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THE MIGRATION-TRAFFICKING NEXUS:
An investigation into the survival strategies of the
Philippines’ poorest migrants

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
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Massey University, New Zealand

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ABSTRACT

The Philippines’ social and economic complexities limit the life choices of its people and migration has become the only perceived method to achieve upward social and economic mobility. Filipinos are being ‘groomed’ to migrate as a ‘culture of migration’ has become ingrained in the national psyche, creating a desperation to migrate which makes the poorest Filipinos prime targets for human traffickers.

The aim of this research project was to investigate the driving factors behind the culture of migration of the Philippines and the implications for trafficking. Underpinned by a qualitative methodology, fieldwork was conducted over five months in Manila and Samar Island in the Philippines.

The findings of this study show that poverty and inequality form the context which forces Filipinos to leave their hometown and the factors which make them vulnerable to trafficking are correlated with endemic corruption and the resulting lack of law enforcement. Additionally the findings revealed that recruitment practices which exploit migrants, including the betrayal of neighbours and kin, have become common practices leading to people being trafficked in poor villages. When trafficking survivors are repatriated they often find the same constraints persist. Hence they are left with no choice but to migrate again and risk being re-trafficked. This thesis concludes that the vulnerabilities inherent in poverty are exacerbated by a complex culture of migration which makes poor Filipinos desperate to accept any offer to migrate and, thus, exposes them to human traffickers.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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I would also like to thank the internal migrants with whom I lived in the squatter settlement in Manila who made my fieldwork such a rewarding experience. Thank you for welcoming me into your community, teaching me how to wash my clothes by hand and helping me to grasp the true necessity of migration.

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<tr>
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<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ATIP</td>
<td>Anti-Trafficking in Persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CATW</td>
<td>Coalition against Trafficking in Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFO</td>
<td>Commission on Filipinos Overseas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRC</td>
<td>Convention on the Rights of the Child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOJ</td>
<td>Department of Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOLE</td>
<td>Department of Labour and Employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSWD</td>
<td>Department of Social Welfare and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FMO</td>
<td>Forced Migration Online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRA</td>
<td>European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IACAT</td>
<td>Inter-Agency Council against Trafficking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDMC</td>
<td>Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IOM</td>
<td>International Organisation for Migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NBI</td>
<td>National Bureau of Investigation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSCB</td>
<td>National Statistical Coordination Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSO</td>
<td>National Statistics Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OFW</td>
<td>Overseas Filipino Worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OHCHR</td>
<td>Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OSCE</td>
<td>Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OWWA</td>
<td>Overseas Workers Welfare Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PNP</td>
<td>Philippine National Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POEA</td>
<td>Philippines Overseas Employment Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UDHR</td>
<td>Universal Declaration of Human Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN.GIFT</td>
<td>UN Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNAIDS</td>
<td>Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS</td>
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<td>UNCHR</td>
<td>United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNFPA</td>
<td>United Nations Population Fund</td>
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<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>UN International Children's Emergency Fund</td>
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<td>UNODC</td>
<td>United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime</td>
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