPORATION



# REGULATION & HUMANITARIAN MEDIATION CHANGES DYNAMICS BETWEEN COMMERCIAL AND SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURES

Prior to 1980s,  
international  
migration (within  
Asia, esp to  
Malaysia) through  
social networks and  
informal channels  
of brokers



Documented  
migration &  
regulating  
remittances became  
explicit part of  
national  
development in  
1980s & 1990s –  
state regulatory  
bodies estd.



Licensing formerly  
informal brokers  
and formalizing  
existing  
infrastructure,  
ground-level social  
networks become  
commercial



Legal protections,  
regulations, and  
infrastructure are  
responses to  
gendered  
humanitarianism, i.e.  
women going as  
domestic workers  
to the GCC heavily  
regulated by  
national and IOM,  
ILO agents



IRIS is referred to under Objective 6 of the [Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration](#) and a number of other inter-governmental frameworks.

IRIS priorities include: 1) awareness raising and capacity building, 2) migrant worker voice and empowerment, 3) the regulation of international recruitment, 4) voluntary certification of private recruitment agencies, and 5) stakeholder partnership and dialogue.



#### RECRUITERS

IRIS recognizes and supports labour recruiters committed to ethical recruitment to increase their visibility and gain market advantage.



#### GOVERNMENT

In many migration corridors, the vulnerability experienced by migrant workers demonstrates the need for strengthened government regulation and enforcement.



#### CIVIL SOCIETY

Respect for and protection of migrants' rights lies at the core of ethical recruitment and IRIS.



#### PRIVATE SECTOR

IRIS helps employers and brands to improve transparency in the cross-border recruitment process.

## “Protection” is a double-edged sword

- Gendered, reflect dominant (patriarchal!) social norms
- Creates new forms of mediation which makes process **MORE** complicated for the migrant
- New relations between the commercial, the regulatory, the social, and the humanitarian are generated. Each has their own agendas.



# QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

Does more regulation make migration better/easier and safer for migrants?

What would a migrant-centered migration infrastructure look like? What kind of radical rearrangements would that require?

THANK YOU!