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**Precarious yet Optimistic:
The Lived Experiences of Filipina 457 Visa
Holders in the Australian Labour Market**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Master in International Development
at Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand

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ABSTRACT

This study looks into the experiences of Filipina migrants on 457 visas in the Australian labour market, and how these women interpret and make sense of their experiences. In particular it addresses the invisibility of migrant women, in the context of the current rise in temporary skilled migration and the feminisation of migration. Whereas most prior research on this topic focused on measurable working conditions, this study focuses on the lived experiences.

This study adopts a qualitative approach, and draws mainly upon interviews and a small qualitative web survey involving Filipina migrants. The results reveal the convergence of various factors within the subclass 457 visa programme which shaped the labour experiences of women. The Filipinas who migrated as primary 457 visa holders have better labour market outcomes in comparison to Filipinas who migrated as dependent partners of primary 457 visa holders, whose skills and potential were largely underutilised. Yet in spite of this labour market outcome disparity, the lived experiences of both primary holders and dependents were the same – that of varying degrees and forms of precariousness and optimism.

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To end, at the crossroad of every major life decision, one question steers me to the direction I hope I would always take – “for whom?” This study is for Filipina migrant workers who were forced to leave their friends, families, and country in order to have a shot at a decent life.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ANZSCO	Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations
DIAC	Department of Immigration and Citizenship
DIBP	Department of International Border Protection
EU	European Union
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IFI	International Financial Institution
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
MBIE	New Zealand Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment
MRT	Migration Review Tribunal
OHS	Occupational Health and Safety
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OFW	Overseas Filipino Worker
UN	United Nations
US	United States

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. INTRODUCTION

The landscape of labour migration has been changing over the past few decades. Firstly, there has been an increasing feminisation of migration. More and more women now migrate independently as wage earners and household economic providers rather than as family dependents (Scalabrini Migration Center [SMC] & International Organisation for Migration [IOM], 2013; United Nations Population Fund [UNFPA], 2006; United Nations International Research and Training Institution for the Advancement of Women [UN-INSTRAW], 2007). Secondly, temporary skilled migration has been growing. The “looming war for skills” (Armitage, 2012, p. 1) has driven many developed countries to selectively relax immigration entry restrictions to prioritise certain categories of skilled migrants (Devitt, 2011; Iredale, 2005; Shachar, 2006; Wright, 2015). Developed countries, however, not only need more skilled migrant workers, but increasingly need them on a temporary basis. For instance, in 2006, the number of migrants who entered Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries with a temporary visa reached 2.5 million – three times more than the number of permanent migrants (Martin, 2008, p. 19). Skilled workers are defined as those who possess a tertiary qualification (at least two years) and/or an equivalent professional experience or skills typically needed to practice a profession (Iredale, 2001 as cited in Iredale, 2005, p. 105; Battistella, 1998 as cited in Scalabrini Migration Center [SMC] & International Organisation for Migration [IOM], 2013, p. 153).

These labour migration trends are primarily driven by the migration-for-development rhetoric peddled by international financial institutions (IFIs) and multilateral agencies (Rosewarne, 2010; 2012). However, herein lies a contradiction. The labour market

disadvantage of migrant women is commonly discussed in the literature. Furthermore, temporary migrant workers are more vulnerable in the labour market. Scholars note that this labour market disadvantage diminishes the development potential of women's migration (Guerrero, et al., 2000; Hugo, 2009; IOM, 2009; Rosewarne, 2012). However, some authors (Piper, 2005; UN Women, n.d.; Ruhs, 2013) imply that the outcomes for low skilled and unskilled migrant women may not necessarily reflect the experiences of migrant women workers in skilled work. Ruhs (2013) for example argues that generally, highly skilled temporary migrants have better labour market outcomes. This leaves open the following questions: *What are the labour market experiences of temporary skilled migrants? Do women have relatively better or positive labour market outcomes through a temporary skilled labour migration scheme?* These questions underpin this thesis.

A review of the literature shows that most of the research on the labour market experiences of migrant women focuses on those in low-paid, low skilled and unskilled work. This is due to the fact that the majority of migrant women are employed in these sectors (Boucher, 2007; Kofman & Raghuram, 2009; Limpangog, 2013; Piper, 2005). In spite of the increasing proportion of skilled migrant women, scholars note that women remain "invisible" in literature on skilled migration (Boucher, 2007; Iredale, 2005; IOM & OECD, 2014; Limpangog, 2013), and even more so within temporary skilled migration. The purpose of this study is to promote a critical perspective on temporary skilled migration as a development strategy by addressing the invisibility of women in temporary skilled migration. Specifically, it aims to explore the implications of temporary skilled migration on the labour market experiences of migrant women and understand the ways by which such experiences are shaped. Furthermore, most of the research approaches migrant women in the labour market from an instrumentalist point of view, while their feelings, perceptions, and aspirations are often neglected. This study hopes to contribute additional insights by framing the research topic from the perspectives of migrant women themselves. To achieve this, the labour market lived experiences of Filipina migrants under Australia's main temporary skilled migration program – the Temporary Work (Skilled) visa, subclass 457 (hereinafter referred to as "subclass 457 visa") – will be explored.

1.2 AUSTRALIA'S TEMPORARY SKILLED MIGRATION PROGRAM: THE 457 VISA

With the possible exception of Sweden, Australia has been leading the world in removing barriers for foreign skilled workers, and has reformed its skilled immigration policies extensively (Abella, 2006; Armitage, 2012; Bucken-Knapp, 2009). With an impending shortage of 2.8 million workers in the next decade (Crowe, 2014, para. 2), Australia is turning to migrants as a large and important labour source. For the Philippine government, Australia's labour crisis is an opportunity and a potential large market for Filipino migrant workers (GMA News, 2011; Micua, 2012). As of 2014, the Philippines ranked as the fourth largest source country of migrants with 225,100 Filipinos – one per cent of the total Australian population (ABS, 2015b; Tweddell, 2015). Filipinos are one of the fastest growing communities in Australia (DIBP, 2015; DIAC, 2014), and soon will be the single largest group in the country (SMC & IOM, 2013).

The 457 visa scheme is Australia's major program to bring in temporary skilled migrants (ABS 2009a; Phillips & Spinks, 2011 in Bahn, Barratt-Pugh & Yap, 2012). It is also the dominant pathway by which Filipinos enter Australia. The 457 visa was designed to address the skills shortage by allowing approved Australian employers to nominate and sponsor skilled foreign workers for up to four years of residency, upon demonstrating that a suitable local worker cannot be hired (Cameron & Harrison, 2013; DIBP, 2015; Larsen, 2013). However, since its implementation in 1996, the 457 visa program has been persistently criticised by various stakeholders for exposing temporary migrant workers to abuse and exploitation by their employers. In fact, two independent reviews – one in 2008 and another one in 2014 – have been commissioned by the Australian government to strengthen the integrity of the visa program by looking into concerns of labour market abuse and exploitation.

Much research has already been conducted on the situation of migrant workers under the 457 visa programme. However, the majority of these studies focuses on the experiences of migrant men, while migrant women, especially women dependents, are under-researched.

In this regard, this study will provide a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of Filipina 457 visa holders (both primary holders and dependents) in the labour market.

1.3 RESEARCH AIM AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research revolved around the central question: *What are the lived experiences of Filipina 457 visa holders in the Australian labour market?* In order to explore what shapes and makes the research participants' lived experiences in the labour market, the following exploratory sub-questions further guided the study:

1) *What are the labour market outcomes of Filipina 457 visa holders?*

The labour market outcomes of research participants will be described by exploring their labour force status¹ and quality of employment using precarious work as a point of reference.

2) *What factors shape the labour market outcomes of Filipina 457 visa holders?*

The different factors that facilitate and constrain the research participants' labour market participation and access, and decision-making around employment will be explored.

3) *How do Filipina 457 visa holders exercise agency in the labour market?*

¹ Labour force status refers to whether a person was employed, unemployed or not in the labour force during the reference period (Statistics Canada, 2015, para. 2).

² Visa rorting in the Australian context is the abuse of the 457 visa scheme to the disadvantage of migrant workers.

The different ways by which research participants cope with challenges in the labour market and exercise agency towards better labour market outcomes will be investigated.

4) *How do Filipina 457 visa holders perceive their over-all labour market experience on a 457 visa?*

This question deals with the research participants' feelings and perceptions about their labour market integration experiences.

1.4 METHODOLOGY

The goal of this research was to understand the labour market integration of migrant women with a temporary skilled visa, as experienced by the research participants themselves. The approach adopted for this study was qualitative; women's lived experiences were central as sources of knowledge. Lived experiences seek to understand how subjective factors of one's identity such as class, gender, race, sexuality, religion and political beliefs among others, shape how people live their daily lives (Boylorn, 2008). The understanding of the research participants' lived experiences is achieved by seeking the research participants' opinions, subjective accounts, and interpretations of their own worlds (Gray, 2013). This research sought to explore *what* the migrant women experienced (see research question 1 on labour market outcomes), *how* they experienced it (see research questions 2 and 3) and *what the experiences mean* for them (see research question 4). To this end, qualitative research methods – qualitative survey, interviews (semi-structured, key informant, group), field notes and memos – were used during the three-week field work in Sydney and Melbourne, Australia. These instruments explored the research participants' motivations, experiences, aspirations, as well as their attitudes and

perceptions towards their overall labour market experience in Australia while on a 457 visa.

1.5 THESIS STRUCTURE

This introductory chapter covers the brief context and background of the study, the purpose, aims and research questions, as well as the methodology. Chapter 2 frames the research topic by piecing together literature on the labour market experiences of migrant women within temporary skilled migration and the factors that shape such experiences. Chapter 3 provides the background for the research topic. It covers an overview of the Filipino migration to Australia, the country's shifting immigration policies, and the issues affecting 457 visa workers in the labour market. Chapter 4, on methodology, describes the methods and the fieldwork experience.

Chapters 5 and 6 present the findings of the fieldwork. Chapter 5 provides an interpretation of the lived experiences of Filipina 457 primary visa holders, while Chapter 6 focuses on Filipinas on a 457 dependent visa. Finally, Chapter 7 relates the research findings within the broader literature to answer the research questions. This chapter concludes by presenting the lived experiences of Filipina 457 visa holders – an understanding of how a Filipina migrant integrates into Australia's labour market with a temporary skilled visa.

CHAPTER 2: WOMEN AND WORK WITHIN TEMPORARY SKILLED MIGRATION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a context for the study by reviewing literature on the labour market experiences of migrant women under temporary skilled migration. The chapter is divided into four main sections. The first section provides the background for the feminisation of migration and the rise in temporary skilled migration as development strategies. The second and third sections offer a deeper understanding of the labour market experiences of migrant women. The migrant women's labour market outcomes will be explored, using precariousness to describe job quality. Then, the different factors that shape migrant women's labour market experiences will be discussed. Specifically, the different sources of migrant women's labour market vulnerability and precarity will be examined. Finally, the different strategies by which migrant women cope with challenges and exercise agency in the labour market towards better employment outcomes will be explored.

2.2 THE RISE IN TEMPORARY SKILLED MIGRATION AND THE FEMINISATION OF MIGRATION

The landscape of international labour migration has transformed over the past decades. In particular, there has been an increased competition for skilled workers and an increased preference for temporariness as a labour migration policy. At the same time, the

international migration patterns of women have been changing. These changes were driven mainly by the migration-for-development rhetoric peddled by international financial institutions (IFIs) led by the World Bank (Rosewarne, 2010, pp. 101; 2012, p. 63). The migration-for-development rhetoric revolves around the role of the growing number of international migrant workers and their massively increasing remittances in today's economy. Latest estimates from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) (2015, para. 1) show that there were 150.3 million migrant workers in 2015. In the same year, USD 601 billion were remitted by migrants to their home countries, of which USD 441 billion were received in developing countries (World Bank, 2015, para. 2). Remittances are now more than three times the size of official development aid and together with migrant savings, provide a significant source of development financing in developing countries (World Bank, 2015, para. 4). In addition, labour migration is believed to bring other development benefits such as the exchange of capital, trade, investment, knowledge, and technology (World Bank, 2015, para. 9). This section will expound on the context of the rise in temporary skilled migration and feminisation of migration as development strategies for both developing and developed countries.

2.2.1 The Rise in Temporary Skilled Migration

Since the early 2000s, many developed countries have selectively relaxed immigration entry restrictions to prioritise certain categories of skilled migrants (Iredale, 2005; Wright, 2015). This global trend is driven by a global shortage of skilled workers, referred to as the "race for talent" (Ruhs, 2013, p. 105) or the "looming war for skills" (Armitage, 2012, p. 1). Current skilled immigration policies target the supply of new migrants to improve human capital, improve competitiveness, and fill labour market gaps resulting from an ageing population, declining population, and economic shifts in host countries (Achenbach, 2014; Boucher & Cerna, 2014; den Bergh & Du Plessis, 2012; Iredale, 2005; Rubin et al., 2010).

The literature also suggests that developed countries not only need more skilled workers, but increasingly want them on a temporary basis. This reflects another trend in international labour migration – an increasing shift away from permanent migration towards temporary labour migration, and a general move towards temporary work across the board (Goldring & Landolt, 2011; ILO, 2006; Iredale, 2005; Rosewarne, 2010). In 2006, for instance, the number of migrants who entered Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries with a temporary visa reached 2.5 million – three times more than the number of permanent migrants (Martin, 2008, p. 19).

Temporary labour migration is migration for the purpose of employment that is not intended to be permanent (Foulkes, 2015, p. 1). There are three main rationales for temporary labour migration. Firstly, temporary labour migration allows developed and developing countries to address labour needs at different skill levels in a way that responds to changing economic conditions (Abella, 2006 as cited in Foulkes, 2015, p. 2). Through temporary labour migration, developed countries can increase the entry of migrants when needs arise, and decrease them in times of crisis (Beneria, Deere, & Kabeer, 2012, p. 22). Temporary labour migration also enables businesses to cope with the challenges of globalisation through flexible labour (Abella, 2006 as cited in Foulkes, 2015; Felstead & Jewson, 1999; New Zealand Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment [MBIE] 2014). For sending countries, temporary labour migration provides employment and remittances, and facilitates the transfer of knowledge and skills (Abella, 2006 as cited in Foulkes, 2015).

Secondly, temporary labour migration offers a political compromise. The World Bank notes that while international labour migration plays an important role in the global economy, the free global movement of people is an extremely sensitive issue infringing on the sovereign right of nation states to regulate its borders (Rosewarne, 2010, p. 102). Through temporary labour migration, host countries are able to harness the development potential of labour migration without renouncing border control and incurring long-term costs (Rosewarne, 2010, p. 102). Meanwhile, Baldwin-Edwards (2005 as cited in Foulkes, 2015) argues that temporary labour migration allows countries to address labour shortages

“when permanent immigration of foreigners, especially low-skilled ones, is not desired or socially accepted” (p. 2).

Finally, the temporariness of labour migration assures sending countries of a steady flow of remittances. Studies conclude that large remittances tend to be more common among recent or short-term immigrants compared to those long established in the host country (Beneria et al., 2012; Martin, 2008; OECD, 2009; Rosewarne, 2012). In the same way, permanent migration and citizenship in the host country lower the absolute value of remittances (Holst, Schäfer, & Schrooten, 2012). Rosewarne (2010, p. 103; 2012, p. 76) provides an explanation – temporariness means migrants know they will return and need to retain connection with migrants’ home countries, and this serves as a motivation for remitting income to family and friends.

Apart from the increasing significance of temporary skilled migration, the current international labour migration landscape also reflects the changing labour migration patterns of women. This will be discussed in the next section.

2.2.2 The Feminisation of Migration

The feminisation of migration refers to the increasing migration of women as independent wage earners and main household economic providers whereas in the past, most migrated as family dependents (SMC & IOM, 2013, p. 240; United Nations Population Fund [UNFPA], 2006, p. 22; UN-INSTRAW, 2007, p. 1). Of the 150.3 million migrant workers in 2015, almost half (66.6 million) were migrant women (ILO, 2015, para. 1). A majority of migrant women workers are in the service sector, particularly in low skilled jobs such as domestic work and hospitality (Rubin et al., 2008, p. xx). The feminisation of migration also refers to the creation of female-specific streams of migration such as the organised migration of women for marriage, trafficking of women for the sex industry, and the commercialised migration of domestic workers and caregivers (SMC & IOM, 2013, p. 240).

Also, some scholars have observed some degree of feminisation of skilled migration especially in sectors such as health, education, and social work, although this is small in terms of the overall migration (Kofman & Raghuram, 2009, p. 4; Rubin et al., 2008, p. xx). According to the IOM & OECD (2014, p. 2), the migration of highly skilled women is increasing in comparison to the migration of highly skilled men and women at lower educational levels. Highly skilled are generally defined as those who have completed tertiary education (IOM & OECD, 2014, p. 5; IOM, 2008, p. 52; Iredale, 2001 as cited in Cerna, 2010, p. 1). The major source countries for highly skilled women in OECD countries are the Philippines, China, and India (IOM & OECD, 2014, p. 5).

Scholars have identified different factors that drive the feminisation of migration. Such factors include globalisation, overall feminisation of the workforce, demographic changes in host countries, gender inequality, and increasing poverty and unemployment in sending countries (Beneria et al., 2012; IOM, 2008; Rosewarne, 2012; UN-INSTRAW, 2007). For Rosewarne (2012, p. 63) the migration-for-development rhetoric, centred on remittances, that drives the temporariness of labour migration, also drives the feminisation of migration. Studies show that migrant women workers are better remitters – they remit a greater share of their earnings, have more control over remittances, and show more interest in savings and human capital investments compared to migrant men workers (UNFPA, 2006, p. 29; UN-INSTRAW, 2007, p. 5; Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality [IANWGE], 2011, p. 9). In addition, migrant women are perceived to be more altruistic – they are expected to work harder, spend less on themselves and even endure poor living and working conditions for the sake of their families' well being (UN-INSTRAW, 2007, p. 5).

The positive effects of women's participation in paid overseas work are widely documented. The labour migration of women is suggested to be potentially transformative (SMC & IOM, 2013, p. 107). Overseas employment can increase women's self-esteem, and elevate their bargaining position within the household and status in the local community (UN-INSTRAW, 2007, p. 4). Migration can empower women where gendered norms and practices in host countries are less restrictive relative to those in sending countries, and

can also challenge gender inequality (Limpangog, 2011; SMC & IOM, 2013; UN-INSTRAW, 2007; IANWGE, 2011). However, according to Beneria et al. (2012, p. 5), the benefits of women's labour migration has been, at the same time, accompanied by their vulnerability and precariousness. And this labour market vulnerability and precariousness, some scholars note, diminishes the development potential of women's labour migration (Guerrero, et al., 2000; Hugo, 2009; IOM, 2009; Rosewarne, 2012). In addition, as IANWGE (2011) notes, women's migration can also entrench gender inequalities and traditional roles. The development effects of women's participation in paid overseas work are therefore, context-specific and dependent on a number of factors.

In this section, the development effects of temporary skilled migration and the feminisation of migration have been presented. Temporary skilled migration provides jobs, and financial and social remittances for sending countries. At the same time, the scheme allows host countries to benefit from skilled migrant labour without the long-term costs. The labour migration of women can be potentially transformative and empowering, and provides a steady source of remittances for sending countries. Meanwhile, the next section will provide a deeper understanding of the situation of migrant women in the labour market within temporary skilled migration.

2.3 THE LABOUR MARKET OUTCOMES OF WOMEN WITHIN TEMPORARY SKILLED MIGRATION

Numerous studies conclude, and multilateral agencies and IFIs concur, that labour market disadvantage shapes most migrant women's experiences. Migrant women, including the highly skilled, confront greater challenges in securing suitable and rewarding jobs in comparison to migrant men and native-born women (Achenbach, 2014; Beneria et al., 2012; Boyd, 1984; Iredale, 2005; MBIE, 2014; Piper, 2005; Raijman & Semnyonov, 1997; Rosewarne, 2012; Rubin et al., 2008; UN-INSTRAW, 2007). In general, migrant women are

more likely to be precarious workers. Many studies have documented why and in what ways migrant women are disadvantaged in the labour market. Most common explanations in the literature highlight the intersection of gender and other forms of discrimination, migrant status and race in particular, to shape the labour market experiences of migrant women. And in the context of temporary labour migration, temporariness of employment and residency acts as another significant source of migrant women's labour market vulnerability.

This section of the literature review has two objectives. Firstly, a conceptualisation of precarious work will be provided to frame the discussion on the quality of employment held by migrant women. Secondly, the labour market outcomes of migrant women as well as the factors shaping such outcomes within temporary labour migration will be explored.

2.3.1 Defining Precarious Work

Migrant women are among the sectors disproportionately represented in precarious work (ILO, 2012; MBIE, 2014; McKay, Jefferys, Paraksevopoulou, Keles, 2012; Piper, 2005). Precarious work is a catchall term used to measure the quality of employment through attributes such as income, job security, and working conditions (Campbell & Burgess, 1998, p. 6). There are two main approaches to conceptualising precarious work. The first approach defines precarious work as any employment falling outside the standard employment relationship, which is based on permanent, full-time, and open-ended contract with a single employer (Campbell & Burgess, 1998, p. 6; MBIE, 2014, p. 74; Vosko, MacDonald, & Campbell, 2009). In this sense, precarious work covers non-standard forms of employment such as part-time work, casual work, irregular hours, on-call or telework, temporary, and fixed term, which are often associated with particular work conditions that render workers in a vulnerable position (MBIE, 2014, p. 74).

This study adopts the second approach, which is founded on Rodgers and Rodgers' (1989) conceptualisation that precarious work is not a binary between standard and non-standard employment, but a continuum of multiple dimensions and varying degrees of labour insecurity (Goldring & Landolt, 2011; Burgess & Campbell, 1998; Rodgers & Rodgers, 1989; Tucker, 2002). What this implies is that characteristics of precariousness can be found not only in non-standard work but also in all forms of employment, including secure permanent jobs, although the form and level of concentration may vary (Rodgers & Rodgers, 1989; Tucker, 2002).

Bringing together the conceptualisations of various authors, precarious work is characterised by a combination of varying degrees of insecurity in employment relations, working conditions, access to rights, entitlements and union protection; limited employee autonomy and recourse; and which places workers at risk for injury, illness, and/or poverty (Alvarez, Gordon, & Spicker, 2007; Boese et al., 2013; Burgess & Campbell, 1998; Clark, 1998; Goldring & Landolt, 2011; ILO, 2012; Rodgers & Rodgers, 1989; Trades Union Congress Commission on Vulnerable Employment [TUC], 2008; Tucker, 2002; Vosko, 2010).

The table below identifies the different dimensions of precarious work, and the different forms of insecurity with regards to these dimensions.

Table 1. *Conceptualisation of Precarious Work*

Dimensions of precariousness	Forms of insecurity	References
Employment security	Limited/uncertain duration of employment; absence of work contracts; high risk of termination; non-standard employment	Goldring & Landolt, 2011; ILO, 2012; Standing, 1993 as cited in Burgess & Campbell, 1998; Tucker, 2002
Employee	Employees have limited autonomy,	Clark, 1998; Goldring & Landolt,

control	recourse or control over job functions and working conditions	2011; Standing, 1993 as cited in Burgess & Campbell, 1998; Tucker, 2002
Income and non-wage benefits	Low, unstable, and unguaranteed income; limited access to social benefits and statutory entitlements	Clark, 1998; Goldring & Landolt, 2011; ILO, 2012; Standing, 1993 as cited in Burgess & Campbell, 1998; Tucker, 2002
Legal, regulatory, and union protection	Lack/absence of collective agreements; obstacles in joining trade unions; lack of protection from laws and customary practice against labour rights violations	Clark, 1998; Goldring & Landolt, ILO, 2012; 2011; Tucker, 2002
Workplace security	Substandard working environment	Clark, 1998
Working time security	Underemployment; hours are uncertain, irregular and/or at the discretion of the employer	Clark, 1998; Standing, 1993 as cited in Burgess & Campbell, 1998
Skill reproduction security	Less opportunity for work-related trainings and career progression	Clark, 1998; Standing, 1993 as cited in Burgess & Campbell, 1998

Source: Author, based on the literature

Tucker (2002) however cautions that in analysing precariousness, the characteristics and the preference of the workers must also be taken into consideration. To illustrate, job characteristics, which might be precarious such as casual night shift with low pay and irregular hours may be desirable for a student, but problematic for a single parent (Tucker, 2002, p. 7). Precarious employment therefore is the interaction of job characteristics and the workers' preference and in this regard, not all non-standard jobs are considered precarious (Tucker, 2002, p. 2). Vulnerability and precariousness are often used interchangeably (MBIE, 2014, p. 15).

Precarious work can have consequences of varying severity and nature. It prevents individuals from being able to plan their future, reclaim rights, and meet their professional, familial, and social obligations (Alvarez et al., 2007; Pedaci, 2010). Precarious work has often been reported as a continual source of anxiety and pressure among immigrant workers, especially temporary migrant workers, and making work–life balance difficult to attain (MBIE, 2014, p. 90). If precarious work is unaddressed, precarious work can even result in poverty (Alvarez et al., 2007; TUC, 2008). The next section will provide a deeper understanding of migrant women’s experiences in the labour market by identifying the main factors that shape such experiences.

2.3.2 Migrant Women’s Double Disadvantage

To understand the experiences of migrant women in the labour market is to unpack labour migration as a gendered experience. Migrant women are disproportionately disadvantaged in the labour market first and foremost due to gender inequalities and stereotypes in sending and host countries, which intersects with vulnerabilities and disadvantages associated with being a migrant (Beneria et al., 2012; UN, 2001; Killian & Manohar, 2015; UN-INSTRAW, 2007). Scholars have used various terms to capture and explain the impact of this intersection in the labour market – double disadvantage (Boyd, 1984, p. 1093; Rubin et al., 2008, p. xviii), double discrimination (Achenbach, 2014, p. 223; UN, 2001, para. 1), and double jeopardy (UN-INSTRAW, 2007, p. 3). Boyd’s (1984) double disadvantage posits that migrant women’s inferior labour market position reflects the combined negative impact, or the “double negative” effects of one’s sex and birthplace, on top of other factors” (p. 1093).

Unpacking the double disadvantage of migrant women presupposes an understanding of the gender division of labour and its extension into the labour market. The gender division have traditionally assigned men to the market area (paid work) as breadwinners and women to the reproduction area (unpaid work) (Kreimer, 2004, p. 223). This means

women are often responsible for familial duties such as child and elderly care, which have implications on the labour market experiences of women. Achenbach (2014, p. 225) argues that the work and family spheres of women are intertwined, that a strain or overload in one sphere will negatively spill over to the other. Also, studies show that skilled migrant women are often conditioned to place their family's interest above their own career in host countries (Achenbach, 2014; Iredale, 2005; Killian & Manohar, 2015; Limpangog, 2013; Kreimer, 2004).

The gender division of labour also meant that labour markets in both sending and receiving countries are segregated whereby men and women are assigned in different occupations and sectors of the economy (United Nations Development Fund for Women [UNIFEM], 2003, p. 20; Rubin et al., 2008, p. xix-xxx). The extension of the breadwinner model into the labour market led to the creation of “women-specific” (Kreimer, 2004, p. 226) work or “women's work” (UN-INSTRAW, 2007, p. 2) such as childcare, education, health care and personal and household services (UNIFEM, 2003, p. 20). These women-specific sectors are devalued – typically low skilled and low-paid (Kreimer, 2004; Rubin et al., 2008, UN-INSTRAW, 2007). In this regard, gender acts as a basic organising principle in the labour market that reinforces and reproduces oppressive gender patterns that disadvantage women workers (Kreimer, 2004, p. 223; UN-INSTRAW, 2007, p. 2; UN Women, n.d., para. 2). These gender inequalities and stereotypes intersect with additional challenges that migrant women confront in the labour market under temporary labour migration, which will be discussed in the next section.

2.3.3 Factors Shaping Labour Market Outcomes

Migrant women face a number of legal, organisational and societal constraints in host countries (Tharmaseelan et al., 2013). These constraints interact with changes in the local labour market – specifically the rise in non-standard flexible employment – to position migrant women workers in vulnerable and precarious situations

Gender bias in immigration policies

The gendered nature of immigration policies in some developed countries significantly affects the labour market access of migrant women (Bach, 2009; Iredale, 2005; IOM & OECD, 2014; Rubin et al., 2008). Labour market access is the ability of migrants to access well-paying, high-status professional jobs commensurate with their skills and pre-migration work experience (Killian & Manohar, 2015, p. 1). Firstly, some host countries define and prioritise skills that largely favour men, thereby restricting the capacity of women to enter into skilled jobs (Bach, 2009; Rubin et al., 2010; Iredale, 2005). For instance, immigration policies prioritise sectors such as medical, engineering, science and technology, finance, and Information and Communications Technology (ICT), which are largely dominated by men (Bach, 2009; IOM & OECD, 2014; Rubin et al., 2008). As a result, migrant women are under-represented in highly skilled jobs in spite of their high social and human capital (IOM & OECD, 2014, p. 13; Rubin et al., 2008, p. xxi).

Secondly, immigration policies often relegate women as family dependents or “trailing spouses”, whose skills and qualifications are either devalued or totally ignored in the migration process (AMES Australia, 2015, para. 4; Bach, 2009, p. 14; Iredale, 2005, p. 162; Kofman & Raghuram 2005, p.149 as cited in Webb et al., 2013, p. 14; Phillips & Abo, 2016, para. 1-2; Toscano, 2016, para. 5). A report by AMES Australia released in 2015 concludes that skilled women dependents are “hidden from view, where their role has shifted from being, in many instances, a paid, well-educated professional to being domesticated as wives, spouses and partners” (Toscano, 2016, para. 2). And as dependents, migrant women face greater challenges in the labour market in comparison to men migrants and even women primary applicants. In Australia for instance, dependents within skilled migration schemes do not get access to settlement services (Iredale, 2005, p. 164). Also, dependents were more likely to be unemployed and if unemployed, were more likely to be in part time jobs, and took longer to participate in the labour market (ABS, 2009a as cited in Webb et al., 2013, p. 20; Phillips & Abo, 2016, para. 1-2). In Australia, it was found that nearly 20 per cent of dependents take over a year to find jobs (ABS 2009a as cited in Webb et al., 2013, p. 20).

Non-recognition of overseas credentials and work experience

The non-recognition of overseas qualifications and work experience is a major impediment to the labour market access of skilled women (Iredale, 2005; IOM & OECD, 2014; Killian & Manohar, 2015; Rubin et al., 2010; Tharmaseelan et al., 2010; UN Women, n.d.; Webb et al., 2013). In Australia for instance, Webb et al. (2013, p. 19) argue that migrant women's education and work experiences are not always recognised in ways that would allow their fair access to the local labour market, thereby contributing to their exclusion. Migrant women, in spite of their high level of skills and work experiences, are treated as novice workers since local experience in the host country is valued over that which was gained overseas (Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency, 2012 as cited in Webb et al., 2013; IOM & OECD, 2014; Killian & Manohar, 2015).

In addition, migrant women face difficulties in having their overseas qualifications accredited and in accessing education and training in host countries. While trainings and other opportunities to gain accredited qualifications are available upon arrival, these services may not be affordable or accessible for dependents, as in the case in Australia (Iredale, 2005, pp. 163-164; Ressia, 2010 as cited in Webb et al., 2013, p.20). Also, skills accreditation and assessment processes using current standards may disadvantage women who have been out of the workforce or have not kept up with advancements in their fields (Iredale, 2005, pp. 163-164).

The gendered nature of immigration policies and the non-recognition of overseas credentials could lend explanations to the high incidence of de-skilling and unemployment among skilled migrant women compared to their native-born counterparts (IOM & OECD, 2014; p. 6; Webb et al., 2013, p. 14). Studies conducted in Australia (Webb et al., 2013), New Zealand (Tharmaseelan et al., 2010) and Israel (Raijman & Semnyonov, 1997) found downward occupational mobility and considerable underutilisation of skills and capacities among highly skilled migrant women. Considering these inferior labour market outcomes and the underutilisation of their skills and potential value, a report recently released by

AMES Australia, refer to migrant women as Australia's "hidden assets" (Toscano, 2016, para. 2).

Gender and racial discrimination

Migrant women workers, including the skilled, suffer from gender and racial discrimination (Coates & Carr, 2005 as cited in Tharmaseelan et al., 2010; Iredale, 2005; Kreimer, 2004; Limpangog, 2013). Iredale (2005, p. 164) argues that gender discrimination can be as obvious as refusing to hire women engineers on the basis of lack of female toilets in building and construction sites, to more concealed forms such as excluding women from interviews due to "inadequate experience", pregnancy and family responsibilities, and disrupted career paths among others.

The wage gap is another form of gender-based discrimination that is highlighted in the literature. Studies found that often, highly skilled women's wages are lower than that of migrant men (Schaede, 2008 as cited in Achenbach, 2014, p. 230; UNIFEM, 2003, p. 20). Skilled migrant women also suffer from the "glass ceiling" phenomenon, whereby women are prevented from occupying high-level positions in the labour market (Iredale, 2005, p. 166; Killian & Manohar, 2015, p. 16; UNIFEM, 2003, p. 20). According to research, highly skilled migrant women are heavily concentrated at the lower end of the job hierarchy, are under-represented at all levels of management (UNIFEM, 2003), and struggle with upward career mobility (Achenbach, 2014; UNIFEM, 2003).

Killian and Manohar's (2015) comparative analysis demonstrate the impact of racialisation on migrant women's labour market outcomes. Their study found that highly skilled North African women were racialised in the French labour market to be "appropriate" and therefore predominantly assigned in feminised, low-status and often part-time jobs such as cleaning and childcare (p. 10; p. 16). Furthermore, the entry of migrant women into low-status occupations impeded their transition to better employment as the stereotype was reinforced (Killian & Manohar, 2015, p. 17). The authors however also note

that racialisation, in some context, could be an advantage. To illustrate, racialisation of Indian women as professionals and competent was crucial in their transition to highly skilled work (Killian & Manohar, 2015, p. 16).

Limpangog (2013) offers an additional insight by highlighting the effect of cultural expectations. According to the author, Filipina migrant women tolerated and endured gender and racial discrimination in the Australian workplace partly due to cultural expectations of them as women to be “virtuous and tolerant”, mediated by their gender and racial location and power relations in the workplace (p. 205).

Familial responsibilities

As explained in the previous section, migrant women are often conditioned to prioritise their familial responsibilities over their own career. Studies found that migrant women give up or delay their careers, or choose non-standard employment so they could manage their familial responsibilities. For instance, migrant women with children below five years of age in Europe have lower employment rates compared to native-born women (Rubin et al., 2008, p. xxiv). In Australia, migrant women were found to have more difficulties in reaching their career goals (Limpangog, 2011, para. 4). They are also less likely to practice the occupation of their training and are more likely to defer their career goals in the host country (AMES Australia, 2015, para. 13; Iredale, 2005, p. 162). In addition, Iredale (2005, p. 162) found that highly educated and professional migrant women were more likely to either delay or give up attempts to have their skills accredited or undergo training, which would have facilitated their labour market access. This is because many women stay at home to attend to the family’s needs and wait until their spouses get settled first (Iredale, 2005, p. 162). Similarly, Killian and Manohar (2015, p. 12) found that highly skilled Indian women delayed their education and labour market entry from 5 to 10 years post migration. Familial obligations also meant that migrant women are unavailable to work full time and are thus concentrated in flexible and non-standard employment (Kreimer, 2004, p. 231).

Migrant women with familial responsibilities have also been found to have difficulty achieving work-life balance (Achenbach, 2014, p. 225). This challenge of balancing work and familial responsibilities is exacerbated by migrant women's isolation from social networks, which could provide support such as grandparents helping out in childcare (Achenbach, 2014; Webb et al., 2013). Research shows that the loss of support networks in host countries reduced women's employability (IOM & OECD, 2014, p. 3; Evans 1984 as cited in Raijman & Semnyonov, 1997, p. 110).

Precarious migrant status

Several studies demonstrate the impact of temporary residence visa on labour market outcomes by using precarious migrant status. Bringing together the conceptualisations of various authors, precarious migrant status captures the range of different forms of "less than full status", including temporary migrant workers (Fudge, 2011; Goldring, Berinstein, & Bernhard, 2009; Goldring & Landolt, 2011). Precarious migrant status is defined by the lack or absence of any of the key rights or entitlements usually associated with permanent residence and citizenship (Goldring & Landolt, 2011; Goldring, Berinstein, & Bernhard, 2009). These include permanent residence authorisation, work permit, autonomy from a third party for residence or employment rights (such as sponsoring spouse or employer), full access to public services and social protections available to permanent residents, and non-deportability (Goldring, Berinstein, & Bernhard, 2009; Goldring & Landolt, 2011).

Precarious migrant status can render temporary migrant workers vulnerable in the labour market (Fudge, 2011; Goldring & Landolt, 2011; MBIE, 2014; Vosko, 2010). Furthermore, Goldring and Landolt (2011) conclude that migrant women with precarious migrant status are more likely to be employed in precarious work compared to men. Goldring and Landolt (2011) found that migrant status and job quality upon entry into the host country are significant predictors of the migrant's labour market outcome trajectory. Their study found that precarious migrant status increases the likelihood of having precarious work and respondents who had highly precarious jobs during their first year were more likely to

hold jobs that are still highly precarious in the future. This is contrary to general labour and immigration research, which posits that the longer an immigrant stays in the host country, labour outcome will improve (Harvey, Siu, & Reil, 1999 as cited in Goldring & Landolt, 2011). The study also found that even respondents who entered with a precarious migrant status but were able to shift to a secure status (i.e. permanent residency) were still more likely to be in jobs that were significantly more precarious than those held by immigrants who entered and remained with a relatively secure status of permanent residence. This suggests that transitioning from precarious to more secure forms of legal migration status does not result in improved labour market outcomes and will not protect many migrant workers from precarious work (Goldring & Landolt, 2011).

Scholars link this labour market vulnerability to the diminished rights and lack of entitlements and protection associated with a precarious migrant status (Fudge, 2011; Goldring & Landolt, 2011; Vosko, 2010). The immigration policies of high-income countries are characterised by a multitude of migrant statuses (Goldring & Landolt, 2011) and each status is associated with different sets of rights, entitlements and restrictions in and beyond the labour market (Anderson & Ruhs, 2010; Dauvergne & Marsden, 2014; Vosko, 2010). For instance, some policies in EU countries, which have been identified to render migrant women workers vulnerable, include zero access to unemployment benefits, and zero to limited protection with regards to employment security and working conditions (Rubin et al., 2008, p. xxiv). Also, migrant women have limited access to key gender equality measures such as childcare provision and guarantee of return to work after maternity leave (IOM & OECD, 2014; Rubin et al., 2008). In Australia, migrant women do not have access to employment services (AMES Australia, 2016, p. 2).

Precarious migrant status segments the labour market by creating a supply of, and demand for a sector of workers who are more vulnerable in the labour market due to their diminished access to rights, entitlements, and protections. Temporary labour migration programs have often been accompanied by labour market segmentation (Ruhs, 2003). The existence of dirty, dangerous, difficult and demeaning jobs which local workers find undesirable creates a demand for migrant workers (Rosewarne, 2010, p. 104). At the same

time, differentiating migrants through precarious migrant statuses creates a distinct labour supply excluded from the standard employment relationship (Anderson & Ruhs, 2010; Vosko, 2010).

Precarious migrant status can also influence migrant women's labour market outcomes in other ways. In Australia for instance, employers were reluctant to hire women with a temporary residence visa believing that the women would be available to work for short periods only (AMES Australia, 2016).

Visa conditions

Some conditions attached to certain visas place migrant workers at a disadvantage (MBIE, 2014, p. 46). Such conditions include restrictions on joining unions, restrictions on terminating or seeking alternative employment, limited duration of contract, restriction on physical mobility, and the requirement to go home before renewal of work visa or employment (Rosewarne, 2010, p. 104). Temporary migrant workers are bound to a specific document, which Rosewarne (2010, p. 104; 2012, p. 76) argues are in effect contract of indenture – temporary work contracts bind workers to a specific employer and occupation within a specific time period. As temporary migrant workers' legal stay in the host country is contingent on their employment contract, they are less likely to complain when abused in the labour market by employers (Foulkes, 2015). As ILO (2010b) have noted –

“...evidence suggests that, in some situations, there may be a deliberate link between policies and practices of excluding migrants from legal and social protection while apparently tolerating their presence in precarious situations that ensure they remain low-paid, docile and flexible” (p. 213).

Flexible and non-standard employment

The increasing reliance of businesses on flexible and non-standard forms of employment intersects with other constraints mentioned in this section to position migrant workers in vulnerable and precarious situations (Kreimer, 2014; MBIE, 2014, pp. 76-77). In the context of temporary labour migration, the temporariness of employment contracts shapes labour market experience in a number of ways. Firstly, non-standard employment, including temporary work, is associated with characteristics of precarious work (Casez & Laiglesia, 2014) as it excludes workers from welfare benefits and employment protections (McKay et al., 2012, p. 5).

Secondly, temporary work contracts segment the labour market (Doeringer & Piore, 1971; Reich, Gordon, & Edwards, 1973). The co-existence of two different types of contracts – fixed term and permanent – drives labour market differences between workers, as well as prevents mobility from fixed-term to permanent jobs (Casez & Laiglesia, 2014). Finally, temporary contracts weaken migrant workers' position. To illustrate, temporary work permits bind workers to their employers (Cheng, 2006), thereby limiting the ability of women to seek redress from abusive employers (Rosewarne, 2012, p. 76). Lodging of complaints could result to dismissal, which in turn could raise the prospect of deportation even before the complaint is heard (Rosewarne, 2012, p. 76).

2.3.4 Section Summary: Migrant Women's Labour Market Outcomes

To recap, the main objective of this section is to understand the labour market outcomes of migrant women in temporary skilled migration and in what ways these outcomes are shaped. Most of the literature has focused on the experiences of migrant women in low-paid and low-skilled work, while women in skilled migration are under-researched. This may be due to the fact that majority of migrant women are employed in these sectors (Boucher, 2007; Kofman & Raghuram, 2009; Limpangog, 2013; Piper, 2005). Some authors

(Piper, 2005; UN Women, n.d; Webb, et. al, 2013) imply though that the outcomes for low-skilled and unskilled migrant women may not necessarily reflect the experiences of migrant women workers in skilled work. The assumption is that the high levels of education and work experience that skilled migrants possess mean they are not at risk of exclusion (Webb, et al., 2013, p. 12).

This literature review found however that labour market disadvantage typically shapes the experiences of migrant women relative to native-born women and migrant men, and even skilled migrant women are not exempted. The major source of migrant women's – both skilled and unskilled – vulnerability is what scholars call a double disadvantage. Gender crosscuts with other layers of discrimination such as race/ethnicity and migrant status that disadvantage migrant women in the labour market. This disadvantage operates through various mechanisms and institutions such as gendered immigration policies, familial responsibilities, non-recognition of overseas credentials, and gender and racial discrimination, among others. In the context of temporary labour migration, this literature review suggests that temporariness of residency and employment contracts adds to the double disadvantage of migrant women. Temporary labour migration is generally characterised by precarious work (Anderson, 2010; Beneria et al., 2012; Boese et al., 2013; Department of Labour, 2008; Foulkes, 2015; Fudge, 2011; Goldring & Landolt, 2011; MBIE, 2014; Rosewarne, 2010; 2012; Ruhs, 2013). Also, temporary labour migration provides limited pathways to permanent residency and citizenship (Rosewarne, 2010). According to Rosewarne (2010, p. 105), precarious work and limited pathways to permanent residency converge to produce a new sector of global labour force associated with a degree of “unfreedom”– workers who are locked into positions subordinate to the classic wage worker.

As a result, migrant women, including skilled migrant women, are found in jobs with varying degrees of precariousness. Specific to Australia, migrant women have been found to have lower labour force participation rate, lower income relative to their skills and qualifications, and have higher unemployment (Hawthorne, 2011; Miranti, Nepal, & McNamara, 2010 as cited in AMES Australia, 2016, p. 1). The table below provides a

summary of migrant women’s labour market outcomes and the factors shaping such outcomes based on literature.

Table 2. Migrant Women’s Labour Market Vulnerability and Outcomes

Sources of Labour Market Vulnerability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Double disadvantage (Boyd, 1984; Rubin et al., 2008; UN, 2001) • Temporariness (Rosewarne, 2010; 2012)
Factors Shaping Labour Market Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gendered immigration policies (Bach, 2009; Iredale, 2005; IOM & OECD, 2014; Rubin et al., 2008) • Non- recognition of overseas credentials (Iredale, 2005; IOM & OECD, 2014; Killian & Manohar, 2015; Rubin et al., 2010; Tharmaseelan et al., 2010; UN Women, n.d.; Webb et al., 2013) • Gender and racial discrimination (Coates & Carr, 2005 as cited in Tharmaseelan et al., 2010; Iredale, 2005; Kreimer, 2004; Limpangog, 2013) • Familial responsibilities (Iredale, 2005; Kreimer, 2004; Rubin et al., 2008) • Precarious migrant status (Fudge, 2011; Goldring, Berinstein, & Bernhard, 2009; Goldring & Landolt, 2011; MBIE, 2014; Vosko, 2010) • Visa conditions (MBIE, 2014; Rosewarne, 2010) • Rise in non-standard employment (Kreimer, 2014; MBIE, 2014)
Labour Market Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More likely to be unemployed and underemployed (ABS 2009a as cited in Webb et al., 2013; Phillips & Abo, 2016; Rubin et al., 2008) • Limited labour market access, de-skilling and downward occupational mobility (Achenbach, 2014; AMES Australia, 2016; den Bergh & Du Plessis, 2012; IOM & OECD, 2014; Killian & Manohar, 2015; Limpangog, 2013; Raijman, 1997; Ressia, 2013; Tharmaseelan et al., 2010; Webb et al., 2013) • Career delays (ABS 2009a as cited in Webb et al., 2013; Iredale, 2005; Killian & Manohar, 2015; Toscano, 2016) • Long hours (Toscano, 2016) • Disproportionately represented in low-skilled, low-paid, and non-standard employment (ABS 2009a as cited in Webb et al., 2013; Boyd, 1984; OECD, 2008; Kreimer, 2004; Phillips & Abo, 2016; Rosewarne, 2012) • Glass ceiling (Achenbach, 2014; Iredale, 2005; Killian & Manohar, 2015; UNIFEM, 2003) • Under-represented in highly skilled work (Bach, 2009; IOM & OECD,

	<p>2014; Iredale, 2005; Rubin et al., 2008)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wage gaps (Schaede, 2008 as cited in Achenbach, 2014; UNIFEM, 2003) • Strain in work-life balance (Achenbach, 2014) • Limited autonomy and control (MBIE, 2014; Rosewarne, 2010) • Limited access to rights, entitlements and protection (Beneria et al., 2012; Fudge, 2011; Goldring & Landolt, 2011; IOM & OECD, 2014; Rubin et al., 2008; Vosko, 2010) • Limited labour mobility (Grimshaw & Rubery, 1997 as cited in Kreimer, 2004; Rubin et al., 2008) • More vulnerable to discrimination, exploitation, and abuse (ILO, n.d.-a; MBIE, 2014) • Stereotyping and bullying (Limpangog, 2013) • Difficulty re-entering the labour market after maternity leaves (Estevez-Abe, 2013, Suzuki, 2007 as cited in Achenbach, 2014; Rubin et al., 2008)
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Source: Author, based on the literature

However, Killian and Manohar (2015, p. 9) point out that the labour market disadvantage of migrant women is relative across contexts. In a comparative analysis of highly skilled migrant women, they demonstrate that Indian women who migrated to the US primarily as dependents and were largely married and with children were able to transform their initial disadvantage into an advantage later on, which enabled them to transition to highly skilled jobs (p. 9). In contrast, North African women who migrated to France independently and were largely without children and therefore appeared to be in a more advantageous position to enter the labour market were trapped in low-skilled and unskilled unemployment and underemployment (Killian & Manohar, 2015, pp. 9-10).

Some researchers argue that despite its negative impact, temporariness is a justified and necessary trade-off for the opportunities for migrant workers in host countries (Ruhs, 2013; Ruhs & Martin, 2008). According to Ruhs' (2013, pp. 4-6) "migrant openness-rights trade-off", the openness in the admission of labour migrants in high-income countries also meant restriction of their rights in order to protect national and long-term interests. Furthermore, sending countries are also aware of the trade-off, but are not willing to pursue more rights for migrant workers, fearing that doing so might reduce their access to

host countries' labour markets (Ruhs, 2013, pp. 7-8). The author also argues that temporary labour schemes expand migrant workers' choices by offering opportunities to earn higher incomes legally at the potential expense of their rights. Similarly, Bell and Piper (2005) argue that circumscription of rights of migrant workers vis-à-vis local workers is justified on moral grounds if workers decide that there are positive gains to be had from migrating for work.

In spite of their labour market disadvantage, skilled migrant women exercised voice and agency in the labour market in a number of ways. These will be explored in the next section.

2.4. EMPOWERMENT AND AGENCY IN THE LABOUR MARKET

Migrant women exercise agency and employ various strategies to cope with their inferior labour market positions. As explained in the previous section, temporary migrant workers have voice and are able to exercise agency, albeit at a minimal degree, in the sense that they still choose to migrate and work in the host country in spite of labour market challenges and trade off of rights (Bell & Piper, 2005; Ruhs, 2013, p. 7). Also, migrant women are able to overcome labour market barriers. For instance, Tharmaseelan et al. (2010, pp. 219-220; p. 233) argue that skilled migrant women use "career self-management" strategies such as seeking for more information, social integration, and acquiring further qualifications and work experience in the host country. Killian and Manohar (2015, p. 10) found that Indian migrant women escaped deskilling and transitioned to highly skilled jobs in the United States by taking on low-waged and unpaid skilled work through volunteering and internships. This strategy enabled migrant women to acquire specific technical and cultural skills that gained them competence, substantial work experience, and professional networks (Killian & Manohar, 2015, p. 10). Some women also resorted to post migration

(re)education as a strategy to enter high paying skilled work (Banerjee & Verma, 2011 as cited in Killian & Manohar, 2015, p. 10).

Killian and Manohar's (2015, p. 14) study also demonstrates that highly skilled women capitalised on social capital embedded in social networks to navigate around labour market integration. School and work networks that Indian women developed through re(education) and through their initial low-waged work, connected them to employment opportunities and provided mentorship with regards to strategies around labour market access before and after graduation (Van Ngo & Este, 2006 as cited in Killian & Manohar, 2015, pp. 13-14). Kinship/ethnic networks also provided work referrals and opportunities (Manohar, 2013 as cited in Killian & Manohar, 2015, p. 14).

In addition, the significance of social movements, civil society, and unions in the demand for better working conditions and protection of labour rights is highlighted in literature. Goldring and Landolt (2011) found that temporary migrant workers who were involved in community-based organisations, social movements and community centres were significantly less likely to be in precarious jobs in comparison to those who had not. Also, Limpangog (2013, p. 201) argues that union membership plays a significant role in protecting migrant women from race and gender discrimination and in demanding for equal rights. According to Migration Council Australia (2013), migrant workers on a 457 visa in Australia who were union members were more satisfied with their employment. Similarly, grassroots organisations worked collectively with migrant workers for the protection of rights (MBIE, 2014, p. 108). The formation of social movements, according to Casperz (2008), is an expression of individual and collective agency among migrant women. Citing the experiences of Filipina temporary skilled migrants in Australia, the author notes that women organised associations and unions, and staged political actions, which resulted to better treatment and working conditions.

Migrant women also make changes in their employment and reproductive situations as a means of coping with dissatisfaction with regards to working conditions, and as a strategy to achieve work-life balance (Achenbach, 2014; pp. 235-236; p. 239). For instance, highly

skilled Chinese migrant women in Japan either switch jobs/occupations, or choose to be self-employed to circumvent labour market barriers and as a means of having a challenging skilled job (Achenbach, 2014, p. 239). At the same time, self-employment allowed migrant women to manage their familial and work responsibilities (Mushabeen 2009 as cited in Killian & Manohar, 2015, p. 15). In some cases, migrant women shape their reproductive choices such as delaying or foregoing childbearing and separation from family (Achenbach, 2014, pp. 238-239).

In addition, migrant women use tolerance and confrontation to deal with race and gender discrimination in the workplace (Limpangog, 2013). According to Limpangog (2013, pp. 204-205), skilled Filipina migrants displayed “pakikisama” (tolerance) through diplomacy and personal courage to racist jokes and petty discrimination as a coping mechanism and to protect their self-esteem. Displays of tolerance could also work as a strategy towards social integration in a racialised environment (Limpangog, 2013). In cases wherein tolerance does not bring about positive change, migrant women shift their strategy to “pakikibaka” (confrontational) (Limpangog, 2013, pp. 205). Confrontational strategies include the filing of formal complaints, questioning systems, practices and decisions, and asserting their workplace and citizenship rights to gain colleagues’ respect and to access or develop internal support system (Limpangog, 2013, pp. 205-207). In some cases, Achenbach (2014, p. 239) also observed the migrant women situated their unfavourable working conditions as an opportunity to learn about the local corporate culture and as an investment in human capital.

2.5. CHAPTER SUMMARY

Over the past decades, the global labour migration landscape has transformed. In particular, more women are now migrating independently for work. Also, many developed countries are shifting to temporary skilled migration as a priority. Under temporary skilled

migration, migrant women, including the skilled, are disadvantaged in the labour market for being a woman, for being a migrant, and for being temporary. Migrant women first and foremost, are negatively affected by the gender-based segregation of the labour market, devaluation of women's work, and the persistence of traditional gender roles in both sending and host countries. This gender-based disadvantage intersects with challenges and vulnerabilities associated with being a migrant such as gendered immigration policies, non-recognition of overseas credentials, and racial and gender discrimination among others.

Specific to temporary skilled labour migration, the combined impact of temporary employment contracts and precarious migrant status operates as another significant source of migrant women's labour market vulnerability. Temporary employment contracts are associated with precariousness, segments the labour market between the secure and insecure workers, and reduces the bargaining power of migrant workers. Precarious migrant status is associated with restrictions and a limited set of rights, entitlements and protections different from that of citizens and permanent residents. This disparity in freedom and access to rights and services contributes to the further segmentation of the labour market by creating a supply of, and demand for a sector of workers who are more vulnerable in the labour market. As Fudge (2011) argues, migrant status is utilised to assign temporary migrant workers to jobs that are precarious, as well as limit their ability to improve their terms and conditions of employment. Also, temporary work contracts and precarious migrant status create a power imbalance between workers and employers. In this regard, Macklin (2010) argues that immigration law does not only determine "who gets in and who stays out" but structures the vulnerability of migrants by assigning them various categories of precariousness (p. 332).

As a result, migrant women, including skilled migrant women, are found in jobs with varying degrees of precariousness. In general, migrant women are more likely to be unemployed, underemployed, and concentrated into non-standard, low-paid and low-skilled jobs in comparison to migrant men and native-born women. With regards to skilled migrant women, common and significant experiences include limited labour market access, de-skilling, delayed careers, downward occupational mobility and gender-based

discrimination such as wage gaps and glass ceiling. However, migrant women workers are not merely conceived as victims. Considering these inferior labour market outcomes and the underutilisation of their skills and potential value, a report recently released by AMES Australia, refers to migrant women as Australia's "hidden assets" (Toscano, 2016, para. 2). In spite of the restrictions and disadvantages that migrant women workers confront in the labour market, they are still able to exercise voice and agency in numerous ways.

Some researchers argue, that despite its negative impact, the circumscription of freedoms and rights within temporary skilled migration is justified and necessary. Limiting temporary migrant workers' freedoms, rights and entitlements is a necessary trade-off for host countries to balance the need to address its labour market shortages and managing issues typically associated with labour migration. Also, it is justified in the sense that migrant workers decide that compromising their rights and access to services is worth the positive gains to be had from overseas employment. Still,

The temporariness and feminisation of migration are promoted by IFIs and multilateral agencies as a development strategy. However, some scholars note that the vulnerability and precariousness that accompany the migration of women diminishes its development potential. Women will only be empowered if they are employed in non-precarious work, and migration policies are non-restrictive, and work and residency are longer-term or permanent rather than a temporary one (Hugo, 2000; 2009; IOM, 2009).

Overall, scholars agree that migrant women remain invisible in the literature on skilled migration. Furthermore, this literature review found that migrant women are even more invisible within temporary skilled migration. In addition, most of the research has focused on labour market outcomes, while women's feelings and perceptions are rarely heard. This study aims to provide insight on the perspective of migrant women, by exploring and understanding their labour market experiences under temporary skilled migration.

CHAPTER 3: FILIPINA MIGRATION AND AUSTRALIA'S 457 VISA SCHEME

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter framed this study with a literature review on the labour market conditions of migrant women and demonstrated the intersection of different structures that shape such conditions. This chapter will provide the background and context of the study. Firstly, the feminisation of Philippine migration and the increasing Filipino migration to Australia will be presented. Secondly, the rationale for Australia's changing immigration policies, specifically the increasing shift towards skilled and temporary migration – will be examined. Finally, the issues affecting 457 visa workers in the labour market will be explored, as well as the sources of their labour market vulnerability.

3.2 THE FILIPINO MIGRATION TO AUSTRALIA

Many Filipino migrants perceive migration as a necessary sacrifice and the golden ticket to a better future for themselves and their families. The Philippine government celebrates them as the country's "bagong bayani" [new heroes]; however migrant advocacy groups call them modern-day slaves. The Philippine government highlights the annual billion-dollar remittances that keep the economy afloat and other development benefits of labour migration. Migrant groups emphasise that most Filipino migrant workers are forced to migrate mainly due to poor economic circumstances in the Philippines, and are made to

endure poor and sometimes exploitative living and working conditions abroad. This is specially so among migrant women workers. With Australia's big demand for skilled workers and the chronic poverty in the Philippines, recent years have seen an increasing number of skilled Filipinos migrating to Australia.

3.2.1 The Labour Migration of Filipinas

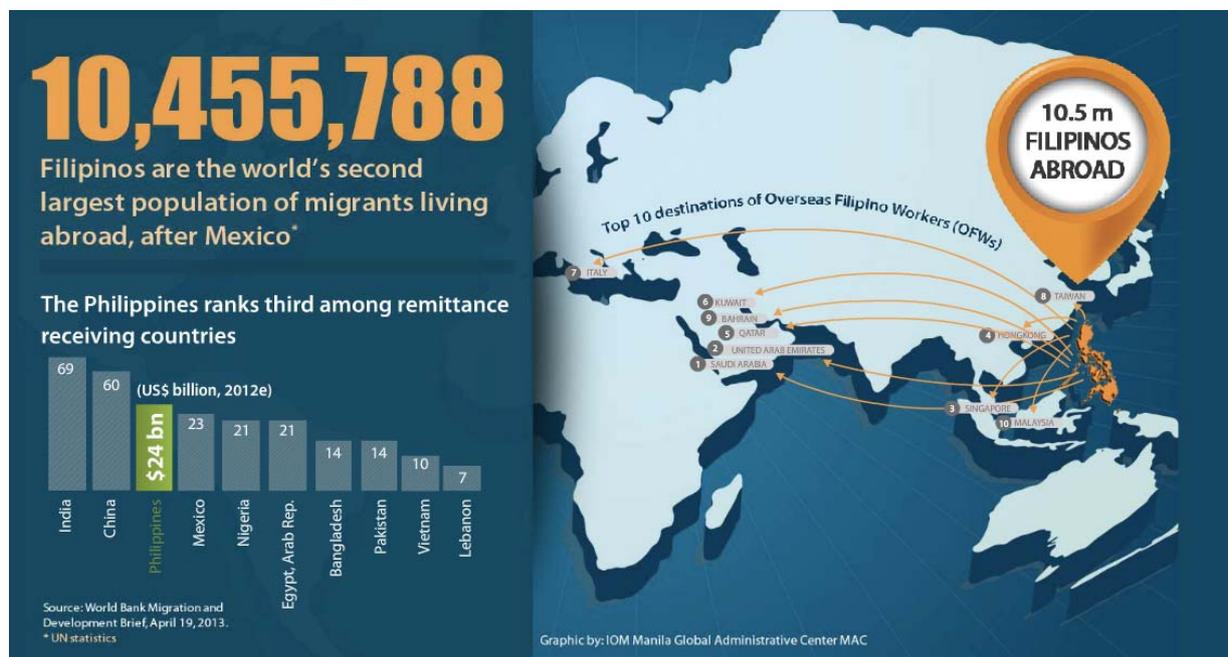
The Philippines, a 7,000-island archipelago in Southeast Asia, has one of the world's largest diaspora. In fact, 10.5 million or ten per cent of its 100-million population are living and working abroad, making Filipinos the world's second largest population of migrants, second only to Mexico (IOM, 2013; Rappler, 2014, para. 1). With over four decades of experience in international labour migration and a model labour export program, the country has carved its niche as a major supplier of labour migrants globally. Consistently, the Philippines are in the top ten source countries for traditional immigration countries (SMC & IOM, 2013) and along with Indonesia, holds the top spot for deploying migrant women (Reyes, 2007). The 2.32 million Filipinos working overseas (Philippine Statistics Authority [PSA], 2015, para. 1) generated USD 24.3 billion of remittances in 2014 alone (Kersting, 2015, para. 1). This figure accounts for approximately 8.5 per cent of the country's total GDP (Kersting, 2015, para. 2). As defined by law, the term overseas Filipinos (OFs) covers all Filipino nationals abroad, regardless of legal status, while overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) specifically refer to migrant workers (SMC & IOM, 2013, p.54).

From being a stopgap measure to address the economic and political crises in the 1970s, labour migration has become an entrenched reality in Philippine society (SMC & IOM, 2013). The "OFW phenomenon", or the mass migration of Filipino workers (Medina, 2012, para. 13), is sustained by a culture of migration that has settled deep within the Filipino psyche, driven by chronic poverty. Increasingly, overseas employment is becoming a main strategy for many Filipino families to improve their situation and in some cases, as the only means of survival (SMC & IOM, 2013). Currently, a quarter of the total population live

below the poverty line (Jennings, 2015, para. 7; Rappler, 2014, para. 12). And in spite of a growth rate forecast of 6-6.5 per cent (Martin, 2015, para. 4), the Philippines still has the highest unemployment rate among the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) states, at 7-8 per cent since 2005 (Santos, 2014, para. 12). In addition, the country has an increasing and young population, and is plagued with widespread corruption, annual calamities, and violence in Mindanao, among others (Jennings, 2015). These factors, along with the increasing labour demand in industrialised countries and the Philippine government's systematisation and promotion of labour migration, have facilitated the departure of millions of Filipinos every year.

The figure below highlights some basic information about the Filipino labour migration to Australia.

Figure 1. *Top 10 Destinations of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs)*



Source: IOM, 2013

Latest government statistics show Filipina migrant workers now outnumber men (PSA, 2015; SMC & IOM, 2012). As of 2014, female migrant workers were at 50.5% while male migrant workers were at 49.5% (PSA, 2015, para. 2). Also, almost 3 in every 10 female migrant workers were aged 25 to 29 years (PSA, 2015, para. 2). The Philippines is one of the three countries in Asia, along with Indonesia and Sri Lanka, where women comprise majority of migrant workers (Guerrero et al., 2000). This is spurred by a massive global demand in household work, which has doubled between 2009 and 2012 (SMC & IOM, 2013). In fact, the largest concentration of Filipino migrant workers is in domestic work, which is largely dominated by women (SMC & IOM, 2013). However, the top professional occupation is nursing, which is also female-dominated (SMC & IOM, 2013). More than half of female migrant workers were labourers and unskilled workers, at 54% (PSA, 2015, para. 2). The top ten destinations for Filipina migrant workers are Hong Kong (where more than 90 per cent of Filipino workers are women), Kuwait, Singapore, Italy, UAE, Japan, and Taiwan (Asis, 2006).

The departure of Filipinas comes with great costs. Literature on the experiences of skilled Filipina migrants is scarce. Generally however, Filipina migrants are subject to the same challenges faced by Filipino migrant workers, but are more vulnerable and at risk given the inherently vulnerable nature of their jobs (Asis, 2006; Guerrero et al., 2000; PDI, 2012; SMC & IOM, 2013). The Philippines' migration policy oscillates between promotion and protection, encouragement and regulation (Guerrero et al., 2000; SMC & IOM, 2013). However, for Guerrero et al. (2000, p. 279), the tension between promotion of Filipina labour migration and the protection of their rights has placed the government in a bind. Given the strong demand for Filipina migrant workers, and the prospect of even greater demand in the future, the country finds itself in the difficult position of allowing the migration of women under circumstances which seemingly promote or allow what Lim (1998, as cited in Guerrero et al., 2000, p. 280) calls the "comparative advantage of women's disadvantage".

3.2.2 Filipino Migration to Australia

Australia is a country of migrants. Every 2 minutes and 19 seconds, 1 international migrant is welcomed into the country (ABC News, 2013, para. 5). International migration has been the main driver of the country's population growth since 2005 (ABS, 2015a; DIBP, 2014a). In 2014 for instance, 53 per cent of its population increase was contributed by net overseas migration (ABS, 2015b, para. 2). On the same year, overseas-born Australians hit a 120-year peak, comprising 28 per cent – or 6.6 million – of the country's 23.5 million population (ABS, 2015a, para. 1)

Filipinos have been migrating to Australia since 1872, when men escaping from Spanish tyranny worked as divers in the pearling industry and eventually petitioned their families (Department of Immigration and Citizenship [DIAC], 2014). During the 1950s, students came to Australia through the Colombo Plan and stayed on after graduation (DIAC, 2014). It was however during the late 1960s when the Filipino population started to rapidly grow, as the immigration restrictions in Australia eased and Martial Law was declared in the Philippines (DIAC, 2014). The 1970s and 1980s saw the migration of women as spouses of Australian residents through the Family Reunion Program (DIAC, 2014; Tweddell, 2015). Over the past two decades however, many have migrated as skilled migrants. As of 2014, the Philippines ranked as the fourth largest source country of migrants with 225,100 Filipinos – one per cent of the total population (ABS, 2015a, para. 9; Tweddell, 2015, para. 6). Filipinos are one of the fastest growing communities in Australia (DIBP, 2015a; DIAC, 2014) and soon, will be the single largest group in the country (SMC & IOM, 2013). Most Filipino migrants are located in New South Wales, followed by Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia (DIAC, 2014). And according to the DIBP (2015a, para. 3), Filipinas substantially outnumbered males as of 2013 at 61 per cent.

Australia is an attractive destination for migrants for its economic opportunities, climate and quality of life (Khoo, McDonald, & Hugo, 2005). At the same time, the country has been opening its doors wider for the entry of migrants, especially skilled migrants. With an

impending shortage of 2.8 million skilled workers in the next decade (Crowe, 2014, para. 2), Australia is turning to migrants as a large and important labour source. The huge skills crisis was a result of a resource boom and an ageing population. The resource boom required a large number of workers, especially with specialised skills and knowledge in sectors such as in mining and construction (Bahn, Barratt-Pugh, & Yap, 2012), which employers claim, cannot be met by the local labour force (Khoo et al., 2004 in Cameron & Harrison, 2013). In addition, Australia is confronted by a declining fertility rate, which is now below replacement level, and a life expectancy that has increased over the last five decades (DIBP, 2014a). Indeed, the government projects that there will be more Australians retiring than joining the labour force by 2036 (DIBP, 2014a). By 2050, a quarter of its population will be over 64 years old and 5.2 million skilled migrants will be needed (GMA News, 2011, para. 14). In the next few years, immigration will be the only source of net labour force growth in Australia – without migrants labour force growth will cease within the next ten years (DIBP, 2014a).

Australia's labour crisis is viewed as an opportunity by the Philippine government. According to former Philippine Overseas Employment Agency (POEA) Chief Carlos Cao Jr., Australia is one of the least explored frontiers and potential large market for Filipino migrant workers (GMA News, 2011). The labour crisis is perceived as a viable solution to the growing unemployment and underemployment in the Philippines and a potential large source of remittances (GMA News, 2011). In 2014, 2.9 per cent of total remittances in the Philippines were generated by Filipino migrants based in Australia (PSA, 2015, para. 8).

The labour migration of Filipinas continues to grow, and most are in labour-intensive and unskilled work, which is associated with vulnerability (see Chapter 2). Meanwhile, the labour shortage in Australia and the easing up of immigration restrictions to bring in skilled workers means more Filipinos are coming to Australia on temporary skilled visas. In the next section, the changing Australian labour immigration landscape, as well as its implications on the labour market situation of migrant workers, will be explored.

3.3 AUSTRALIA'S CHANGING IMMIGRATION POLICY: PRIORITISING SKILLED AND TEMPORARY MIGRANTS

From the mid-1990s, Australia's immigration program underwent three fundamental changes – shifting from family immigration to skilled immigration, from permanent to temporary entry, and from independent application (points-tested) to employer-nominated. Under Australia's Migration Programme, there are two pathways towards permanent residence – the Family Stream, which enables the migration of immediate family members, and the Skill Stream (DIBP, 2014b). Over the past decade, skilled migration now exceeds family migration in Australia (ABS, 2010; AMES Australia, 2016; Balogh, 2014; Boucher, 2007). Since 2004, majority of Filipino migrants come to Australia through the skilled migration scheme (Tweddell, 2015). Skill is generally defined in Australia as the ability to competently perform tasks associated with a certain occupation (ABS, 2013, para. 28). The Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) provides a list of skilled occupation for migration and categorises them into different skill levels measured through formal education, training, and previous experience required for the tasks (ABS, 2013; DIBP, 2015b).

Australia led the world in removing barriers for foreign workers, reforming its skilled immigration policies more extensively than any other advanced economy in this recent period (Armitage, 2012). As a result of a series of reforms in its skilled immigration programme, the number of skilled migrants tripled in Australia in the past decade and now accounts for close to half of all migrants (Cameron & Harrison, 2013, p. 108). From 2010-2011, majority of skilled migrants were professionals (62.9 per cent), followed by technicians and traders (16.5 per cent), and managers (15 per cent) (DIAC, 2010; 2011 in Cameron & Harrison, 2013, p. 109). Top industries were health care and social assistance, other services and construction (Cameron & Harrison, 2013, p. 109). A report released by AMES Australia (2016) found that under the skilled visas stream, women are much more likely to arrive as dependents (also referred to as partner migrant or secondary applicants).

The shift to skilled immigration has clear and substantial benefits to Australia (DIAC, 2003 as cited in Boucher, 2007). Apart from addressing the country's skilled labour shortage, the development and rise in skilled immigration during the 1990s was based on a deliberate economic rationale – skilled immigrants place less burden on the State and bring more economic benefits compared to family reunion immigration (Iredale 1997; 1998 as cited in Boucher, 2007). True enough, studies show that skilled migrants are less welfare dependent, are more active in the labour market, and have stronger employment outcomes in comparison to those who came through other forms of immigration schemes (Boucher & Cerna, 2014; DIBP, 2014b). In some cases, skilled migrants have performed better in the labour market compared to Australian workers (DIBP, 2014b; Loussikian, 2014). They have a higher participation rate, are more likely to be in a skilled occupation, and have a higher full time income than the typical Australian (DIBP, 2014b). Skilled migrants also worked smarter and harder than their Australian-born colleagues, contribute to innovation and entrepreneurship, and make positive fiscal contribution to the economy because they pay more in taxes than they consume in government expenditures (Loussikian, 2014; Khoo, McDonald, & Hugo, 2005).

Another significant change in Australian labour migration policy is the transformation of its skilled migration programme from permanent to temporary entry (Armitage, 2012; Toh & Quinlan, 2009). Prior to the 1970s, the use of temporary resident foreign workers was avoided in favour of permanent migration, predominantly from Europe (Quinlan & Levertracy, 1990 as cited in Toh & Quinlan, 2009). However, the need for a more flexible labour force by the business community in order to cope with the challenges of globalisation prompted the government to prioritise temporary skilled migration. A number of categories have been developed to facilitate the entry of temporary migrants with work rights such as student visa, working holidaymaker visa, and the Pacific Seasonal Workers' scheme, but the most significant is the temporary work (skilled) visa (subclass 457), also referred to as the subclass 457 visa (hereafter just 457 visa), which resulted to an influx of temporary labour migrants to Australia (Khoo, Hugo, & McDonald, 2005; Saunders, 2008). Along with the growing number of backpackers, international students, seasonal workers, and New Zealanders, temporary migrant arrivals have already surpassed

permanent arrivals since 2004. In 2012, there were more than 1 million temporary migrants in Australia – a 60 per cent increase from 2005 figures, making up five per cent of the total population, or about ten per cent of the total work force (Mares, 2012, para. 17; para. 19; para. 90). This indicates that the old paradigm of permanent migration is disappearing (Armitage, 2012; Saunders, 2008; Toh & Quinlan, 2009), and that temporary labour migration has become a significant component of the country's migration programme (Oke, 2012). Mares (2009) also argues that another significant transformation in Australia's labour immigration program is the shift from government planning, control and target setting to a more flexible set up whereby employers dictate flows based on demand.

Recent transformations in Australia's labour immigration policies reflect global trends as discussed in Chapter 2. As a result of and response to globalisation, Australia shifted its priorities towards the skilled and temporary migrant workers (Hugo, 2006). What was initially a stopgap measure has become a permanent feature of Australia's labour market and labour immigration policy. In the next section, Australia's main temporary skilled labour migration scheme – the 457 visa – and its implications on the labour market conditions of migrant workers, will be explored.

3.4 THE 457 VISA AND LABOUR MARKET VULNERABILITY

The most significant of Australia's temporary skilled migration schemes is the 457 visa. In recent years, the Australian government has heeded the business community's demand to expand the 457 visa programme, citing gains from bringing in temporary skilled workers. Yet at the same time, this visa scheme has been consistently criticised by various stakeholders for the number of labour market violations committed against 457 visa holders.

3.4.1 The 457 Visa

The 457 visa is the most common means of bringing in temporary skilled migrant workers to Australia, accounting for about half of the total migration to Australia (ABS, 2009 as cited in Bahn, Barratt-Pugh, & Yap, 2012, p. 5). According to Migration Council Australia (2013, p. 3), there are 190,000 primary and secondary 457 visa holders in the country. This figure is roughly equal to the annual intake of permanent migrants, but still a small fraction of the total 1.2 million temporary migrants in Australia (Migration Council Australia, 2013, p. 3).

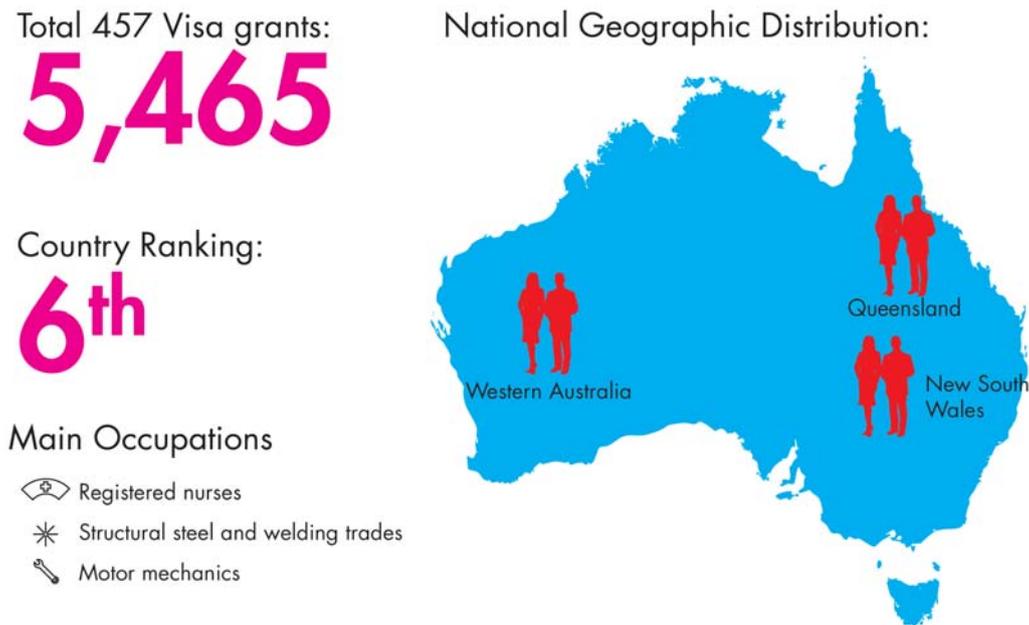
The 457 visa scheme is demand-driven and highly responsive to local labour market conditions (Migration Council Australia, 2013). It was designed to address the skills shortage by allowing approved Australian employers to nominate and sponsor skilled foreign workers for between 3 months to 4 years of residency, upon demonstrating that a suitable local worker cannot be hired (Cameron & Harrison, 2013; Mares, 2009). The 457 visa was introduced in August 1996 by the Keating government, initially as a short-term solution to the skills shortage (Toh & Quinlan, 2009) while local education and training caught up with demand (Mares, 2012). At first, the 457 visa was used to import medical and IT professionals but over time, the programme has broadened to include trades and lower skilled workers (Mares, 2009). In addition, the range of source countries also expanded beyond developed countries such as the United Kingdom to include developing countries like China, India, and the Philippines (Mares, 2009). And over the past years, the program has been increasingly instrumentalised as the government's response to the business community's need for flexible and skilled labour to cope with the challenges of globalisation (Khoo, Voigt-Graf, McDonald, & Hugo, 2007; Mares, 2012; Toh & Quinlan, 2009), while at the same time avoiding the tensions that come with granting permanent residency. According to Migration Council Australia (2013, p. 3), the 457 visa programme helps the country maintain its global competitiveness and is critical towards aspirations to becoming a regional hub.

Under this visa scheme, employers must first be approved as standard business sponsors before they can hire overseas workers over a two-year period (Cameron & Harrison, 2013). As sponsors, they are responsible in ensuring that the nominated positions fulfill minimum skill and salary levels (Cameron & Harrison, 2013). They are also held responsible for ensuring that the worker has adequate living and working conditions such as proper housing, transport to and from workplace, and adequate provision for the worker's children to attend school (Khoo et al., 2007 as cited in Bahn, Barratt-Pugh, & Yap, 2012). Holders of 457 visa, known as primary visa holders, are able to come in and out of Australia as long as the visa remains valid. Women in general are under-represented as primary applicants (Kofman & Raghuram, 2009). The visa can be renewed several times. They are also allowed to bring immediate family members with them to Australia as dependents, with spouses of principal holders given legal rights to work (Mares, 2009). They can apply for permanent residency for themselves and their family at the end of their stay (DIAC, 2009 as cited in Bahn, Barratt-Pugh, & Yap, 2012). The option to bring dependents and apply for permanent residency has made the 457 visa an attractive option among skilled migrants (Velayutham, 2013). A study by Khoo, McDonald, and Hugo (2005) indicates that the 457 visa programme has well targeted the entry of young, well-qualified and highly skilled people. They are young, educated, and with good work ethics (Loussikian, 2014). Skilled migrants now represent a significant component of Australia's labour force that is highly educated (Saunders, 2008).

The Philippines ranks as the sixth largest source country for skilled migrants under the 457 visa as of 2013-2014 (DIBP, 2015a). Filipino 457 visa holders peaked in 2011-2013 and decreased in 2014 (DIBP, 2015a). The main occupation for Filipinos under the 457 visa in 2013-2014 was nursing (DIBP, 2015a). Other top occupations were structural steel and welding trades workers, motor mechanics, cooks, software and applications programmers, mechanical engineering draftspersons and technicians, HR professionals, ICT system and business analysts, telecommunications trade workers, and accountants (DIBP, 2015a; Tweddell, 2015). Majority of Filipino 457 visa holders were located in Western Australia, followed by Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, and the Northern Territory (DIBP,

2015a). A few basic information about Filipino 457 visa holders during the period 2013-2014 are listed in the figure below.

Figure 2. *Filipino 457 Visa Holders in Australia*



Source: Author, adapted from DIBP (2015a)

3.4.2 Labour Market Situation of 457 Visa Holders

The 457 visa programme has been persistently criticised by various stakeholders for exposing temporary migrant workers to abuse and exploitation by their employers. Complaints filed by 457 visa holders at the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), in addition to pressure from unions, prompted the government to commission an independent review of the visa programme. One of the few key studies on the labour market situation of 457 visa workers is the Visa Subclass 457 Integrity Review, also referred to as the Deegan Review. Completed in 2008, the Review proves the criticisms to

be well founded, but particularly for those at the lower end of the salary scale (Parliament of Australia, 2012). The Deegan Review exposed the different forms of precariousness 457 visa holders were subjected to within their workplace. These included discrimination in the workplace, no overtime payment, longer work hours, limited access to medical benefits, illegal dismissal due to sickness and pregnancy, overcharging of rent and other expenses by employers, and even sexual harassment (Deegan, 2008, p. 6). The Review also found there was no sufficient assistance to make sure 457 visa holders fully understood their rights (Deegan, 2008). Similar studies provide evidence to Deegan's findings. According to Toh and Quinlan (2009), 457 visa holders confront occupational health and safety risks (OHS) largely due to their concentration in precarious jobs, and had difficulty accessing their OHS rights and entitlements. Oke (2012) found that 457 visa holders suffer from exploitative working conditions and salaries below market rates.

However, some scholars emphasise that the labour market experiences among 457 visa holders are not homogeneous. Some studies conclude that 457 visa workers who were low skilled and at the lower end of the salary scale were more vulnerable. For instance, Oke (2012) argues that low-skilled workers are more vulnerable while high-skilled workers are little affected by their temporary status (Oke, 2012). This conclusion is supported by the results of Khoo et al.'s (2005) study, which reveals that skilled temporary migrants found their work experiences on a 457 visa largely positive and highly satisfying. It must be noted though that a large majority of those who responded to Khoo et al.'s (2005) study were from developed and English-speaking countries. A survey conducted by Migration Council Australia (2013, p. 4) found that 88 per cent of 457 visa holders were very satisfied with their relationship with their employer. Furthermore, an overwhelming majority of 457 visa holders felt that they were able to utilise their skills and training in their jobs in Australia (Migration Council Australia, 2013). Deegan (2008) also concludes that workers at the lower end of the salary scale, specifically tradespeople and other less qualified workers, who make up a majority of all 457 visa holders, were more vulnerable. Similarly, Velayutham (2013) argues that experiences of precariousness differ according to the sector and nature of employment tenure. Velayutham's (2013) study of Indian 457 visa holders found that migrants employed in the IT industry mostly complained about the lack of job

security, given that the industry norm was contractual and project-based employment. Consequences of contract-based employment, as found by Velayutham (2013), include minimal relationships with colleagues, limited investment in migrant workers' capacity development, and difficult career progression. Meanwhile, 457 visa workers employed in the manufacturing and construction industries were found to be more precarious. Some of the labour market issues documented include exorbitant recruitment fees and other illegal charges, contract substitution, no overtime payment, dismissal without notice, expensive and cramped accommodations, long work hours, safety breaches and deduction of sick leaves (Velayutham, 2013). Indian 457 visa holders also complained about overwork, underpayment and slow, sporadic or absent wages (Velayutham, 2013).

Following the results of the Deegan Review, the Australian government put in place policy reforms and enforcement mechanisms to strengthen the integrity of the programme. One of the policies guarantees 457 visa holders the same wages and labour conditions as their local counterparts (Mares, 2009; Power, 2014). In addition, the Fair Work Commission (FWC) – Australia's workplace rights watchdog – has been given wider powers to investigate visa rorts² and to crack down on employers exploiting the program (Hurst, 2013). All employer sponsors are subject to the Employer (Amendment) Sanctions Act which subjects employer sponsors to fines, criminal sanctions, and even imprisonment, for breaching migrant workers' rights (Power, 2014). Yet, in spite of these reforms, unions and the media continue to document widespread rorting, or the abuse of the 457 visa. New forms of abuse included sham-contracting, threats for joining unions, immigration fraud, tax fraud, bullying, and intimidation (Clancy, 2014).

In February 2014, the Department of Immigration again commissioned a four-panel independent review (Balogh, 2014; Clancy, 2014) to look at the abuse and rorting of the programme, and to recommend whether to retain or terminate the labour market testing requirement (Interstaff International, 2014). The report "Robust New Foundations: A Streamlined, Transparent and Responsive System for the 457 Programme" which came out

² Visa rorting in the Australian context is the abuse of the 457 visa scheme to the disadvantage of migrant workers.

in September 2014, documented cases of salary and position concerns, but found no evidence of widespread visa rorting and gave the programme a clean bill of health (Baker, McKenzie, & Aston, 2014). According to the business community, cases of visa fraud and labour market abuse were isolated (Hurst, 2013). The report proposed recommendations to ease the import of temporary labour, including fast-tracking the approval process for larger businesses with good records, lenient English language requirements, and consideration of a 10 per cent reduction in the AUD 53, 900 maximum income threshold (Baker, McKenzie, & Aston, 2014, para. 4).

Yet contrary to the clean bill of health bestowed by the DIBP on the 457 visa programme, audits performed by the Fair Work Ombudsman show abuse and exploitation of temporary foreign workers (Baker, McKenzie, & Aston, 2014). According to the random audits, up to 40% of 457 visa holders were underpaid, made to work in occupations that did not match their visa applications, and were either no longer employed by their principal sponsors or whose sponsors could no longer be located (Baker, McKenzie, & Aston, 2014, para. 1). There were hundreds of cases of workers recruited as professionals but ended up in blue-collar jobs (Baker, McKenzie, & Aston, 2014). However, the audit also revealed that more than 1,000 cases reported no concerns (Baker, McKenzie, & Aston, 2014, para. 10). Mares (2009) clarifies that the “multiplying” cases of abuse is debatable. According to the author, the news organisation *Australian* concludes that either the abuse was increasing, or pro-active enforcement and monitoring introduced by the Rudd government has made the cases more visible. Still, Deegan (2008) concludes that cases brought to official attention were a small part of the overall problem.

An Internet search reveals that Filipinos are part of the statistics. Recent accounts in the media document the exploitation of Filipina 457 visa holders. In 2015, a company director was fined more than AUD 175,000 for violating the labour rights of 10 Filipinos, 5 of which were women, between 2009-2012 (Australian Associated Press, 2015, para. 1; para. 4). Other cases documented in the media include Filipina 457 visa holders being subjected to underpayment, illegal charging of recruitment costs, no overtime payment, no benefits, cramped accommodations, illegal dismissal, contract substitution, and ban on union

representation (Australian Associated Press, 2015; Brown, 2015; Toscano, 2015).

3.4.3 Sources of Vulnerability

Studies suggest that 457 visa workers are vulnerable in the labour market due to an imbalance in power between migrant workers and their employers. For instance, Mares (2009, para. 14) argues that the problem on the abuse of 457 visa holders is structural – it emanates from a disparity in power between first world employers and third world workers. Similarly, Oke (2012) concludes that the vulnerability of 457 visa holders rests upon their bargaining position vis-à-vis the employers. Literature suggest that the 457 visa program was designed in a way that affords employer sponsors much influence throughout the migration process, which has negative implications on the rights and agency of temporary migrant workers. Scholars agree that 457 visa holders are vulnerable in the labour market because their existence – their continued employment and residency in Australia – largely depend on the employers (Boese, Campbell, Roberts, & Tham, 2013; Deegan, 2008; Oke, 2012; Dauvergne & Marsden, 2010). Crucial to the discussion are three important points: 1) the increasing trend of employer nomination instead of points-tested as the dominant basis for entry of skilled migrants into Australia, 2) employer-sponsored skilled immigration as pathway to permanent residency, and 3) limited rights and lack of access to public goods associated with non-citizenship or precarious migrant status.

Impact of employer nomination

Employer nomination and sponsorship is now the dominant pathway to enter Australia. Employer sponsorship was due to a deliberate policy shift from a supply-driven to a demand-driven migration programme to protect local workers from direct competition from skilled migrants (Balogh, 2014) and also to ensure that migrants do not add up to the unemployment queue (Mares, 2012). However, the increasing weight given to employer

sponsorship within skilled immigration policies has major implications on the position of workers vis-à-vis their employers.

Under the 457 visa programme, the only means by which migrant workers can come into, and stay in Australia, is through an employer willing to nominate and sponsor them. Primary 457 visa holders are subject to Condition 8107, which limits their right to work only with the approved employer sponsor and in the approved nominated position for up to four years, unless changes are approved by the DIBP (DIAC, 2009 as cited in Bahn, Barratt-Pugh, & Yap, 2012; Power, 2014). Under the same policy, 457 visa holders are not allowed to seek a second job. In addition, to be without an employer sponsor for 90 days would mean a breach of visa conditions liable for deportation from Australia (Asia Pacific Migration Network, 2015). These conditions meant migrant workers are unable to switch jobs and employers easily, despite abusive and exploitative conditions. Deegan (2008) for instance found that 457 visa workers were unable or unwilling to stand up for their rights for fear of risking their employment and consequently, their chances towards permanent residency.

Impact of employer sponsorship for permanent residency

Increasingly, temporary skilled migration is becoming the pathway for migrant workers to secure citizenship, called the two-step immigration, which was innovated in New Zealand and Australia (Boese et al., 2013; Boucher & Cerna, 2014; Dauvergne, 2000; Mares, 2009). Studies indicate that a majority of 457 visa holders intended to apply for permanent residency (Boese et al., 2013; Khoo et al., 2005; Migration Council Australia, 2013). However, this aspiration for permanent residency further increases and extends the position of dependency of 457 visa holders on their employers (Boese et al., 2013; Deegan, 2008; Mares, 2009). This is due to the significance of employer sponsorship in the application and approval of residency applications, which in turn, provides employers great leverage over migrant workers (Deegan, 2008; Mares, 2009). Toh and Quinlan (2009) argues that employers have the power to decide whether 457 visa holders will

remain long enough to make such an application and whose references may have a critical bearing on the assessment process. Official statistics show that 59 per cent of permanent residence visas in 2010-2011 were issued onshore, an indication that employer-sponsored migration is becoming the dominant path to permanent residency (Mares, 2012, para. 53).

Meanwhile, the process for the independent application for permanent residency has been made more difficult. The slots for permanent residency in the skilled migration scheme which migrants can independently apply for, has been cut down (Mares, 2009). In addition, the occupations on the critical skills list which can qualify for independent application for permanent residency has been trimmed, removing trades and low skilled occupations such as plumbers, carpenters and metal fitters (Mares, 2009). The threshold for English language competency under the new skilled migration points test has also been increased (Boese et al., 2013). Also, processing times for independent application are significantly longer, and run the risk of having to acquire additional local qualifications, rendering this alternative less attractive (Boese et al., 2013). Furthermore, the number of 457 visa holders has increased, but the slots for permanent migration has been falling (Mares, 2009). In a situation where the independent application for permanent residency is made harder, Deegan (2008) and Mares (2009) argue that the employer's ability to withhold sponsorship is powerful and renders 457 visa holders particularly vulnerable.

Diminished rights, entitlements and protection

This power imbalance must also be situated within the context of limited rights and diminished access to public goods of temporary migrant workers. Mares (2009) claims that while in theory, 457 workers are afforded the same rights and conditions as Australians, these are not guaranteed in practice. Furthermore, the author argues that Australia limits the rights and entitlements of temporary migrant workers when they become administratively or politically inconvenient. To illustrate, 457 visa holders pay local taxes on income earned, but do not enjoy the full benefits of government services in return such as access to public welfare or public health programmes (Mares, 2009). As explained in the

previous chapter, the inequality in terms of rights and access to public goods associated with a precarious migrant status, further reduces the bargaining power of migrant workers.

Boese et al. (2013) adopted Goldring et al.'s (2009) framework on precarious migrant status to demonstrate how dependency transpires within the 457 visa scheme. According to the authors, 457 visa holders do not have full access to Medicare (except for a few countries where the Australian government has a Reciprocal Health Care Agreements), have limited access to free public school education in certain states, and lack access to social security payments or to Family Assistance. Holders of the 457 visa pay for these expensive, and sometimes-inadequate public goods, which can have a negative impact on their general health, wellbeing, sense of belonging and inclusion (Boese et al., 2013). In addition, the financial burden amplifies the sense of dependency on the job and on the employer, thus exacerbating the experience of precariousness (Boese et al., 2013).

Even their ability to make use of legal protections in unfair dismissal is severely curtailed (Mares, 2012). Mares (2009) explains that since 457 visa workers only have 90 days to look for a new job, they may be liable for deportation even before the unfair dismissal case has been resolved.

Toh and Quinlan (2009), however, argue that 457 visa holders may be afforded the same legal entitlements, but have greater difficulty accessing these due to other factors such as stereotyping and discrimination by administrative agencies due to their outsider status, or being concentrated in sectors with precarious character. Some scholars also highlight that 457 visa holders are vulnerable because they are misinformed or unaware of their legal entitlements (Boese et al., 2013; Toh & Quinlan, 2009; Velayutham, 2013). Reliance on a third party, such as recruitment agents and employers, results to misinformation that could heighten a sense of dependence and consequently precariousness (Boese et al., 2013). Thus, Boese et al. (2013) argue that the impact of precarious migrant status partly depends on the workers' awareness of the precise configuration of rights associated with their status. Velayutham (2013) adds that a worker's English language proficiency is also a

significant factor.

The feelings of dependency, and the lack of access to rights, entitlements and protection often lead to an inability or reluctance to resist mistreatment (Boese et al., 2013). Workers are less likely to protest against, or expose exploitation, for fear of compromising their employment, and therefore, their chance of gaining permanent residency. Because 457 visa holders do not want to compromise their visa status, they put up with forms of exploitation and accept unfavorable terms within and outside the workplace. Migrant workers are also less likely to file for complaints and join unions. Apart from the fear of losing their visa, 457 workers' ability to seek redress or alternative employment or to demand better conditions is restricted by contract substitution and the Condition 8107 (Toh & Quinlan, 2009).

3.4.5 Recommendations from Previous Studies

Mares (2009, para. 21) claims that Australia's temporary migrant labour scheme can be made ethical, or much more ethical. Mares (2009) clarifies that temporary labour migration programmes are not all equally bad, and that Australia's 457 visa system is better than most. Still, improving the 457 visa programme would result to improvements in the lives of migrant workers (Mares, 2009). Major studies by Deegan (2008), Mares (2009), and Migration Council Australia (2013) provide a number of recommendations to address the abuse of 457 visa workers. The government has already taken up some recommendations. For example, Deegan's (2008) proposal to extend the Condition 8107 from a period of 28 days to 90 days, which was also supported by Migration Council Australia (2013), was taken up. However, Mares (2012) notes that far-reaching recommendations that aimed to enhance rights and expand opportunities for permanent residency were not taken up.

Some of the recommendations focus on the protection of local jobs and conditions, broadening pathways for permanent residency, providing dependents access to services,

and protection of migrant workers' rights. Firstly, the programme should not displace local workers nor undermine wages and hard-won conditions (Mares, 2009). Secondly, migrant workers should not be permanently temporary (Deegan, 2008; Mares, 2009; Migration Council Australia, 2013). While migrant workers are willing to trade off their rights for economic opportunities in Australia, this situation should not continue indefinitely (Mares, 2009). The proposed policy response for this is to widen pathways for temporary migrant workers to become permanent residents (Mares, 2009). Considering that 457 visa holders who aspire for permanent residency are more vulnerable, Deegan (2008) suggests giving greater weight to the length of employment in Australia to make it easier for workers to apply for permanent residency independently. Also, Deegan (2008) proposes that workers be allowed to apply for permanent residence onshore. According to Mares (2009), neither recommendation was taken up by the government. The Migration Council Australia (2013) meanwhile proposes that 457 visa holders be allowed to apply for permanent residency under the Employer Nomination Scheme (ENS) irrespective of the number of employers they have worked for. Under the current ruling, 457 visa holders must have worked for the same employer for at least two consecutive years before qualifying for residency application.

Thirdly, according to the Migration Council Australia (2013), the full potential gains from temporary migration is not maximized as dependent spouses have poor employment outcomes and struggle with language and local work culture. In this regard, the organisation proposes for the extension of services to dependents. Specifically, settlement services and other support to enable the social and economic participation of dependents must be provided (Migration Council Australia, 2013). In addition, the same organisation suggests for the removal of all expenses associated with dependent children's education.

Finally, measures to protect migrant workers' rights must be taken up. For Mares (2009), protection of 457 visa holders' rights would mean providing them some level of labour market mobility, rather than tying them to a specific employer. Other proposals include strengthening compliance and monitoring, conducting voluntary workplace orientation sessions for 457 visa holders, and developing programmes to address discrimination and

exploitation (Migration Council Australia, 2013).

AMES Australia (2016) also proposes a number of measures, which specifically address the poor labour market outcomes of migrant women, including women dependents. Such measures include providing support for information regarding job seeking, gaining work experiences (through volunteer or internship programs), mentoring, and skills accreditation (AMES Australia, 2016, p. 4). Also, other proposals include giving migrant women access to university and TAFE (technical and further education) courses and childcare support (AMES Australia, 2016, p. 4).

3.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Faced with a huge skills crisis, Australia has changed its labour immigration policies and at the heart of this transformation is the rise in temporary skilled migration. The 457 visa is the country's major programme to bring in temporary skilled migrants. Over the years, this visa scheme is increasingly the pathway of skilled Filipinos to come to Australia. However, the 457 visa has been at the centre of public debate so much that it has prompted two separate independent reviews. While the business community continues to demand for the expansion and flexibility of the programme, other stakeholders have raised concerns regarding the abuse and exploitation of 457 visa holders. The literature demonstrate that the 457 visa programme is designed in a way that renders workers vulnerable in the labour market. The increasing weight given to employer nomination and sponsorship in employment and application for permanent residency creates dependency, which in turn renders 457 visa holders vulnerable to precarious work. Visa holders are forced to suffer through poor living and working conditions without complaint for fear of jeopardising their work and their chance of securing permanent residency. At the same time, the restrictions associated with the 457 visa and the limited access to rights and protections associated with the migrant workers' precarious migrant status, significantly limit their agency.

Recommendations have been proposed to mitigate the vulnerability of migrant workers and to make the 457 visa programme more ethical. The main proposals relate to the protection of local jobs and conditions, broadening pathways for permanent residency, providing dependents access to services, and protection of migrant workers' rights.

While the labour market experiences of 457 visa holders are richly documented in the media and in the academe, most focus on the experiences of men. Generally, migrant women remain invisible in the literature, and even more so are the women dependents. With the projected increasing labour migration of Filipino workers to Australia, and the various challenges surrounding the 457 visa programme, this study seeks to contribute to the literature by understanding and highlighting the experiences of Filipina 457 visa holders in the Australian labour market.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I outline the broad principles as well as the data collection and analysis methods that were applied to address the research problem. The starting point of the chapter is an examination of my positionality. Following that is a description of the methodology. The arguments that would support qualitative research as the appropriate methodology for the social phenomenon under study are then laid out, and the fieldwork experience is described in detail. This section includes the arguments for, limitations, as well as the implementation of the chosen data collection and analysis tools. Bracketing and measures for the ethical conduct of research are also explained. Finally, strategies for trustworthiness and rigour are discussed.

My interest in migration stems from the fact that it has always been a large part of my reality – my best friend works in the Middle East, my high school friends teach English in Beijing and clean houses in Barcelona, my relatives are settled in the United States, and my brother’s family reside in Singapore. I am best friend, former classmate, niece, cousin, and sister to Filipino migrants. As an activist and development worker, I have had the opportunity to collaborate with migrant and women’s organisations on a number of projects. I also volunteered for a Filipino migrant organisation in New Zealand. At work and during travels, I have crossed paths with Filipina migrant workers. I have heard them speak at conferences, bumped into them in restrooms, at airports during long layovers, at the immigration queues, and in restaurants as they waited on their employers. Often, their stories were the same – life as a working migrant was hard, but there were just no opportunities back home.

The decision to conduct research on Filipina migrant workers was a result of my exposure to their plight in the labour market, fuelled by my social and political commitment to women's rights and social justice. I knew that in the future, more Filipinas would be migrating in search of employment. My hope was that the results of this research will not only contribute to the discourse around women and temporary skilled labour migration, but could be used by NGOs and other stakeholders for advocacy and policy work.

Australia was the focus of my study for a number of reasons. Firstly, Australia is one of the traditional recipients of migrants. Secondly, Australia is becoming more significant in Philippine migration with its growing community of Filipino migrants. Thirdly, given financial and time constraints, Australia was a convenient location to conduct fieldwork. I already have personal contacts based there, and it was accessible from New Zealand where I was pursuing my postgraduate degree.

4.2 METHODOLOGY

This research was informed by the foundational assumptions of constructivism/interpretivism, which rejects the existence of a universal objective truth (Creswell, 2014; Willis, 2007). Instead, human knowledge is socially constructed; truth and meaning are formed through human interactions with the world (Creswell, 2014; Crotty, 1998; Gray, 2013; Willis, 2007). Individuals develop their own subjective meanings of social phenomena; however, multiple, varied, contradictory, but equally valid, realities exist (Creswell, 2014; Gray, 2013). In this regard, the approach adopted for this research is qualitative.

Qualitative research focuses on peoples' experiences and how they interpret it (Howson, 2010). It seeks to explore social phenomena with the aim of understanding meanings

ascribed to it by those who experience the social phenomena (Birks, Chapman & Francis, 2008; Schensul, 2008). In qualitative research, meaning is contextually situated (Birks, Chapman & Francis, 2008, p. 70) – peoples' beliefs and behaviours are understandable and make sense in the context in which they live (Schensul, 2008, p. 533). This sense making through the eyes and lived experiences of people, is at the heart of good qualitative research (Schensul, 2008, p. 53). Lived experience has been used as a research technique to explore research problems in the area of development studies. For instance, Middlemiss (2015) explored perceptions of energy vulnerability and fuel poverty from the point of view of the interviewees. Lived experience has also been used to study gendered experiences. Anina and Pieter (2015) investigated how white women experienced discrimination in interracial relationships, Loke et al. (2012) explored women's experiences of intimate partner violence, while Dutta (2016) studied the impact of family obligations on the career choices of Indian women

For this study, lived experience is the understanding and representation of how subjective factors of an individual's identity (such as gender, race, class, sexuality, and political and religious beliefs) influence the research participants' experience and perception of knowledge (Boylorn, 2008, p.490). The study will focus on how women migrants interpret their experiences, in order to gain a better understanding of their lived experiences. Lived experience privileges experience as a way of knowing and interpreting the world, and thus, the research process allows the research participants' voices to be heard (Boylorn, 2008, p. 490). Lived experience acknowledges the integrity of a single life, and suggests that by comparing it with others, we are able to learn about society (Boylorn, 2008, p. 491).

Qualitative research, by highlighting the multitude of experiences and perspectives of different development actors, allows the issues and roles of the poor and marginalised to take precedence, and in the process, promote social change (Stewart-Withers, Banks, McGregor, & Meo-Sewabu, 2014). Furthermore, in qualitative research, the researcher immerses in the world of the research participants (Birks, Chapman & Francis, 2008) to collect "thick" data (Willis, 2007, p. 181). Yet in the process, the researcher is committed to learn and understand the perspectives of the research participants without imposing

his/her own views and biases (Schensul, 2008; Willis, 2007). There are several qualitative methods that allow knowledge to emanate from the participants, some of which are used in this study. These are discussed in the next section.

4.3 THE FIELDWORK EXPERIENCE

Field work was conducted in Sydney and Melbourne, Australia from July 27 to August 17, 2015. Both cities were chosen as study sites because the states of New South Wales and Victoria hold the largest Philippine-born migrant population in Australia, as per the 2011 census (DIAC, n.d.). Initially, the plan was to gather data for four weeks. However, saturation was reached early and the fieldwork was shortened to three weeks. To check for saturation, data were reviewed at the end of each day to check that no new insights were emerging from fresh data.

4.3.1 Recruitment and Access to Participants

Participants for this study were Australia-based Filipinas who hold, or had previously held a 457 visa, either as a primary holder or as a dependent. The aim was to collect data from a manageable number of participants, as careful interpretation of a small number of very rich data sources was crucial in qualitative research (Morgan, 2008; Creswell, 2014).

This study relied on non-probability sampling, specifically snowball sampling, to locate participants for the web survey and interviews. A wide network of contacts is crucial to the success of the research (Borovnik, Leslie, & Donovan, 2014), and in the case of this study, was instrumental in the access and recruitment of participants. My involvement with migrant organisations in the past facilitated direct access to a network of Filipina migrants

in Australia. Prior to my arrival in Australia, communication had been established with relevant staff from migrant and women's organisations about my study.

There were three initial contacts that facilitated access to other participants. My first contact was a member of the migrant organisation introduced to me by the Chairperson, and whose wife was a qualified and willing participant. As it turned out, the couple were not only officers of the migrant organisation, but also respected members of a Filipino community located around 20 kilometres from Sydney city central. The couple agreed to discuss my research with their personal networks, and those who agreed to participate were introduced to me. At this point, I changed my accommodation arrangements and transferred to their community, taking on the offer of a research participant to stay at her place. In retrospect, doing so was an advantage as Borovnik et al. (2014) suggest, living with the community facilitates trust and acceptance. Also, the proximity facilitated easier access to participants and allowed me to be part of their social world, albeit temporarily, thus enabling me to attend parties, sing karaoke, and even help in household chores.

I met my second contact in Sydney through common friends based in the Middle East. She introduced me to her flatmate and also invited me to attend a Filipino birthday party, where I was able to access a few more participants. Finally, my third contact, who was based in Melbourne, was introduced to me by a mutual friend in the women's movement. Apart from the three contacts, I also requested the assistance of friends and relatives through social media in reaching out to their personal networks of qualified participants in Australia.

4.3.2 Data Collection

A range of qualitative data collection methods was employed during fieldwork to explore how the Filipina migrants experience and interpret their realities in the Australian labour market while on a 457 visa. Data collection commenced through a qualitative web survey, which generated data that were used as the foundation for the follow-up semi-structured

interview – the primary data collection method. These were supplemented by key informant and group interviews, and field notes and memos.

Qualitative web survey

A small-scale qualitative web survey was used during the initial stage of data collection. While a survey is typically associated with quantitative studies, a few authors have proposed surveys as a qualitative method. A quantitative survey aims to measure and describe the numerical distribution of the characteristics of a topic in a population, while the qualitative survey analyses diversity of a topic within a population (Jansen, 2010, p. 2). As defined by Jansen (2010) –

“A survey is a qualitative survey if it does not count the frequencies of categories(/values), but searches for the empirical diversity in the properties of members, even if these properties are expressed in numbers (p. 3).”

A qualitative survey therefore is the study of diversity, while quantitative survey looks at the number distribution or frequencies in a given population (Jansen, 2010, p. 2). In this regard, a qualitative survey is an appropriate methodological approach for studies seeking to explore meanings and experiences (Fink, 2003 as cited in Jansen, 2010).

For this study, a qualitative web survey was set up through a free online platform (Qualtrics), which was live for four weeks. The web survey aimed to help identify issues and generate data, which served as the foundation for the follow-up in-depth interviews. The survey was a mixture of open-ended and closed questions (see Appendix A).

The closed questions gathered information about the participants' socio-demographic profile and visa status. In addition, the closed questions collected factual information about labour force status (i.e. whether employed, unemployed, or not in the labour force), and work conditions (i.e. salary range, work hours, occupational health and safety, benefits,

unionisation, among others) to determine employment quality. The objective was to combine data on labour force status and employment quality, in order to provide an interpretation of the research participants' labour market outcomes. In addition, two matrices were utilised to generate data on the research participants' perception of their labour market experience. Jansen (2010) clarifies that the nature of metric data is established in the analysis. According to this author, "It is not inherent ontology but analysis which determines whether a study is qualitative or quantitative" (p.3). The open-ended questions meanwhile sought to expound on the respondents' answers to the matrices and explored their motivations, perceptions and future plans.

The invitation to participate, and the survey web link were disseminated to contacts who shared these with their own networks. Also, the web link was shared with Filipino communities in Australia via their Facebook pages. The web link included the background of the study, relevant contact details, ethics approval and the rights of the participants. A button for consent directed respondents to the start of the survey. At the end of the survey, respondents were given the option to leave their contact details should they agree to a follow-up interview. Those who agreed were contacted through their preferred mode of contact, either by phone or email.

In total, 23 women responded to the survey, out of which 12 agreed to participate in the follow-up interviews. Participation was relatively balanced between primary holders (10) and dependents (13). Nine of the respondents were past 457 visa holders who were permanent residents at the time of the survey, while 13 were current 457 visa holders and one was on a bridging visa³. On average, respondents took 15-20 minutes to complete the survey. In hindsight, the survey questionnaire could have been more effective if it was shorter, simpler, and written in Filipino. Analysis of the response rate indicates a high dropout rate. However, the web survey had its own strengths – it was easier to disseminate to a wider audience, and was less intrusive than other methods.

³ A bridging visa is temporary visa issued after the current substantive visa ceases and the next substantive visa is being processed (DIBP, n.d.)

Below is the list of web survey respondents. For reference, the meanings of the abbreviations are as follows:

Marital Status – M (Married), P (Partnered), S (Single)

Visa Status – PR (Permanent Resident), CH (Current Holder), BV (Bridging Visa)

Location – NSW (New South Wales), NT (Northern Territory), WA (Western Australia)

Table 3. *List of Web Survey Respondents*

Pseudonym	Age	Marital Status	Visa status	Location	Educational Attainment	Employment Outcome
PRIMARY HOLDERS						
Jean	32	S	CH	NSW	Bachelor	Registered nurse
Linda	44	M	PR	WA	Bachelor	Registered nurse
Catherine	32	S	CH	NSW	Bachelor	Sales representative
Mary	32	P	BV	NT	Bachelor	Hotel manager
Carmela	36	S	CH	WA	Bachelor	IT professional
Erin	25	M	CH	WA	Bachelor	Mine planning engineer
Amy	31	S	PR	NSW	Bachelor	Accountant
Lana	29	S	CH	NSW	Bachelor	Sales representative
Meldee	34	M	PR	WA	Bachelor	Manager
Maricris	27	S	CH	NSW	Bachelor	Registered nurse
DEPENDENTS						
Desiree	39	M	PR	NSW	College undergraduate	Factory worker
Liana	44	M	CH	NSW	Bachelor	Community care worker
Alina	44	M	PR	NSW	Bachelor	Factory worker
Carol	33	M	PR	WA	Postgraduate	Research geologist
Kris	38	M	CH	NSW	Bachelor	Unemployed
Cynthia	56	M	PR	NSW	Bachelor	Permanent packer
Lailani	37	M	CH	NSW	Bachelor	Part-time retail assistant
Gia	29	M	CH	NSW	Bachelor	Casual packer
Elsa	41	M	CH	NSW	High school graduate	Casual packer

Marissa	29	M	PR	NSW	Bachelor	Casual packer
Mylene	33	M	PR	NSW	Bachelor	Customer service assistant
Eden	41	M	CH	NSW	Diploma	Casual packer
Patricia	30	M	CH	NSW	Bachelor	Unemployed

Semi-structured interviews

The primary method for data collection was the semi-structured interview. According to Kvale and Brinkman (2009), semi-structured interviews seek to describe the research participants' lived worlds through interpretations of meanings they ascribe to the phenomenon under study (p. 27). Semi-structured interviews are almost likened to everyday conversations, but with a purpose, a specific approach and technique (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009, p. 27). There are key advantages to using a semi-structured interview. In particular, it allows the participants to answer in their own words (Kvale, 1996; Roulston, 2010; Schensul, 2008). Similarly, Leech (2002) claims that semi-structured interviews "allow the respondents the chance to be the experts and to inform the research" (p. 668). This in turn provides the researcher a deeper insight into how the participants think and reflect on their meanings, perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes (Folkestad, 2008; Schensul, 2008).

An interview guide was prepared (see Appendix B), with open-ended questions that sought to explore the following: motivation for migrating and experiences in coming to Australia on a 457 visa; their employment status pre and post migration; their perceptions and feelings about their labour market experience and work conditions; the decision-making around employment; and their over-all life and livelihood plans. The interview guide was pre-tested with Filipina migrant friends via Skype or face-to-face for feedback. Flexibility around questions was exercised based on responses and initial data generated from the survey and on the responses of the participants. The interview was conducted in Filipino, although at times, the participants chose to converse in English. Participants chose the time and location of the interview, usually in the late afternoons after their work shifts. All

participants agreed for the interviews to be voice-recorded. On average, the interviews took 30 minutes.

In total, 18 women were interviewed: 12 were survey respondents who agreed to a follow-up interview, and 6 women whom I met through snowball sampling did not participate in the survey. Out of the 18 women, 13 agreed to a face-to-face one-on-one semi-structured interview, 3 opted for email conversations and 2 were interviewed by phone. Four participants preferred to be interviewed with their husbands. The majority of the interviewees were dependents (13) and 5 interviewees were primary holders. The interviewees are listed in the table below.

Table 4. *List of Interview Participants*

Pseudonym	Age	Marital Status	Visa Status	Location	Educational Attainment	Employment Outcome	Date of Interview
PRIMARY HOLDERS							
Jean	32	S	CH	NSW	Bachelor	Registered nurse	Aug. 1
Karen	40-50	M	BV	NSW	Bachelor	Full time receptionist, and two part-time jobs	Aug. 1
Linda (<i>email</i>)	44	M	PR	WA	Bachelor	Registered nurse	Aug. 12
Catherine (<i>email</i>)	32	S	CH	NSW	Bachelor	Sales representative	Aug. 13
Mary (<i>email</i>)	32	P	BV	NT	Bachelor	Hotel manager	Aug. 12, 15
DEPENDENTS							
Cynthia	56	M	PR	NSW	Bachelor	Permanent packer ⁴	Aug. 1
Lailani	37	M	CH	NSW	Bachelor	Part-time retail assistant	Aug. 2
Gia	29	M	CH	NSW	Bachelor	Casual packer	Aug. 2
Elsa	41	M	CH	NSW	High school graduate	Casual packer	Aug. 4
Marissa	29	M	PR	NSW	Bachelor	Casual packer	Aug. 4

⁴ Packers are factory workers whose main task is to sort products into boxes/packages.

Clara	39	M	PR	NSW	Bachelor	Unemployed	Aug. 6
Anna	29	M	CH	NSW	College under-graduate	Casual warehouse staff	Aug. 6
Mylene (<i>phone</i>)	33	M	PR	NSW	Diploma	Customer service assistant	Aug. 7
Eden	41	M	CH	NSW	Bachelor	Casual packer	Aug. 8
Aida	35	M	CH	NSW	Certificate	2 undeclared jobs	Aug. 8
Patricia (<i>phone</i>)	30	M	CH	NSW	College under-graduate	Unemployed	Aug. 11
Mila	39	M	BV	Victoria	Bachelor	Casual packer	Aug. 14
Beth	42	M	PR	Victoria	High school level	Part-time cleaner	Aug. 14

Semi-structured interviews, however, do have some limitations. Collecting good interview data requires practice, effort, and highly developed listening skills on the part of the researcher (Roulston, 2010; Willis, 2007). Also, this method is limited by the recall and the ability of the participants to express their experiences within the interview timeframe and by the ability of the researcher to ask the appropriate questions (Cook, 2008, p. 423). Therefore, semi-structured interviews are often combined with other methods and forms of data (Cook, 2008).

Group interview

Three participants suggested they be interviewed as a group. A group interview is essentially the simultaneous systematic questioning of several individuals in a formal or natural setting (Frey & Fontana, 1991; Fontana & Prokos, 2007). Morgan (1997 as cited in Gibs, 1997) argues that there is a distinction between a focus group and a group interview. According to the author, while both involve interviewing several individuals simultaneously, the emphasis in the focus group is on the insight and data about the research problem that is produced through the interaction within the group (p. 12). Meanwhile, the focus of the group interview is on the questions and the responses between

the researcher and the participants (Morgan, 1997 as cited in Gibs, 1997, p. 12). A group interview enhances social investigation through insights generated in a group context, and it aids recall among participants; it also can be a source of validation, and a check for bias (Frey, 2004; Fontana & Prokos, 2007; Frey & Fontana, 1991).

However, group dynamics within group interviews can present challenges (Frey, 2004; Fontana & Prokos, 2007). To illustrate, one participant initially dominated the discussion, although others were often nodding in agreement. Eventually though, once rapport was created, the other participants started to actively participate in the discussion. The list of participants in the group interview is listed in the table below.

Table 5. *Group Interview Participants (Dependents)*

Date of interview: August 6

Pseudonym	Age	Marital Status	Visa Status	Location	Educational Attainment	Employment Outcome
Teresa	44	M	PR	NSW	Certificate	Casual packer
Susan	33	M	CH	NSW	College undergraduate	Casual packer
Helen	44	M	CH	NSW	Bachelor	Casual packer

Key informant interviews

Four key informants were interviewed. The value of key informants in research, according to Fetterman (2008) and Schensul (2008), is their knowledge and understanding about their community. However, the insights of key informants are rarely accepted blindly; thus, key informants are traditionally used for triangulation and to enhance rigour (Fetterman, 2008, p. 478).

All key informants were based in Melbourne: one was the Chairperson of a Filipino migrant organisation, two were from a women's organisation, and one key informant was from a national union. The interviews lasted anywhere from 40 minutes to an hour. The questions

focused on their organisation’s advocacy work around Filipina 457 visa holders, and sought to explore their opinions on the 457 visa, and the situation of Filipinas in Australia in the labour market. The key informants were also requested to provide their opinion on the initial data generated from the semi-structured interviews and survey. The key informants are listed in the table below.

Table 6. *List of Key Informants*

Pseudonym	Designation and Organisation	Date of Interview
Ramon	Chairperson, Filipino migrant organisation	August 11
Cess	Officer, Filipina migrant organisation	August 14
Liza	Chairperson, Filipina migrant organisation	August 13
Myra	Staff, national union	August 13

Field notes and memos

Field notes are the researcher’s personal notes describing in detail the events, people, places, and things (Brodsky, 2008, p. 342). Memos meanwhile, are the initial ideas, hunches, impressions, and potential codes or themes (Firmin, 2008, p. 191). While field notes seek to record observations as observed by the senses, memos are initial impressions and reflections during the process of collecting data (Groenewald, 2004). I maintained a journal for field notes and memos for the duration of the fieldwork. Field notes recorded the recall of events and other observations at the end of a fieldwork day. In addition, interview recordings and web survey responses were regularly checked and the initial analyses and possible codes and themes emerging from these data were written as memos.

4.4 REFLEXIVE BRACKETING

Gray (2013) argues that the researcher is party to what is being observed (p. 25). Therefore, researchers have to lay aside their understanding of the phenomenon under study in order for the phenomenon to “speak for themselves” (Gray, 2013, p. 24). This is managed through a process referred to as bracketing. It should be noted that reflexivity and bracketing are similar but not the same. Rather, Ahern (1999) describes both processes as “fruits of the same tree” (p. 10). Reflexivity is the process by which a researcher reflects on personal biases, assumptions and experiences and how these may have influenced the research findings (Saumure & Given, 2008, p. 797). However, bracketing is a methodological process of suspending or putting aside these subjectivities (Ahern, 1999). To put it simply, a researcher must be aware of his/her own preconceptions, feelings and beliefs about the phenomenon being studied (reflexivity), in order to put these aside and therefore minimise their influence on the research (Ahern, 1999; Chan, Fung, & Chien, 2013).

My perspectives on migrant women in the labour market have been largely shaped by my experience and identity as a social activist and development worker. My encounter with migrants and exposure to progressive theories has made me aware of structures and institutions that are oppressive to migrant women workers. Specifically, I recognise the impact of class, race, gender, and neoliberal globalisation on the exploitation, marginalisation, and powerlessness of migrant workers. These preconceptions were cemented by my own limited experience as a part-time low-skilled worker in New Zealand. At the same time, my location as a Filipina born and raised in the Philippines meant I shared similar experiences and understanding with the participants with regards to how difficult it is as a woman to live and make a living in the Philippines and in the host country. However, while I recognise migrant women as a marginalised sector, I am also exposed to theories on agency and women’s empowerment as a postgraduate student of development studies. These have guided me to view migrant women not as a one-dimensional homogenous powerless group, but as a sector capable of agency and empowerment.

Authors have proposed a number of measures as a guide for reflexive bracketing (Ahern, 1999; Chan, Fung, & Chien, 2013; Tufford & Newman, 2010), which have been adopted for this research. A reflexive journal was maintained prior to entering the field site to record reflections of my preconceptions about the research topic and the initial analyses of data collected. Reading through the notes during data collection and analysis, and in writing the results and discussion, allowed me to step back and be cognisant of my subjectivities as I engage with the data. The iterative process of going back to the data, reading my journal entries and reflecting on my positionality, has helped ensure that my interpretation and analysis are based on the data and not on my own experiences and preconceptions.

4.5 INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

Data analysis is an iterative and continuous process (Folkestad, 2008; van den Hoonaard & van den Hoonaard, 2008). In the field, diligent writing of memos facilitated data reflection and initial analysis. Post fieldwork, raw data was first prepared such as the verbatim transcription of interviews, downloading survey responses, and encoding the field notes and memos. Next, the data were read to get an overall sense of what the information was saying. As a third step, a careful (line-by-line) reading was done. Open coding (both through hand and computer-assisted [Atlas.ti]) was used to highlight recurring ideas, significant statements, and relevant concepts. These codes were thinned down and clustered into categories that were analysed at a deeper level to reveal patterns and relationships, and developed into themes. The significant statements and themes were interpreted and related back to the literature. The final output was an interpretation of the lived experience, which, according to Creswell (2006), is a passage capturing the common experience of the participants (p. 62). The aim is for the reader to come away with the feeling, "I understand better what it is like for someone to experience that" (Polkinghorne, 1989 as cited in Creswell, 2006, p. 46).

4.6 ETHICS

The process of research introduces issues of power, and even more so when engaging with women participants, who often lack political voice and are in less powerful positions (Brooks & Hesse-Biber, 2007; Scheyvens, Scheyvens, & Murray, 2014; Stewart-Withers et al., 2014). Researchers therefore are responsible for ensuring that the research process: is conducted in ways that uphold the participants' dignity, privacy and safety; is not exploitative; and accurately represents and reflects their voices and struggles (Scheyvens, Scheyvens, & Murray, 2014).

In this research, measures drawn by Banks and Scheyvens (2014) to ensure research is ethical from the bottom up were adopted. The research topic was of interest and value to the Filipino migrant community, as migrant organisations were planning to launch a campaign on the 457 visa. Also, protocols were carefully followed to meet Massey University's ethical standards. This research complied with Massey University's Human Ethics Committee (MUHEC) requirements. As part of this, I completed the Development Studies in-house ethics process, which included the completion of an ethics form and discussion with both my supervisors and one other lecturer within the Development Studies Department. As a result of this meeting the research was considered to be low-risk, and a low risk notification was sent to MUHEC (please see Appendix C for the university ethics approval).

Efforts were made to ensure that the process was transparent and which protected the participants' privacy and anonymity. All the necessary information about the study and the research process, as well as the participants' rights, were provided. Raw data were stored on password-protected devices. Pseudonyms were used and any personal identifiable information were deleted. Initially, the women were requested to sign the consent forms. However, the women seemed uncomfortable about signing documents, thus verbal consent was solicited and recorded instead.

Friendly, respectful and equal relations were developed with the participants. Respectful language was used and Filipino customs for respect were followed. I offered to help in household chores, graciously accepted their invitations to gatherings, brought food and drinks to parties, and even gamely sang karaoke when requested. Friendly relations continued beyond fieldwork, with regular communication via Facebook with a significant number of participants. One participant even asked me to be her bridesmaid!

In addition, ethics from the bottom up means making the findings accessible to the participants (Banks & Scheyvens, 2014, p. 162). A summary of my research findings will be shared with the participants and the migrant organisation for dissemination to their own communities. Should there be an opportunity, I would be happy to go to Australia and present the findings in one of their events. As a gesture of my appreciation for their time and effort, participants were given tokens that would remind them of their participation in the study, and of New Zealand.

However, in spite of preparations to ensure the ethical conduct of this research, power issues were present in the field. The presence of a third party (contacts) was crucial in mitigating power between the participants and me. Rather than directly approaching the participants myself which would place them in a situation whereby they would be hesitant to say no, third parties first discussed my study with potential participants, and only those who agreed to participate were introduced to me. Meanwhile, it also brought up potential power issues between the third parties and the participants, considering the positions they held within the migrant organisations. Yet upon careful observation and reflection, I concluded that the way the organisation operates had to be acknowledged and respected, trusting in the democratic values these organisations uphold. To illustrate, not everyone they approached agreed to participate in the study, indicating that women exercised their right to make decisions without influence. With regards to conflict of interest in view of my positionality, these were avoided through bracketing. At the same time, to avoid confusion about my role as a researcher and an activist, I was introduced first and foremost to the participants as a postgraduate student undertaking a study as a requirement for my degree.

4.7 RIGOUR AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

Rigour, which is interchangeable with trustworthiness, determines the quality of the research process (Saumure & Given, 2008, p. 796). The features of a rigorous qualitative research include transparency, maximal credibility, maximal dependability, comparativeness, and reflexivity (Saumure & Given, 2008, p. 796).

Transparency refers to a clear and thorough description of conducting the research (Saumure & Given, 2008, p. 796). This process allows readers to evaluate the appropriateness of the methods chosen for the research problem (Saumure & Given, 2008, p. 796). Similarly, dependability or reliability refers to laying out the process and methods so that other researchers can collect data in similar conditions and achieve similar results (Saumure & Given, 2008; Given & Saumure, 2008). By providing a detailed methodology chapter, this study hoped to achieve transparency and dependability.

Credibility is the confidence that can be placed in both data and analysis through a fair and accurate representation of the data (Groenewald, 2008; Saumure & Given, 2008; Given & Saumure, 2008). As Groenewald (2008) suggests, notes were taken during fieldwork, and negative cases were sought and cited (Saumure & Given, 2008) to enhance credibility. At the same time, interviews were tape-recorded to ensure integrity of data (Firmin, 2008).

Qualitative research aspires for confirmability, or the extent by which interpretations and findings match the data (Given & Saumure, 2008, p. 896). During the stages of analysis and writing up the findings, I often referred back to the data to ensure accuracy. Saumure and Given (2008) also suggest that comparability can be achieved by comparing various cases and research findings on the research problem (p. 796). The results of this study were compared with results of similar studies. In addition, reflexivity denotes rigour. Reflexive bracketing was discussed in detail in the earlier part of this chapter.

Finally, triangulation is another key feature of trustworthiness and rigour. Data

triangulation was achieved by combining three data sources in the study – migrant women, key informants, and field notes and memos. Methodological triangulation was also achieved through the implementation of different data collection methods.

4.8 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

There were four main limitations of this research. Firstly, snowball sampling was largely used to locate participants for the semi-structured interviews. According to Morgan (2008), this sampling method runs the risk of capturing a biased subset of the sample population (p. 817). To illustrate, one initial data source led to 12 additional participants, out of the 21 migrant women who participated in the interviews. For this reason, most of the interviewees were located in the same area, and held the same job. Secondly, most of the interviewees were dependents; only five were primary holders. In this regard, there was less data to draw on to explore the lived experiences of primary holders. Thirdly, the interviews were mainly conducted in Filipino. While Filipino is my mother tongue, there is always some risk associated with translating into a different language.

Finally, limitations have also been observed in the implementation of the methods. A high dropout rate was registered in the web survey. Also, time was limited to build rapport with all of the participants. To some degree, being associated with the migrant and women's organisations was helpful in facilitating trust and rapport with participants who were members or connected to these organisations. For women who were not associated with these organisations however, building rapport and trust did not come as easily. As one key informant informed me, women typically will not trust and talk easily about their struggles to a stranger. Instead, most would focus on the positive side of their experiences, which the key informant emphasised, was part of the Filipino culture. Rich data arose after the official interview was over – when the recorder had already been turned off. Attempts to recapture such data were done through quick notes in my journal. Observation would have been an

appropriate method to place in context the women's words and at the same time, capture that which they were not saying. Also, this study was limited by time and is therefore small-scale and does not capture the wide range of migrant voices.

4.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Qualitative methodology has been identified as an appropriate approach for this research as it places women's lived experiences at the centre of inquiry. Focusing on the lived experiences of migrant women provided depth and uncovered the nuances of migrant women's experiences and perceptions in the labour market with a temporary skilled visa, which might otherwise have been overlooked from a positivist framework. To achieve this, fieldwork was conducted in Australia for three weeks, using methods such as a qualitative web survey, interviews (semi-structured, key informant, group), and field notes and memos.

Measures were followed to ensure the conduct of research was ethical from the bottom up. With regards to power issues, however, the presence of third parties needed to be carefully considered in context. A careful reflection on my positionality revealed how it has influenced decision-making around what research topic to pursue, and how it was maximised as a strength to access research participants. At the same time, reflexive bracketing was implemented to suspend personal preconceptions and experiences about the research topic and allow the participants' voices to take precedence.

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS AND RESULTS (PART 1): THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF FILIPINA 457 PRIMARY VISA HOLDERS IN THE AUSTRALIAN LABOUR MARKET

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This research aimed to provide an interpretation of the lived experiences of Filipina 457 visa holders in the Australian labour market, and the findings are presented in two parts. In this chapter (Part 1), the focus is on the experiences and perceptions of Filipina migrant workers who are or were on a primary 457 visa (henceforth referred to as primary holders). In total, there were ten web survey responses, two semi-structured interviews, and three email conversations. Field notes, memos, and key informant interviews supported these data. The chapter is divided into three sections. It starts with a description of the women's experiences in coming to Australia. Then, the migrant women's labour market outcomes are described. Specifically, their labour force status, employment outcomes, work conditions, and their perceptions of these are presented. Finally, the factors that may have shaped the women's labour market experience, as well as the ways by which they exercise agency, are explained.

5.2 EXPERIENCES IN MIGRATING TO AUSTRALIA

Increasingly, skilled Filipinas migrate independently to Australia on a primary 457 visa. This section explores the characteristics of such primary holders and their experiences in coming to Australia, including their motivations for migrating and their experiences in securing a 457 visa.

The demographic data from Tables 3 and 4 in Chapter 4 show that primary holders were at their prime working age (29-44), with the majority being in their early 30s. Data also indicate that participants were highly educated, with all having Bachelor degrees. The majority were young single adults with no children; of the ten survey respondents for instance, six were single and four were partnered.

5.2.1 Motivations for Migrating

Based on the interview and survey data, economic circumstances in the Philippines have mainly pushed skilled women to seek work opportunities in Australia. For example, Jean⁵ shared that meeting her sales quota in the pharmaceutical industry in the Philippines had become much more difficult. She quit her job, sold her car, and decided to move to Australia. Survey responses revealed that skilled women migrated independently in search of “better work opportunities”, “a stable job”, “good income”, “a better life for children and family”, and “greener pastures”. Mary, who migrated to Australia with her partner, echoed the sentiments of most participants – they would not have left the Philippines for Australia “had their lives been any better back home.” Liza, who chairs a migrant women’s organisation in Australia that provides support to Filipina 457 visa holders, supported Mary’s view.

⁵ Pseudonyms are used for all participants in this study. For their demographic data, please refer to Tables 3 and 4 in Chapter 4.

“457 visa holders are forced to leave their country by their situation, the root cause of which is poverty and lack of job opportunities back home. So even if it meant being separated from their families, they would still leave.” (Liza, key informant)

However, the data also suggest that women migrated independently for reasons other than economic circumstances. To illustrate, Jean and Catherine, who were both single, were motivated by the prospect of career and personal growth in another country. Catherine expressed contentment with her job in the Philippines and shared that she had no plans of working abroad. While helping a cousin look for an overseas job online, she chanced upon a job vacancy that suited her qualifications.

“It excited me to imagine myself being on my own in a foreign country and still have the same line of work AND earn 5 times my salary in the Philippines. If that’s not a good deal, I don’t know what is.” (Catherine, email)

Survey and interview data revealed four main factors that pulled women to Australia: income, standard of living, family environment, and personal network in Australia. Linda, a registered nurse, found Australia’s salary rate appealing. Other participants highlighted Australia’s standard of living and environment as ideal for raising a family. As demonstrated by the cases of Karen and Jean, having family members settled in Australia was also a significant factor in their decision to migrate.

The data reflects the independent migration of young, highly educated and skilled Filipinas to Australia. While the main motivation for migration was economic conditions back home, women also migrated for non-economic reasons.

5.2.2 Securing the Primary 457 Visa

The interviews show that processing the primary 457 visa was relatively easier than other visas. For example, the processing was faster and the requirements were lesser than skilled visas that offer permanent residency upon entry. Furthermore, Ramon, the Chairperson of a Filipino migrant organisation in Australia, explained that as the 457 visa is employer-sponsored, it was an easier and guaranteed way of securing a work visa as opposed to the independent skilled migration track.

The interviews reveal two pathways by which Filipinas secured a primary 457 visa: offshore and onshore. Offshore processing was the dominant pathway and the employers typically decided the type of visa.

“The visa that the employer offered was a 457 visa so I don’t think I have any say in that. The company shouldered all the expenses so I really didn’t mind whatever visa they were giving me.” (Catherine, email)

“Honestly, my partner and I have no knowledge about Australia and about visas... The employer who hired us forwarded me links to submit requirements in lieu to acquiring visa. I opened links, supplied required documents and that was it.” (Mary, email)

Based on the experiences of Catherine and Jean, all expenses related to the processing of their 457 visas were covered by the employers. Catherine shared that the company also covered her travel costs to Australia. This was not always the case, however. In Mary’s experience, the visa and travel expenses, including that of her partner’s, were deducted from her salary over the first six months. This is legal – according to the DIBP (n.d.) website, employers are not obligated to pay for visa fees and travel expenses of visa holders to Australia.

Three interviewees processed their 457 visas onshore. This meant securing a different type of visa (e.g. student visa) to come to Australia, and applying for a primary 457 visa afterwards. For instance, Linda arrived in Australia on a 456 visa in 2003, which she converted to a 457 visa a year later. Interestingly, the interviews also revealed that onshore processing became an option for women who initially were not able to meet the requirements for a primary 457 visa. To place this into perspective, data suggest that it was not very easy for these women to independently migrate to Australia. Interviews with migrant women and key informants revealed three main factors that impede women from qualifying for a primary 457 visa. Firstly, most occupations and job vacancies under the 457 visa were trades-related, and typically associated with men's work (e.g. plumbing, panel fitting, mechanic, carpentry). Key informants (Cess, Liza, Myra) observed that the majority of Filipino 457 primary holders were men in semi-skilled work. This observation was shared by some of the dependent interviewees (Aida, Gia, Eden, Susan, Teresa, Helen).

Secondly, human capital requirements were significant barriers. To illustrate, both Karen and Jean's educational qualifications were not recognised as being at a similar level to Australian qualifications. In addition, the 457 visa requires a minimum of five years' work experience in the nominated occupation. Therefore, Karen and Jean's sole option was to come on a student visa and apply for a 457 visa afterwards. This pathway, according to the participants, took longer, was more expensive, and even resulted in a great deal of stress over the uncertainty of having the 457 visa approved. Jean secured a one-year student visa to study age care with the assistance of an agent, which she extended for another year to pursue a diploma in nursing. Prior to the expiration of her student visa, Jean successfully found an employer sponsor for a 457 visa.

In contrast, Karen's experience was arduous. Karen had to switch visa several times. She arrived in Australia on a tourist visa, came back with a two-year student visa that she later on converted to a 485 graduate visa. To be able to stay longer in Australia, Karen's migration agent advised her to secure a 457 visa through a process which she described as "not lawful actually". Karen shared that she made an agreement with her employer, who at the time was not an approved sponsor. Karen paid for everything, including all fees related

to the application for a standard business sponsor; the migration agent processed all necessary applications, and all her employer had to do was to forward documents and sign the papers. According to the DIBP (n.d.), employers are not allowed to recover or transfer costs related to becoming an approved sponsor to the 457 visa applicant. Employers are also not allowed to transfer the costs of sponsorship, nomination and other administrative and sundry costs related to the recruitment and hiring to the 457 visa applicant (DIBP, n.d.). The expensive fees, the illegality of the process, and the uncertainty of the results, placed a great strain on Karen, who at the time of the interview, was suffering from stress and insomnia.

“Hopefully, it will be ok. For the past two weeks now, my life has been very stressful, like crying every day. That was Tuesday, was it? When I broke down again after a week of misery. This is big money, we are talking about money here. So I’m thinking, what if it doesn’t get approved?” (Karen, interview).

Thirdly, some participants noted that recent changes in immigration policy have made it harder to secure a 457 visa, in comparison to previous years. In particular, IELTS was a significant issue among the participants.

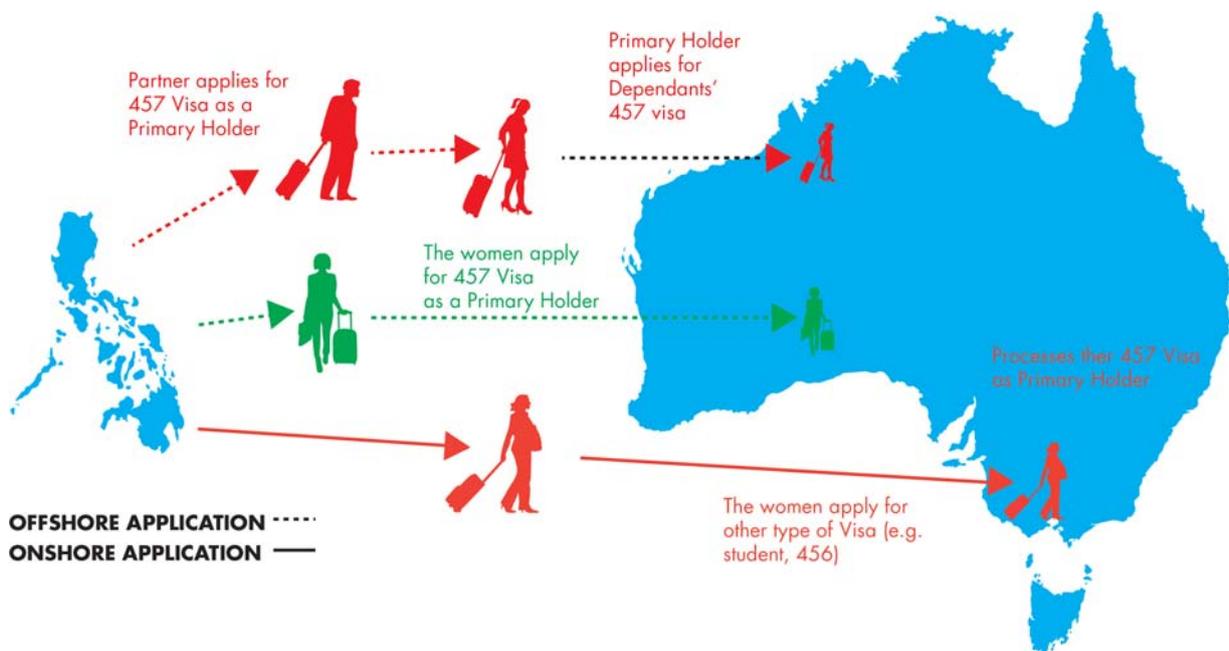
“Now, competition [for jobs] is high and it’s harder to apply for work. So the more skills and training certificates you have, the greater chances to get a job. And IELTS is one of the priority requirements now to apply for 457 and permanent residency.” (Linda, email)

Interview and survey data indicate that skilled Filipinas migrate independently to work in Australia also for other reasons than economic circumstances. In addition, the pathways and the experiences of women in coming to Australia on a 457 visa were varied. While offshore processing was the dominant pathway, onshore processing served as an alternative especially for women who were not initially qualified for a primary 457 visa. -

Some found their visa processing fast, easy and cost-free, but the opposite was observed by other participants.

The figure below illustrates the two pathways by which Filipinas secure a 457 visa.

Figure 3. Pathways to Securing a 457 Visa



Source: Author, based on findings

Having explored the journey of Filipina primary 457 visa holders to Australia, the succeeding sections provide an interpretation of their labour market experiences.

5.3 EXPERIENCES IN THE LABOUR MARKET

In this section, the experiences of primary holders in the labour market are illustrated. Firstly, the labour market outcomes of primary holders are presented by bringing together factual information on employment held, labour force status, and working conditions.

Secondly, the women's perceptions with regards to their labour market integration on a 457 visa are highlighted. Finally, the strategies by which primary holders cope with challenges in the labour market and exercise agency are described.

5.3.1 Labour Market Outcomes

Based on the interview and survey data, primary holders were employed in skilled and highly skilled jobs such as registered nurses, sales representatives, managers, IT professionals, accountants, mining engineers, and resident care officers. Data generated from the survey also show that all participants were in full time employment, with work contracts ranging from a minimum of four years to permanent positions. As explained in Chapter 2, standard employment is based on permanent, full time and open-ended work contracts with a single employer. Participants found their jobs through online job advertisements, referrals from personal networks, and company transfers.

Figure 4. *Jobs of Filipina 457 Primary Holders*



Source: Author, based on findings

A comparison of jobs that participants held pre and post migration indicated no de-skilling. However, for participants who came to Australia initially on a student visa, a career shift has been observed. To demonstrate, Jean and Karen's jobs in Australia were not related to their previous occupations or educational backgrounds in the Philippines. According to both women, their career shifts were prompted by the cost of courses and the local labour market demand. Jean, whose background was in physical therapy and pharmaceutical sales in the Philippines, shifted to caregiving and nursing in Australia. Similarly, Karen worked as a cashier in a local government office in the Philippines, but studied community service, and eventually found a job as a resident care officer in Australia.

In terms of working conditions, more than half of the survey respondents underwent work-related training sponsored by the employers. The benefits received from the employers varied, and these included airfares for both primary holders and dependents, housing on arrival, superannuation, transportation to and from work, free accommodation at the work site, uniform allowance, company car, and communication gadgets.

"Accommodation is provided on site. I have my own room with all the basic amenities- fridge, TV, study, ensuite bath. It's a 30-min drive from the accommodation compound to the mine office. Work is from 5am to 5pm. We fly in via chartered flight to the mine site on a Tuesday and fly out Wednesday the following week." (Erin, survey)

Not all of the participants were enjoying the same level of benefits. Mary's airfare and that of her dependent partner were deducted from her salary. Two survey respondents mentioned that they only received superannuation.

Of the three respondents who disclosed their annual salary, two were found to be underpaid. Catherine's annual salary before taxes was AUD 52,000, while Maricar and her partner were only paid a total of AUD 55,000 for both of them. The minimum salary for primary 457 visa holders is AUD 53,900 across Australia. Meanwhile, Respondent #19 was receiving AUD 140,000 annually.

This study documented one case of poor working conditions and labour rights violations. Mary shared that she and her dependent partner were “victims of the abuse and rorting of the 457 visa”. According to Mary, she and her partner were made to work “long, unreasonable hours”: from 12-16 hours daily, including weekends and public holidays. On some occasions, days off were cancelled. They did not receive payslips, holiday pay, and overtime pay. While the other staff members were being paid anywhere between AUD 22 to 30 or more per hour, Mary and her partner were receiving around AUD 3 to 5 per hour. Furthermore, after conversations with other staff members, Mary realised that she was not only “grossly underpaid”, but also that she and her partner were receiving and sharing the salary for one person. Ramon (key informant), who chairs a Filipino migrant organisation in Australia and who assisted Mary in her case, described her situation as “hire one, get one worker free”. Eventually, Mary was dismissed from her job via email while she was on leave and vacationing in the Philippines, which she argued was “harsh, unjust and baseless”. According to Mary, she received neither notification of misconduct nor verbal or written warnings during her employment. Mary filed cases for unfair dismissal at the Fair Works Commission, and for unpaid wages at the Fair Work Ombudsman. However, the cessation of her employment led to the cancellation of her visa, so a case was also filed at the Migration Review Tribunal (MRT) to contest the cancellation.

Key informants also shared their insights on the working conditions of migrant women. According to Myra, a union staff, they have observed occupational health and safety concerns, low income, and gender-based pay gap in the hotel, cleaning and banking industries, which are the largest employers of women. Also, Cess, a staff member of a Filipina migrant organisation, noted cases of contract substitution.

The data shows that primary holders were able to access skilled full time jobs. The women also experienced varying access to employer-sponsored benefits. While some women enjoyed perks such as a company car, communication gadgets, free housing, and free airfare among others, a few shared that the only benefit they received was superannuation. However, a few cases of poor working conditions and labour rights violations have also been documented.

5.3.2 Women's Perceptions of their Labour Market Integration

Having established factual information about the participants' labour market outcomes in the previous section, this part presents migrant women's perceptions – their thoughts and feelings about their labour market integration, as well as their labour market aspirations.

“Equal rights and treatment” and “opportunities”

For some participants, the 457 primary visa afforded them equal rights and treatment in the workplace.

“I feel good about the conditions attached to my work contract because they adhere to the Fair Work Act of Australia.” (Catherine, survey)

“I was treated same as local hires.” (Amy, survey)

Also, some participants perceived that their labour market circumstances were “good opportunities” and provided a pathway towards permanent residency, which was the ultimate goal among the participants. Survey and interview data show that nearly all respondents were either permanent residents, currently applying for, or had plans to apply for permanent residency. Key informants (Ramon, Cess) supported this finding. Only one respondent stated she was unsure about permanent residency.

“...provide good opportunities to everyone.” (Jean, survey)

“...it opens new future opportunities in being the 1st step towards working on a permanent residency visa in Australia.” (Catherine, email)

In addition, the survey shows that primary holders did not register dissatisfaction with their jobs. Of the ten who responded to the survey, two participants loved their jobs, four

liked their jobs and three respondents rated their jobs as “OK”. One respondent opted not to respond.

“I am actually privileged to have been accepted in this job.” (Catherine, survey)

“My work over all? VERY GOOD.” (Jean, survey)

“It is good.” (Lana, survey)

Typically, participants highlighted the lighter workload and higher compensation in comparison to their previous jobs in the Philippines.

“Work load is just right compared to home country.” (Carmela, survey)

“I get paid accordingly as a nurse.” (Linda, email)

Some participants appreciated the better work opportunities, management, and work environment.

“1) Rewarding – Not only is it rewarding financially but also rewarding in every aspect. I notice that I get the satisfaction of knowing, adapting and living the Australian culture... It’s actually liberating to know that you’re expected to accomplish things I thought only guys are capable to do. 2) Novelty – Although I have been in Sales for the last 6 years, practicing it here is quite different mainly because of the clientele’s attitude and behaviour...” (Catherine, email)

“I really, really like it because management is good, working environment is good. And work is flexible, so I have overtime and I can also do extra shift. And we are given trainings outside of our facility.” (Jean, interview)

Overall, participants regarded the 457 visa as a feasible option to work in Australia. According to the survey, none of the respondents would discourage other Filipinas from migrating on a 457 visa.

*"It's really a good visa to start with if someone is applying to migrate to Australia."
(Catherine, survey)*

"Just be prepared for the kind of job she will have. It is ok to have that visa. " (Meldee, survey)

Meanwhile, other participants had a different perception of their labour market circumstances, as the following paragraphs demonstrate.

"Hard work"

A few women felt that work was "hard", often citing long hours.

"It was always hard work when I was on 457 visa. I had to work extra hours without overtime. Can't complain about it since it was in our contract. (Meldee, survey)

Personal observations during interactions with some of the participants provide a glimpse of their lives at work; these comments were not brought up during the interviews. To illustrate, Jean expressed great satisfaction about her job. In one instance, however, Jean arrived late at one gathering and explained that she was very tired, having clocked in 16 hours at work that day.

"Jean needed money to support her father's dialysis in the Philippines. One time, she was really tired. She was late to our karaoke session because she clocked in 16 hours that day. And yet, she still went straight to the karaoke session. Maybe it was her way to de-stress." (Field note #14, August 17)

For Mary, her job was "tremendously busy and often very stressful". She clarified, however, that her work experience was more than "either liking or disliking it."

"The experience was both fun and horrible. It was fun because there were so many things that came up that I think made me and my partner a better person as whole. It was horrible because the situations we've been through were literally just horrible, broke us a person one way or another." (Mary, email)

"Insecurity"

The interview and survey data indicate that the feeling of "insecurity" was the most common and significant experience among the participants. For the women, there was always this fear of losing their jobs and of "being sent home".

"As a 457 visa worker, I didn't feel secure because anytime, we could be sent back to the Philippines which is why I really persevered to become a permanent resident." (Linda, email)

"It's been good apart from the occasional feeling of uncertainty especially with the downtrend in iron ore prices. The mine could close if it ceases to make profits." (Erin, survey)

Cess, who worked with temporary Filipina migrants in Australia, made a similar observation.

"You are like an asylum seeker, your mind is in limbo. Because you are not a permanent resident! So you are always afraid that any moment now, you would be asked to leave. Imagine five years of your life being like that? All your plans in life are distracted." (Cess, key informant)

This fear of being sent home was heightened by the view that the women had "nothing to return to". For Mary, "no work, house, life nor future was waiting for them in the Philippines". Karen also shared the same sentiment, adding that she had already spent a lot of money to secure a 457 visa, and she needed to recover the cost.

“Being tied”

Participants also emphasised work restrictions associated with a primary 457 visa, specifically “being tied” to their employer sponsor for the duration of the contract. Karen for example, while happy over the approval of her 457 visa, also noted that as a consequence, she had to give up her other jobs to work solely for her sponsor.

“But sadly with this new visa, I have work restriction. I will only work with my sponsor employer. So no more extra income, that’s why I’m having a hard time compared to before when I’ve got three jobs.” (Karen, Facebook chat)

“It’s ok to have that visa. You just need to be patient to be tied with the company you wish to work for.” (Meldee, survey)

Furthermore, Ramon explained that apart from being tied to the employer, primary holders were also tied to their nominated occupation. This meant that primary holders do not enjoy the freedom of choosing their employment.

“Let’s say a principal applicant. If he’s a welder, that’s the only job that he can hold. And even if he wants to change employers, he still needs to find a job as a welder. He cannot change his nomination [occupation]. Unless you become a permanent resident.” (Ramon, key informant)

Vulnerability

Data suggest that the convergence of all these perceptions – of “insecurity”, “being tied”, and the 457 visa as their “opportunity” for permanent residency – may have influenced how participants responded to their employment circumstances. This finding is situated within the context in which 1) the main objective of respondents is to acquire permanent residency, and in this regard, 2) the significance of employer sponsorship in their employment and application for permanent residency.

As discussed in the earlier part of this section, the main goal of 457 visa holders was to become permanent residents. Ramon however clarified that employers are under no obligation to sponsor 457 workers for permanent residency, which was a common misconception among Filipino migrant workers.

“The main objective of the 457 holder is the pathway to permanent residency, which is not always 100% guaranteed. There were cases in which the employers will only maintain your 457 status as long as he wants, but he will not sponsor you to become a permanent resident.” (Ramon, key informant)

In this regard, 457 primary holders become, in the words of Ramon, “hostage to the employer” and what Cess described as “at the mercy of their employers.” As a consequence, migrant women often endured their poor working conditions so as not to compromise their jobs and their chances of securing permanent residency.

“They just accept [their situation]. Because for one, they don’t want to rock the boat. They don’t want to compromise their status, their job security, which is non-existent anyway.” (Ramon, key informant)

“You are tied for two years, tied to the employer because what you are after is that the employer nominates you for permanent residency. So the 457 visa holder will just endure because you don’t want to compromise your chances of getting permanent residency.” (Cess, key informant)

To illustrate further, Mary acknowledged her partner’s and her own “exploitative and abused condition”, but “chose to remain silent and continued to work hard” due to “previous threats from the employer of being dismissed”, and “in the fear of being sent back home”. Furthermore, Mary also shared in her account that they endured their conditions in the hopes that, as promised by their employers, their permanent residency would be sponsored. Similarly, Meldee thought that securing permanent residency was worth all the hard working conditions.

"It was ok. At least the hard work paid off when I had my residency since my employer helped me to have my residency." (Meldee, survey)

Ramon shared that most cases of labour market abuse and unpaid wages handled by their organisation were 457 visa holders. Similarly, Cess revealed that many of their members who were on 457 visas were "abused in so many ways." According to both key informants, 457 visa holders are a very vulnerable sector among migrant workers due to their temporary status. Ramon clarified that while permanent residents also confront the same hardships in the labour market, 457 visa holders, being temporary residents, are in a more vulnerable position because they are not able to access social security and welfare benefits from the Australian government. Furthermore, Liza argues that migrant women are even "more vulnerable".

"Women are always more vulnerable, even among immigrants here. Even inside the homes, or in factories, women are not treated equally." (Liza, key informant)

As this section has demonstrated, migrant women's perceptions about their labour market integration are varied and much more nuanced than a binary of positive versus negative experience. A few women registered high satisfaction with their jobs and overall labour market situation, citing better working conditions in comparison to their employment prior to migrating. Still, for most women, the labour market restrictions associated with a 457 visa and the temporary nature of their employment and residency may have resulted in feelings of "insecurity", "being tied", and "hard work". Regardless of their experiences, migrant women still perceived themselves to be in a favourable situation. Mary's statement echoed the sentiments of most participants: that "regardless whether the situations were positive or negative", the migrant women still saw themselves as "blessed". This is because migrant women perceived the 457 visa as opening doors towards their ultimate goal, which was to secure permanent residency.

5.3.3 Coping Strategies

Cess noted the “remarkable resilience” of 457 visa holders in terms of “finding ways to survive in spite of the hardships and the lack in access to benefits” such as Medicare. In particular, she highlighted the role of communities that Filipino migrants have created for themselves in providing different forms of support, including assistance in looking for jobs.

“Groups and communities are created by themselves, either in Churches, or Facebook pages. They meet regularly and that’s how their networks are created and expanded. This is also how the wives find jobs. We help each other out, like moving houses, looking after each other’s children.” (Cess, key informant)

In the case of Linda, doing double shifts was her way of coping with homesickness and which at the same time, allowed her to save money to study again and convert her nursing licence.

“So that I won’t feel sad, I always do double shifts and at the same time, be able to save money so I could study again and convert my license. And also, I always call my family back home.” (Linda, email)

With regards to challenges around employment, the experience of Mary shows the significance of organisations in providing legal, moral and other forms of assistance. According to Mary’s account, the Filipino migrant organisation provided information, liaised with legal counsel and the relevant government authorities, and even provided temporary shelter during their ordeal. Linda meanwhile relied on her personal network and changed her attitude to cope with issues in the workplace.

“In terms of hardships in adjusting to my work, I was able to manage through the help of friends and through lots of prayers. I just remind myself to always do my work duties

properly and can go home safely. And that every payroll, I have money to send to my family in the Philippines.” (Linda, email).

5.3.4 Mitigating Vulnerability

The key informants’ organisations have put forth recommendations to mitigate 457 workers’ vulnerability to labour market abuse and exploitation. Firstly, the workers’ “bondage” to the employers should be eliminated. According to Ramon, their proposal was that “after serving the minimum tenure of two years under the same employer, the holder can apply for residency even without being sponsored by the employer.” In addition, 457 workers who suffered from abuse should be given an easier pathway towards permanent residency, according to Cess.

Secondly, the 90-day grace period indicated in Condition 8107 should be removed, as Cess argued that the allotted time was too short for a migrant to seek work and a new sponsor. Both key informants shared that changes in the local economy such as the slump in the mining industry, and new policies that sought to protect the local workforce have made it tougher for temporary migrant workers to secure new jobs. For instance, according to Cess, immigration fees have increased, and companies seeking to sponsor 457 visa workers were required to advertise the vacancy for at least six months, and to hire local apprentices to prioritise local workers.

Thirdly, Liza highlighted that their main call was for equal rights and equal treatment for all migrant workers as workers, regardless of visa status.

“...for us, the call is to ensure equal rights and equal treatment for migrant workers, regardless of visa status, which are afforded to local workers.” (Lisa, key informant interview)

For the stakeholders, mitigating the vulnerability of 457 visa workers would mean demanding equality with local workers, addressing the labour market restrictions associated with a 457 visa, and providing an easier and independent pathway towards permanent residency.

5.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter aimed to capture the breadth and depth of the labour market experiences of skilled Filipina migrant workers on a primary 457 visa. While skilled Filipinas migrate to Australia mainly for economic reasons, other motivations also include the prospect of personal and professional growth. With regards to labour market outcomes, the 457 visa scheme facilitated the integration of migrant women in the labour market as full time skilled workers. Furthermore, primary holders generally found their working conditions satisfactory, especially in comparison to their employment back home. However, this study also documented a few cases of labour rights violations.

Primary holders' perceptions of their labour market integration on a 457 visa were varied. A few expressed satisfaction, citing that they were granted equal rights and treatment in the workplace. For most women, however, there were feelings of "insecurity", "being tied", and "hard work" in the labour market. These perceptions resulted from labour market restrictions associated with the 457 primary visa, and the temporary nature of employment and residency. However, migrant women still perceived their experience as an opportunity that would open doors for their ultimate goal, which was to secure permanent residency. Furthermore, the study found that the convergence of "insecurity", "being tied", and aspirations for permanent residency may have resulted in primary holders' dependency on their employer sponsors, and consequently to their labour market vulnerability. This was within a context wherein 1) employer sponsorship is significant in the 457 visa workers' employment and application for permanent residency, and 2) their

diminished capacity to rights, entitlements and protections. In this regard, stakeholders proposed that mitigating labour market vulnerability meant addressing labour market restrictions associated with a 457 visa, providing for equal rights and treatment, and providing an easier and independent pathway towards permanent residency.

CHAPTER 6: ANALYSIS AND RESULTS (PART 2): THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF FILIPINA 457 DEPENDENT VISA HOLDERS IN THE AUSTRALIAN LABOUR MARKET

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is the second part of the presentation of findings. In the previous chapter, the labour market experiences of Filipinas with a primary 457 visa were presented. This chapter focuses on the experiences of Filipinas on a dependent 457 visa (hereon referred to as dependents). Data for this section were primarily generated from 13 interviews, 1 group interview, and 13 web survey responses.

The chapter is divided into three main sections. The first section presents the dependents' migration to Australia – their motivations for migrating and experiences in securing the 457 dependent visa. This will be followed by an exploration of their labour market outcomes and experiences, and the factors that shaped such experiences. In addition, strategies that women employed to manage challenges around their employment circumstances will be described. Finally, the last section explores how dependents perceive their labour market integration on a 457 visa.

6.2 EXPERIENCES IN MIGRATING TO AUSTRALIA

The demographic data of participants show that generally, Filipina 457 visa holders are at their prime working age, with high levels of education. Dependents were between the ages 29-56, with most being in their early 30s. Eight women had Bachelor degrees, four were college undergraduates, two had diplomas and two did not reach tertiary level. In contrast to primary holders were most were single and without children, all of the dependents were married and most had children.

6.2.1 Motivations for Migrating

Similar push and pull factors have motivated both primary holders and dependents to migrate to Australia. Firstly, the economic situation in the Philippines was a major push factor for the migration of married Filipinas. While most dependents migrated “to be with their husband” (Lailani, Anna, Elsa), follow up interviews revealed that economic circumstances such as low incomes (Gia) and loss of employment in the Philippines (Cynthia, Marissa) have pushed their husbands to seek work overseas.

Secondly, Australia as providing opportunities for a “better future for the family” was a major pull factor. Data show that family reunification followed within eight months to two or more years after the husband had settled in Australia. At the time of the interview, of the 15 participants who were parents, 14 had brought their children to Australia. Meanwhile, one participant was still processing her children’s visa. For instance, Aida has worked as a caregiver in Singapore and Israel for a number of years, but it was in Australia where she was able to be with her children.

“...and here, you can be with your children.” (Aida, interview)

"He [husband] really did his best to come to Australia. Because here, he can bring his family." (Mila, interview)

Many participants thought Australia as an ideal place to raise a family due to its high quality of living and family-friendly amenities.

"We have decided to come to Australia to grab the opportunity and for our family to have a better living, especially good life for our kids. Because work-life balance is really important." (Marissa, survey)

"Better work/career opportunities and quality of life." (Carol, survey)

Finally, similar to the primary holders, dependents also highlighted the 457 visa as a pathway towards permanent residency. Except for one participant who opted not to respond to the question, all research participants were either permanent residents, or were strongly interested in permanent residency.

"So given that I'm his dependent, I already chose to stay in Australia, which is a good choice, because there are more opportunities to grow here. Unlike in the Middle East, you cannot apply for permanent residency." (Gia, interview)

A few participants were also motivated by employment opportunities and higher income.

"...to find work so that I could help him [husband] in our financial stability." (Patricia, survey)

"Because more money!" (Helen, group interview)

6.2.2 Securing the 457 Dependent Visa

To secure the 457 dependent visa, the husbands (who were the primary visa holders) typically waited until they get settled in Australia before processing the dependent visas to bring their spouses and children (see Figure 3 in Chapter 5). According to the husbands who joined the interviews, they first needed to save money to pay off debts incurred such as recruitment fees, and also to pay for the visa and travel expenses of the dependents. Of the 16 dependents interviewed, only one participant migrated with her husband at the same time. The rest took anywhere from eight months to a few years before reuniting with their husbands.

The participants' experiences in processing their visas were generally positive, the interviews reveal. The process was "easy" and fast, only taking 30 days in some instances, if paperwork were in order.

"It was easy. He [husband] just sent our medical certificates and I think after just one month, we already got our visa." (Lailani, interview)

"For his [husband] visa, it was easy because of his skill, certifications and work experience...For us [dependents], it was easy too." (Mila, interview)

In fact, the relative ease and speed by which the 457 visas were processed was a significant motivation for the participants to come to Australia. For example, three participants shared that their priority destination was Canada (interviews with Mylene, Gia, Lailani), but the 457 visas were approved first so they came to Australia.

Data indicate that generally, similar push and pull factors have motivated primary holders and dependents to migrate to Australia – economic circumstances in the Philippines, Australia as a land of opportunities for self and family, and pathway for permanent residency. In addition, both primary holders and dependents found the visa processing

relatively easy in comparison to other visas. The next section will explore the labour market outcomes of dependents.

6.3 LABOUR MARKET OUTCOMES

While all dependent participants migrated primarily for family reunification, all interviewees expressed the intention to participate in the Australian labour market. This section will present their motivations for working, and their labour market outcomes and concerns.

6.3.1 Motivations for Labour Market Participation

Based on the interview data, the high cost of living in Australia mainly drove dependents to participate in the labour market. This financial burden was exacerbated by unsubsidised health insurance and school expenses for their children.

“Especially if you have a secondary and college student...One semester is about AUD 10-15,000 per semester, depending on the course. So that’s about AUD 30,000 a year? Where would you get that amount? And also your accommodation, electricity, utilities, and so forth and so on.” (Ramon, key informant)

According to Cess (key informant), who volunteers for a women’s organisation, some Filipina migrants started to participate in the labour market when they arrived in Australia although they had previously been stay-at-home mothers in the Philippines. Dependents realised that in Australia, “a family will not survive economically if only one is working”,

she added. Based on interviews, four women did not have prior work experience, but decided to enter the workforce in Australia.

“...because if my husband is the only one working, the money won’t be enough for our living expenses here and to remit back in the Philippines.” (Cynthia, interview)

In addition, as Cynthia noted, women needed money to remit back to their own families in the Philippines. Cess (key informant) shared that the migration of dependents has changed the financial dynamics within the household. Along with the migration of women came the responsibility for them to send remittances to their own families in the Philippines, regardless if they were employed or not. This usually meant that a Filipino household in Australia would have to send remittances to both the men and the women’s families in the Philippines.

However not all were motivated to join the workforce primarily for economic reasons. For Mylene and Aida, the motivation for entering the labour force was that they were “not used to staying at home”.

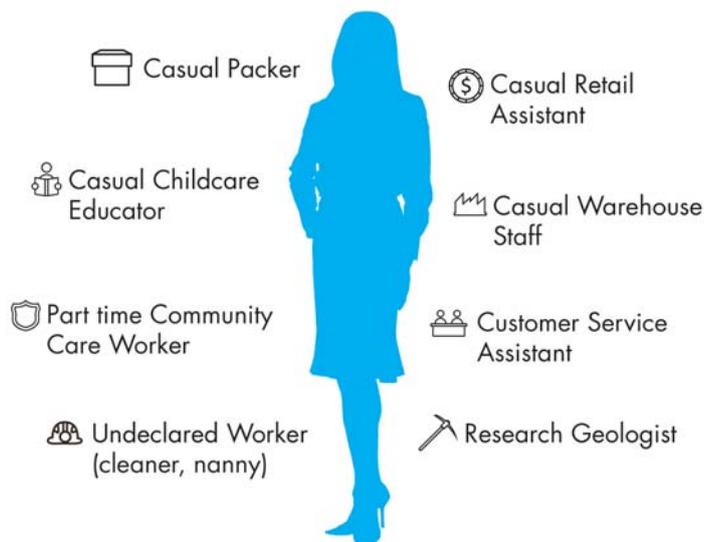
Upon arrival in Australia, participants typically took one to two months to get settled before looking for employment. Interview data indicate that a common experience among the women was lack of information. As their husbands needed to go back to work, participants (interviews with Mila, Aida, Marissa, Eden) shared that they had to figure things out on their own and relied on networks to deal with issues such as looking for employment.

6.3.2 Employment Outcomes

Data generated from the interviews and web survey revealed three main trends with regards to the labour market outcomes of dependents. Firstly, participants were heavily

concentrated in unskilled work (see Figure 5). Most participants were factory workers, specifically packers, the main task of which was to sort pharmaceutical or food products into boxes. Other women worked as warehouse staff, cleaner, retail assistant, and nanny. A few participants were in low and semi-skilled jobs such as childcare educator, community worker, and customer service assistant. One survey respondent was a research geologist (skilled), although clarified that her first job on a 457 visa was not related to this. Three participants however were unemployed.

Figure 5. *Jobs of Filipina 457 Dependent Visa Holders*



Source: Author, based on findings

Secondly, interview and survey data indicate that most participants' employment status have changed from standard employment prior to migration to non-standard employment upon arrival in Australia (see Table 7 below). Non-standard employment, as discussed in Chapter 2, covers part-time, casual, and temporary work. In fact, almost all of the employed participants were in different forms of non-standard employment; only two participants had full time work (research geologist and customer service assistant). Most were casual workers on an on-call, no work-no pay basis. The rest were underemployed and part-time

workers, working anywhere from 10-15 hours per week.⁶ One participant held two part-time fully undeclared jobs.⁷

Thirdly, the data also indicates a downward occupational mobility or de-skilling among the participants. According to the interviews with women, securing a job that was in line with their previous occupation was not easy in Australia. Applying the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) to categorise employment, a comparison was made between the participants' jobs prior and after migrating to Australia, as shown in Table 7 below. The results show that 1) jobs that the participants secured while on a 457 visa were not in line with their previous occupation, and 2) were lower in skill level in comparison to the jobs they held prior to migration. To illustrate, among the interviewees, those who previously held semi-skilled and low-skilled jobs prior to migration, were employed in unskilled work in Australia. Three previously skilled workers became unemployed, while the previously unskilled workers remained in unskilled work in Australia. Three interviewees did not have prior work experience and were employed in unskilled work. The results also indicate no upward occupation mobility among the interviewees.

Table 7: *Employment Status of Filipina 457 Dependents Pre and Post-arrival*

Dependent interviewees	Education level	Employment status prior to migration	Employment status post arrival
Eden	Bachelor	Assistant supervisor (FT)	Casual packer
Marissa	Bachelor	HR staff (FT)	Casual operator/packer

⁶ The ILO (n.d.) defines an underemployed worker as those who in the reference week 1) worked less than the usual full time work hours, 2) would like to work more hours, and 3) were available to work more hours (para. 3).

⁷ According to the European Commission (2014) the most detrimental form of undeclared work is the fully undeclared work, which is the absence of a work contract between the employer and employee, and no taxes or contributions are paid from the salary (para.4)

Helen	Bachelor	Office staff (FT)	Casual packer
Gia	Bachelor	Secretary (FT)	Casual packer
Mila	Bachelor	Bank employee (FT)	Casual packer
Elsa	High school graduate	Cashier (FT)	Casual packer
Susan	College undergraduate	Retail assistant (FT)	Casual packer
Lailani	Bachelor	Gym instructor (FT)	Part-time retail assistant
Mylene	Diploma	Electronics technician (FT)	Customer service assistant (FT)
Aida	Certificate	Caregiver (FT)	Undeclared work
Beth	High school level	Unemployed	Part-time cleaner
Cynthia	Bachelor	Unemployed	Casual packer
Anna	College undergraduate	Unemployed	Probationary warehouse staff
Teresa	Certificate	Unemployed	Casual packer
Clara	Bachelor	IT professional (FT)	Unemployed
Patricia	College undergraduate	Draftsperson (FT)	Unemployed

**FT- Full time*

For some participants, the job search took anywhere from two to nine months.

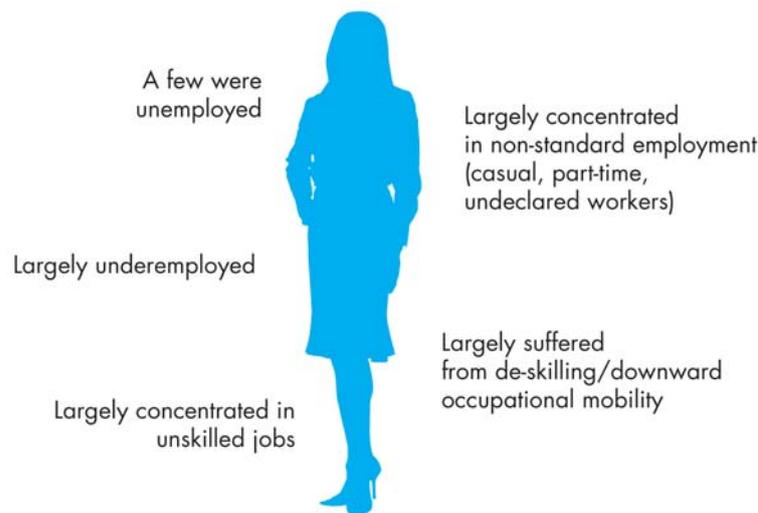
“It took me about 9 months to get a job, albeit not in the mining/resource sector (I graduated with a BSc in Geology).” (Carol, survey)

Participants found it difficult to find full time jobs that were related to their previous professions but securing casual and part-time unskilled work was relatively easy, as long as one was “not picky”.

“I think it is easy [getting a job] as long as you are not picky. Most of the time, in the Philippines, if it’s a labour intensive job, blue-collar job, most people will not pick it. Especially if you have a degree. So it’s like, I know a lot of people, friends, whose work here is more on cashier in Coles or Target. Me, I’ll be happy if Target will get me.”
(Clara, interview)

The interview data also show that participants largely relied on networks to find jobs. Of the 16 interviewees, 15 found work through referrals from family and friends, who were usually fellow Filipina dependents. One participant found her job through online job search. As Cess explained in the previous chapter, most dependents find jobs through networks and communities created by the migrants themselves. The figure below summarises the labour market outcomes of the participants.

Figure 6. *Labour Market Outcomes of Filipina 457 Dependent Visa Holders*



Source: Author, based on findings

Data show a difference between the labour market outcomes of primary holders and dependents. All primary holders were in skilled and standard employment, while dependents were largely concentrated in unskilled and non-standard employment.

6.3.3 Quality of Employment

Interviews reveal that most dependents were concerned about the quality of their employment. In this section, women's specific concerns about their working conditions will be explored.

Uncertainty and lack of work hours

Most dependents were concerned about the uncertainty and the lack of work hours. Many participants were casual factory workers who worked eight-hour shifts. However, the shifts were neither fixed nor guaranteed, and instead, dependent on production demand. For instance, during the factory's off-peak seasons, work can be as infrequent as one or two shifts (8-16 hours) a week. In some instances, participants were not given any shifts for long periods. To illustrate, at the time of the interview, Gia had not been given work for the past two weeks. As another example, Susan was working for two-three hours daily as a retail assistant but quit her job without notice when she was not given work for two weeks.

*"I went AWOL! Because she [employer] did not give me work for two weeks already."
(Susan, group interview)*

As a result, participants often have no way of knowing how many hours they will work or when they will work. While weekly rosters were sometimes prepared, most often the roster was circulated on a daily basis.

"I'm a casual on-call employee. No work, no pay basis. Sometimes works 50 hours a week, sometimes 38, sometimes 30. Last June, only 8 hours a week. You just have to wait for the Manager's call/text every time." (Eden, survey)

In some instances, work hours were even more irregular and unpredictable. Mila's work schedule was sometimes changed by the management at the last minute. At times, she gets

called in to work only an hour before the shift starts, and sent home after only four hours of work instead of the usual eight-hour shift.

“ They will call you to come work even though it’s already 3:30 pm [shift starts at 4:30pm]...and there were times, they [management] will tell you, one of the machines is broken. So you would only work four hours and then be sent home. You wasted the day.” (Mila, interview)

This degree of uncertainty with regards to work hours was heightened over the fact that participants had no way of knowing when or whether they would be made permanent full-time employees.

“Up to now, I am still waiting if I will become permanent or not. I don’t know.” (Mila, interview)

“We have fellow employees who have been working there for like seven years, and they are still casual.” (Gia, interview)

For some women, the unstable work hours meant unpredictable earnings.

“[Work is] not regular. Sometimes once a week, twice a week. So it’s hard if it’s only like that. We pay how much for the unit [flat]? And then my salary is only like that?” (Cynthia, interview)

Income and limited benefits

With regards to income, a few participants thought their work paid well relative to the type of job (interviews with Gia, Mila, Susan, Teresa, Helen). The national minimum wage in Australia is AUD17.29; the hourly wage for a casual factory worker was anywhere between AUD 21-23.

“What I earn is ok compared to other mummies working out there. And their work is even heavier than mine.” (Eden, interview)

In fact, no one has expressed dissatisfaction over their wage rates. However, in one post-interview conversation with some of the participants, it was revealed that they were receiving wages lower than the locals. None of the interviewees raised this as an issue. Cynthia explained that either the women were not aware, and if they were, did not mind as their wages in Australia were still considerably higher in comparison to what they were earning in the Philippines. Below is an excerpt from a field note about the conversation.

“During our chats, Roger highlighted that 457 holders are not paid the standard wage and there are ways employed by employers to go around this. Anna also confirmed that she’s receiving below standard wages. When I shared with them that none of the interviewees so far have raised this as an issue, Cynthia mentioned that 1) the salaries are confidential so 457 migrants had no way of comparing their salaries with that of locals’ and 2) migrant women compare their salaries back home, so it’s ok.” (Field note # 12, August 10)

With regards to benefits, the survey data show that the only benefit the participants received was superannuation. However, not everyone was receiving this benefit.

De-skilling

Most participants, the factory workers especially, expressed concerns about the unskilled nature of their jobs. Some women described their lives at work as constantly “waiting for the time to pass” (Susan) and eagerly waiting for Friday to arrive (Teresa). Similarly, other interviewees found their jobs as “menial” (Gia), “no-brainer” (Gia, Marissa), “boring” (Teresa), “not professionally challenging” (Gia) and “repetitive” (Marissa, Teresa, Gia, Helen, Susan).

“... working in manufacturing is a repetitive kind of job. Sometimes you want to quit. Actually, I sometimes tell my husband, I don’t want to do this anymore. It’s like you’re not thinking anymore because all you have to do is to place stuff in boxes.” (Marissa, interview)

“How will you feel challenged if you see the same thing, do the same thing everyday? Repetitive. It’s like your level of intelligence is up to this [low] level only because nothing changes. Everyday, it’s the same. You don’t get excited for the next day.” (Teresa, group interview)

Some participants also thought that their jobs allowed “no room for professional growth” (Gia, interview). Only two interviewees were promoted at work, and even then, there were no significant changes in terms of compensation.

“During my stay, career-wise, I was not happy. Your level might go up, but your salary is still the same. So in effect, you just get additional responsibilities.” (Mylene, phone interview)

OSH concerns

Moreover, some participants also noted OHS concerns. Aida for example acknowledged that being an “all-around” domestic worker placed her at risk for health concerns. Two participants suffered from chemical burns and skin problems from packing powders and pharmaceutical products. Most complaints however were related to the physical nature of their jobs. Specifically, factory workers found their jobs “tiring”.

“...since they don’t have a lot of male employees, they place women there. So we are put in jobs that are heavy... requiring heavy lifting.” (Cynthia, interview)

"You have to be quick and strong, because we get to lift boxes. So it's different from my past jobs where I was just sitting." (Gia, interview)

Lack of voice and choice

The interviews also indicate that some participants felt they did not have a voice in the workplace nor a choice with regards to their employment situation. For instance, while Aida acknowledged the health concerns and disadvantages of her undeclared work, she also felt that she did not have any choice on the matter.

"It's hard. But you don't have any choice, it's your work." (Aida, interview)

Gia was not comfortable over the fact that her overtime was paid cash-in-hand. According to her, this absolved her employer from any liability should anything untoward happen to her while working overtime. Consequently, it has caused Gia to worry, considering the physical nature of her job, and the fact that she did not have access to Medicare. Still, Gia felt that she did not have the right to object about the situation.

"The downside [of 457]? It's like we don't have the right to object, on issues like our overtime." (Gia, interview)

The lack of voice in the work place was also demonstrated in Marissa's case. According to her, due to the lack of system in the workplace, she was not able to benefit from the supposed increase in salary when she was transferred to her employer's sister company. Yet despite having a degree and professional experience in human resource management, Marissa was hesitant to raise concerns about it, nor provide suggestions to her employer because she was "only a packer".

Other concerns shared by the women include delayed wages (Lailani), non-payment of wages (Susan), and workplace bullying (Eden). Additionally, data also show that not all

participants had an employment contract and none of the participants were union members. However, participants did not raise these as concerns.

Interestingly, despite the challenges and concerns about their working conditions, survey results show that participants did not register dissatisfaction with their jobs. Two of the respondents “loved” their jobs while the rest thought that their jobs were “ok”.

“It’s good.” (Liana, survey)

“It’s ok. Not so good, not so bad.” (Cynthia, survey)

“So far, my job is really good.” (Elsa, survey)

To summarise, the obligation to remit and the high cost of living, compounded by unsubsidised school fees and health insurance, has motivated dependents to participate in the labour market. However, interview and survey data indicate poor employment outcomes among the participants. Women were unemployed, underemployed, and largely concentrated in unskilled and non-standard forms of employment. Also, deskilling was observed in nearly all of the participants. In addition, for most dependents, underemployment and de-skilling were the major concerns. In the next section, the factors that might have shaped such labour market outcomes will be explored.

6.4 FACTORS SHAPING THE LABOUR MARKET EXPERIENCES

The interviews and survey indicate a number of factors which women perceived to have had significant impact on their experiences in the labour market. These factors include labour market policies and employer practices, and parental status which hindered participants’ labour market access.

6.4.1 Labour Market Barriers

Lack of recognition of foreign credentials

Data indicate that a major obstacle in women's labour market access was the non-recognition of their post-secondary qualifications from the Philippines to be of equal level in Australia. Cess explained that a four-year degree from a Philippine institution is reduced to a two-year diploma course in Australia, with the exception of those graduating from a few recognised institutions. Hence, the only means by which participants would be able to practice their profession was to gain locally recognised qualifications in Australia through further studies.

"It's very challenging to continue the same career that I have in the Philippines. [To be able to do so] is I have to study". (Mylene, survey)

"Hard when I arrived... Others [employers] are asking for Australian certificate; experience is not enough." (Eden, survey)

However, most participants shared that pursuing further studies in Australia was not feasible. In fact, only two out of the seven interviewees who expressed desires to study, were able to do so. The interviewees highlighted two factors as significant obstacles to study – unsubsidised tuition and a lack of time. The tuition of temporary residents, including that of their children, were not subsidised by the Australian government. Participants were not able to afford the international student rates, which were more expensive than what local residents pay for. This meant that women prioritised their children's school expenses over their tuition for vocational courses and postgraduate studies. Thus, participants would rather wait for their permanent residency so they could benefit from subsidised tuition.

"If I go to school before I get a permanent residency, tuition would be too expensive. Unlike if you're a PR, [tuition is] subsidised." (Gia, interview)

"If I'm going to study, it will cost a lot. Too expensive. And we have children who study and their tuition is expensive too. So I thought to myself, not now. So I just decided to stick to my work in the meantime." (Marissa, interview)

In addition, participants felt they did not have the time to study. The economic circumstances in Australia and the financial obligations to their families in the Philippines meant that participants had to work. The situation proved even more challenging for women with children in Australia. The additional responsibility over the household and childrearing meant little or no time left for studying.

"I really had plans to continue studying childcare, but then, I already love my job now. And I don't have the time if I will study. Because I work from Monday to Friday, so how about my studies?" (Teresa, interview)

Employers' requirement of local experience

Some interviewees claimed that most employers required local experience. This meant that their previous work experience in the Philippines and overseas were not recognised. For example, Patricia was a skilled worker in the construction and architecture industry, but has been unsuccessful in her job search since she arrived in Australia. According to her, most of the job vacancies related to her profession required at least two years of local experience. Similarly, Aida's years of work experience in the Philippines and overseas were not enough for her to land the same job in Australia.

"Yes, there are many vacancies but then, they require local experience. So sometimes, I don't send my application if it states there 'local experience only'." (Patricia, phone interview)

"They said, as long as you didn't work here [Australia], that's [previous work experience] nothing." (Aida, interview)

Employers' preference for permanent residents and citizens

Most participants perceived their temporary residence status as a major impediment for them to access jobs. Participants shared that they were unsuccessful in their job applications because employers preferred permanent residents and citizens.

"And you know, they [employers] want someone permanent. Either you're a permanent resident or citizen." (Elsa, interview)

"... it was a bit hard for me to find a job, especially that a FIFO work was not one of my options. As I remember, most companies back then preferred candidates with Australian citizenship/permanent residence visas. It took me about 9 months to get a job, albeit not in the mining/resource sector." (Carol, survey)

"When employers ask 'What's your visa?' and I mention '457 visa but already in process of applying for permanent residency'... that's it [Laughs]. They don't call back anymore. So, ok. They [employers] will say, 'Ah ok, I don't wanna waste your time. So this job is for uh, locals and for permanent residents!'" (Gia, interview)

Cess claimed this practice to be discriminatory. According to her, it is "unlawful for employers to ask if applicants were permanent residents or citizens" but that employers "justify it by requiring local experience". Lailani held a different perspective. From her experience, the employer did not inquire about visas.

"They don't ask if you're holding a 457 visa as long as you want to have a job and you're suitable for that job. So I would say it is a fair treatment even if I'm on a secondary visa holder." (Lailani, interview)

Additionally, other factors were mentioned during the interviews as significant in the labour market integration of the participants. These include the requirement for a driver's licence (Beth, Mila), and discrimination (Ramon).

The interview data also revealed that culture, to some degree, influenced the dependents' labour market outcomes. Specifically, the Filipino values of loyalty (Marissa), gratitude and "utang na loob" (reciprocity, indebtedness) to the employer sponsors meant that they could not say "no", nor leave their employers to look for a better job unless "they've been let go" (Aida).

6.4.2 Impact of Familial Responsibilities

The data also reveals that childrearing responsibilities influenced dependents' decision-making regarding employment. Almost all of the participants were parents whose children were in Australia. Of the 16 interviewees, 15 were parents; 13 brought their children to Australia. Of the 14 survey respondents, 12 were parents, ten of which brought their children to Australia. Data from the interviews indicate that the age of the children, the high cost of childcare, and the women's personal network (of family and friends) were significant factors in their decision-making around employment. As temporary residents, 457 visa holders' family do not benefit from the Australian government's Family Tax Benefits, which include support for raising children. With the high cost of childcare, participants with children below five years of age either decided to give up or delay their careers or chose non-standard employment. Clara was a former IT professional in the Philippines who decided to become a stay-at-home mother since her arrival in Australia. According to her, the initial plan was to find a job, but she and her husband decided that it would be cheaper for her to stay at home to take care of the children, rather than place them in childcare.

"It was \$90 dollars [cost of childcare per day]. So I was thinking if I work, I couldn't work in the IT [industry] or anything like that. What I needed was a part-time job. But if that's the case, all of my salary will just go to his school fees [laughs]. So my husband said, I should not work." (Clara, interview)

A few women delayed their careers from a few months (Eden) to five years (Beth) so they could focus on childrearing. According to Eden, "if you have children, you really can't work". And some women opted to look for part-time or casual jobs so they could manage their parental responsibilities and financial obligations. To illustrate further, Anna shared that while she missed her children, she and her husband decided not to bring them to Australia yet because she wanted to work.

"Anna shared that she was not happy in Australia because she missed her children terribly, and if only she had an option, she would rather go back home. When I asked why they did not bring their children, she said that if she did, she would be obliged not to work. She wanted to work." (Field note # 12, August 10).

The lack or presence of family and friends who can look after the children also significantly influenced the employment outcomes among the participants. A large majority of participants did not have family members in Australia. Also, as temporary residents, their capacity to bring their parents or other family members who might support in childrearing was also limited.

"My husband said I should not work yet because we would have to pay if we ask someone else to take care of the child. It's hard here, specially if the child gets sick. Unlike in the Philippines, where you can ask relatives or your neighbours to mind the children." (Beth, interview)

In contrast, some interviewees were able to take on casual or part-time work as they had family and friends who could look after the children. Marissa for example shared that the presence of a Filipino family friend who agreed to care for her children for a less-than-

standard fee has allowed her to work casual eight-hour night shifts. Typically, the women preferred part-time work and afternoon or evening shifts when family and friends are back from school or work and could take over in minding the children.

6.4.3 Dependents' Livelihood Strategy

Considering the labour market barriers, the dependents' strategy and mind-set with regards to employment was to "grab any job opportunity that was available." And in combination with parental responsibilities, dependents' choices were limited to jobs that were unskilled, part-time, casual, and undeclared.

"It's like, whatever [job] opportunity comes, even if it's not what you like, grab the opportunity." (Mylene, phone interview)

"...being in a new country, you need to accept any kind of job for you to be able to live and for you to experience working in a new environment." (Gia, survey)

This meant temporarily shifting careers and getting into jobs that were relatively easier to come by. To illustrate, Patricia had been unsuccessful in finding a job related to her profession since her arrival in Australia three months ago. She realised the need to temporarily shift careers as the only means for her to participate in the local labour market. At the time of the interview, Patricia was searching for part-time cleaning jobs.

"Maybe it would be really like that in the meantime. I really had to shift careers if needed...take on available jobs...whatever kind of job." (Patricia, phone interview)

Dependents are confronted with various challenges in the labour market, which they perceived to have shaped their labour market experiences. The convergence of policies, employer practices, limited access to services, parental responsibilities, and isolation from

social networks have limited dependents' livelihood options. However, dependents have employed strategies to manage or cope with these labour market challenges. These will be explored in the next section.

6.5 COPING STRATEGIES, EXERCISING AGENCY, AND THE TRANSITION TO BETTER LABOUR MARKET OUTCOMES

Interview data indicates that participants were not passive but employed different strategies to overcome labour market barriers, cope with poor working conditions, and exercised agency to transition to better employment outcomes.

6.5.1 Coping Strategies

Some participants tried to overcome labour market barriers by gaining local experience through volunteerism and taking short vocational courses. Teresa for instance, volunteered in a childcare centre for two months. Two interviewees and one survey respondent undertook short vocational courses in age care and childcare. A few participants negotiated with their employers with regards to work hours and shifts to allow them to manage their work, parental responsibilities and studies.

Participants also coped with poor working conditions and inferior labour market positions. Aida, Mylene, and Lailani held second jobs, including undeclared work, to augment the lack of work hours and insufficient income. Eden set up an online fashion store to generate additional income and as an outlet for her passion.

One case of workplace bullying was documented. Mila shared that as the new employee and being the only Filipino in the workplace, she felt ordered by everyone to do tasks, which she thought was not necessary. Also, as the factory was mostly made up of Chinese management and workers, no one tried to translate work-related communication to her. According to Mila, she learned to “say no”, to “talk back” and refused to start working unless management translated the day’s work orders for her.

Networks and communities also played a significant role in providing support to dependents within and outside the labour market. As a researcher, my interactions with the participants in Sydney allowed for observation on how they provided support to each other in various ways – from work referrals and tips to providing advice on accommodation and filing for permanent residency.

“No interviews today, sort of a break. But became an opportunity to make observations. I noticed how migrants were helping and watching out for each other. For example, Roger and Cynthia were giving tips and advice on looking for new accommodation, recommendations about work, and even advising others on how to secure a 457 visa and permanent residency. But I think, more than just providing advice, it was helpful to give a lending ear.” (Field note #10, August 3)

Key informants supported such observation. Cess highlighted the role of networks and communities in offering to babysit free of charge so that dependents could work, providing work referrals, and offering assistance in moving houses, and giving advice on how to cope with issues such as lack of access in healthcare. Myra emphasised that more than the support these organisations provide is the sense of community and belongingness that they create.

“In [Filipina migrant organisation], whatever provision it provides, what is also important is the networking and sense of community...the belongingness.” (Myra, key informant)

Most of the interviewees imbibed a positive attitude towards their employment circumstances. While unhappy with their jobs, Marissa and Mylene viewed their employment as opportunities that would help them better integrate into the labour market in the future. For Mylene, the communication skills gained at work as a customer service assistant proved useful in her studies and in subsequent job applications. Similarly, Marissa believed that the local experience she acquired as a factory worker would be helpful in the future.

“You can just start small first. All of the experiences that you will acquire can be used later on.” (Mylene, phone interview)

“...here, before you can apply in other jobs, local experience is required. Which is ok. I thought to myself, at least in some way, I had a few years of work experience already.” (Marissa, interview)

A few participants also highlighted the concept of “tiis” (to bear/endure) and that “you cannot have it all” (Mila) to help them cope with their employment situation. Also, interviewees shared that they constantly reminded themselves to focus on the goals – to gain income, create a better future for the family, and to become permanent residents (Marissa, Susan). According to Marissa, two years is a short period to wait until she gets a chance towards better employment outcomes through permanent residency.

6.5.2 Transitioning to Better Labour Market Outcomes

Most interviewees believed that their inferior labour market position was temporary and that they will be able to transition to better labour market outcomes. Interview data on employment goals and aspirations provide insight on how participants perceived or defined better labour market outcomes. A few women expressed contentment with their current jobs.

"What my plans are? Nothing. Contented. I'm already contented working in the factory. It would be hard to look for another job." (Helen, group interview)

Most participants however aspired for the following: 1) participate in the labour market, 2) return to their previous occupation, and 3) shift to a different career.

"I wanted to continue my career when I was in the Philippines and look for stable, big company that will offer a challenging career to develop skills and knowledge." (Mylene, phone interview)

"If I work in childcare, it needs more focus and attention compared to my job now, but at least the work will be lighter. But in these times, I've noticed it's sort of hard to look for a job, right?" (Teresa, group interview)

While interviewees may have different goals with regards to the occupation, all have expressed the desire to transition to a standard or permanent and full time job. In this regard, the most common perception of better labour market outcomes is the transition to standard employment.

"What I want is to have a permanent job. Even though it's just a packing job, as long as it's a permanent position." (Eden, interview)

"No plans. I'm ok with my job, if I become permanent. If not, I will look for another job." (Anna, interview)

Interviewees have identified two factors that would determine their transition to better labour market outcomes. Firstly, interviewees believed that they would have the chance to secure their preferred jobs once they have acquired permanent residency. This would allow them to bypass labour market barriers such as the employers' preference for permanent residents and citizens. As Gia also explained, permanent residency was "her

only ticket” to getting the job that she wanted. The subsidised tuition, which is one of the benefits of permanent residency, would allow her to go back to school.

*“After we pass the permanent residency, I want to go to school just to get that certificate, that will also take me to another job that I’m looking forward to have.”
(Gia, interview)*

Mylene shared that she was able to benefit from the subsidised tuition, which has allowed her to shift career from customer service assistant to childcare educator.

“ I waited for a year until we became permanent residents, so that tuition would be cheaper.” (Mylene, phone interview)

In addition, a few participants explained that the benefits and sense of security associated with permanent residency meant giving them the option to shift away from the “grab-whatever-opportunity-comes” strategy.

“Now that I am permanent [resident], I have more choices, more options...and I also receive benefits from the government for my child.” (Mylene, phone interview)

However, the interviews suggest that acquiring permanent residency was neither easy nor guaranteed (interviews with Gia, Lailani, Aida, Mila, Beth). As Cess also explained, securing a 457 visa was easy, but permanent residency was another matter.

“...it was easy for them to get a 457 visa because of their [husbands’] decades of experience overseas. But it does not mean that they will easily get their permanent residency.” (Cess, key informant)

The experiences of Mila and Beth demonstrate how temporary residence status can be extended for longer periods and the difficulties in securing permanent residency. Mila and her family were on a bridging visa for almost two years at the time of the interview.

According to her, they have been in Australia for more than four years and still has not secured permanent residency. The company where Mila's husband worked was sold to another company before they could file for permanent residency. This meant they had to wait another two years before they would be eligible to file and by then, their 457 visa had already expired. Other participants highlighted the changing and stricter policies such as the IELTS requirement. Beth and her family took five years before becoming permanent residents. The extended period of being temporary residents and the uncertainty of the results of their application for permanent residency has resulted in a great deal of stress among the participants. Thus, some participants emphasised the importance of making sure that their husbands' employers would be willing to sponsor their permanent residencies (interviews with Cynthia, Gia).

"That's why my husband is very very stressed!" (Mila, interview)

"Before, we were always worried, that we will be sent home. Sometimes, my husband and I already fight over it. The fear was always there." (Beth, interview)

Secondly, for women with young children in Australia, the chance to participate in the labour market or find a better job would transpire when the children go to primary school. The women explained that children entering primary school meant freeing some time that would allow them to work and take on full time and permanent jobs. Beth for instance, shared that she planned to transition from her part-time (15 hours/week) cleaning job to a full-time factory job once her youngest child enters primary school.

Maybe when my child's already in school, I can start working." (Clara, interview)

"Maybe when he [child] goes to school, I will really apply. Whatever job, part time or full time, whatever job." (Patricia, phone interview)

Data however also suggest that not all those who became permanent residents transitioned to better employment outcomes. Of the six interviewees who acquired permanent

residency, labour market changes have been observed in two participants. One participant shifted to a different, but still casual, occupation. The other participant transitioned from a five-year unemployment to part-time unskilled work. However, the participant explained that this was due to her youngest attending school. No changes were observed in the labour market outcomes among the other four permanent residents. Two participants stayed in their unskilled casual jobs long-term, at five and seven years respectively. For the remaining two participants, no labour market changes have been observed. It must be noted though that these two participants have children below five years of age and chose not to participate in the labour market yet. What the data indicate is that permanent residency does not always guarantee better labour market outcomes. As Cynthia answered when asked if there was any difference in her labour market experience upon securing permanent residency, "it's the same." However, data also indicate that parental responsibilities may have a significant impact on the labour market outcomes of dependents.

For the dependents, their poor employment outcomes are temporary. To cope with their poor working conditions, dependents took on second jobs for additional income, imbibed a positive attitude, and utilised personal networks, communities, and organisations. Dependents also took on volunteer opportunities and low-paid and unskilled work in order to gain local work experience. Dependents believed that permanent residency, and their children going to primary school, would enable them to transition to better labour market outcomes. While work plans differed (some women wanted to practice their occupation of training while a few wanted to shift careers), common among the dependents was the aspiration for standard (full time and permanent) jobs. The next section will explore dependents' overall perception of the 457 visa.

6.6. DEPENDENTS' PERCEPTION ON LABOUR MARKET INTEGRATION ON A 457 VISA

Generally, interview participants perceived the dependent 457 visa positively due to its associated work rights in comparison to other visa schemes such as the holiday working visa and the student visa. Interviewees noted that under the 457 visa scheme, they would be able to work full time. In addition, participants perceived the dependent 457 visa positively in comparison to the primary 457 visa. Dependents have lesser restrictions compared to the primary holders, and could exercise more freedom in the labour market. As explained in Chapter 3, primary holders are “tied” to employers and to specific occupation nominations. Primary holders are also not allowed to hold second jobs. In contrast dependents are entitled to unlimited work hours, are allowed to hold multiple jobs, and are not restricted to a specific occupation or employer.

“It’s ok because I can work full time under 457 visa.” (Desiree, survey)

“It’s ok because you are allowed to unlimited work, which is the most important of all. So when it comes to work, there aren’t many restrictions on the 457 visa.” (Eden, interview)

“As a dependent, I have the same work and social rights as the principal. It is also good to know that under 457 visa, we have unrestricted work conditions.” (Gia, survey)

In this regard, dependents, according to Ramon, were the ones who “save the family economically” as they have access to untested labour.

“If you are on a 457 visa, you [primary holder] are tied to that nomination while dependent women can do any work. For as long as they want. They don’t have hour limitations. They can be cleaner, accountant, so forth and so on. If they will be accepted in jobs. That’s why sometimes, they support the family. If they are hardworking.” (Ramon, key informant”

However, interview data indicates that despite the relative labour market freedom afforded to dependents, most of the participants were not mobile in the labour market. Of the 14 participants who were employed at the time of the interview, only one participant was able to switch jobs while on a dependent 457 visa. Susan was dissatisfied with her part-time job and was able to easily switch to a casual job that paid relatively more. Cess provided a possible explanation. According to her, women were hesitant to “get out of their comfort zones” and face another period of uncertainty.

“When you enter Australia, you imbibe in yourself that whatever job you can get, that’s it. It’s their comfort zone already. So rather than risk entering another cycle of no security again...Of course, they are already tired by then.” (Cess, key informant)

To illustrate further, a few participants expressed contentment with their jobs as well as citing difficulties and uncertainties should they try to look for a new job.

“Because sometimes, we don’t know if we’re going to get hired if we apply again.” (Helen, group interview)

While participants regarded the 457 visa positively and its associated work rights, participants also felt that integrating into the labour market on a 457 visa had its challenges. Specifically, participants highlighted the lack of access in benefits and the insecurity in the labour market resulting from a temporary residence status.

“Of course [working on a 457] is hard. For example, you’re still temporary up to now. Sometimes, they [employer] will hesitate to make you a permanent staff, thinking that you’d be sent home any time. Up to now, I am still waiting if I will become permanent or not. I don’t know.” (Mila, interview)

At the same time, despite the unlimited work hours and lesser work restrictions, Aida argued that the existence of local labour market barriers still prevented her from finding a good job.

*"It's hard for women here. Because for example, I have unlimited work hours. But I still could not get a good job. Because I still need to study and take certificate courses."
(Aida, interview)*

However, one survey respondent stated that while it was hard to break into the labour market initially, the 457 dependent visa allowed holders to access any job openings.

"It was hard to get a job at first, but after you were able to break into the Australian workforce, the 457 visa will allow you to be a good candidate for any job openings available. I can, however, say this because I had a dependent 457 visa. Being the primary holder, I think, would be a different story." (Carol, survey)

Over all, participants perceived the 457 visa as a feasible option for women to come work in Australia. Data show that none of the participants would discourage a Filipina relative or friend from migrating to Australia on a 457 visa. One participant however stated that it is better to come to Australia as a permanent resident compared to coming on a 457 visa. In addition, some participants observed that it is relatively more difficult to come and work in Australia independently. According to Gia and Aida, there were no jobs that would immediately provide a work visa for women.

6.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Most Filipinas on a 457 visa are dependents who migrated to Australia to reunite with their partners. The high cost of living, lack of access to benefits, and the obligation to remit to their families in the Philippines largely motivated women to participate in the Australian labour market. While participants acknowledged the relative labour market freedom and lesser work restrictions associated with a dependent 457 visa, this research indicates that dependents tend to be unemployed, underemployed and heavily concentrated in unskilled and non-standard forms of employment. Data also suggests de-skilling or a downward

occupation mobility prior to and after migration, and no significant labour movement while on a dependent 457 visa. Data indicate that job searches for some women took anywhere from 2 to 9 months before being able to find employment. In addition, participants expressed concerns with regards to their working conditions and vulnerabilities which included lack and uncertain work hours, the physical and unskilled nature of their jobs, and lack of voice and choice, among others.

The interview and survey data indicate that the intersection of two main factors – labour market barriers and parental responsibility – negatively affected the labour market and integration outcomes of the 457 dependent visa holders. Dependents were confronted by labour market policies and employer practices which significantly limited their capacity to integrate into the labour market. At the same time, as the men were the primary applicants, their continued employment was the basis for the family's legal stay in Australia. Consequently, family and childrearing responsibilities mainly fell on the women. However, women were not passive, but employed strategies to cope with their poor working conditions and inferior labour market positions and exercised agency to transition to better labour market outcomes. Overall, participants situated their labour market experience while on a 457 dependent visa within their general life and livelihood plans. For the dependents, their inferior labour market positions were temporary and their situation in the labour market may improve dependent on two factors – acquiring permanent residency and when children already enter primary school in Australia. The women believed securing permanent residency would enable them to overcome labour market barriers. For women with young children, the entry into primary school meant freeing some time that would allow them to participate in the labour market and take on standard employment. However, it is clear that acquiring permanent residency may not always guarantee better labour market outcomes.

CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION: INSECURITY, VULNERABILITY, AND OPTIMISM IN THE LABOUR MARKET

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the fieldwork findings presented in Chapters 5 and 6 will be critically examined in light of what is known in the literature (discussed in Chapters 2 and 3). This chapter, hence, will address the study's aim, which was to understand the lived experiences of Filipina 457 visa holders in the Australian labour market. In order to explore what shapes and makes the lived experiences of research participants, four exploratory questions were used to guide this research:

- 1) *What are the labour market outcomes of Filipina 457 visa holders?*
- 2) *What factors shape the labour market outcomes of Filipina 457 visa holders?*
- 3) *How do Filipina 457 visa holders exercise agency in the labour market?*
- 4) *How do Filipina 457 visa holders perceive their overall labour market experience?*

This chapter is organised according to the abovementioned questions and will conclude by bringing the key discussions together: their labour market outcomes, the facilitating and limiting factors that shaped such outcomes, and their perceptions and aspirations. These key discussions will form the interpretation of the lived experiences of Filipina 457 visa holders, and provide an understanding of what it is like for a Filipina migrant to integrate into Australia's labour market with a temporary skilled visa.

7.2 WHAT ARE THE LABOUR MARKET OUTCOMES OF FILIPINA 457 VISA HOLDERS?

The migrant women's labour market outcomes are described in this study by examining labour force status (i.e. employed, unemployed, not in the labour force) and employment quality. To understand employment quality, this study's conceptualisation of precarious work, as discussed in Chapter 2, was used as a point of reference. Overall, the findings suggest a labour market outcome disparity, with primary holders having better outcomes in comparison to dependents. However, precariousness was present in the employment of both primary holders and dependents, with the latter being more precarious than the former.

To illustrate, all primary holders were employed. In contrast, not all dependents were able to find employment. Also, no de-skilling was observed among primary holders, as all were able to practice the occupation of their training. A few women shifted careers, but employment post migration was not lower in skill level compared to employment pre-migration. Meanwhile, de-skilling and downward occupational mobility were observed in all dependents. Dependents were largely concentrated in low skilled and unskilled work. Furthermore, de-skilling applied not only to the highly educated women, but also to those with less skill.

With regards to employment quality, all primary holders were in full time employment, and with work contracts of a minimum of four years to permanent positions. This meant that primary holders were in standard employment. They also received a range of benefits, although women experienced these benefits differently. Still, findings indicate that varying degrees of precariousness were present. The findings show that primary holders were insecure with regards to union protection as none of the participants were union members. In addition, primary holders' control and autonomy were limited. As a result of Condition 8107, primary holders did not enjoy the full freedom of choosing their employment and employer, as they were tied to their employer sponsor and nominated occupation.

Furthermore, this study documented three cases of underpayment and one case of visa abuse and rorting, indicating some degree of vulnerability among primary holders.

Meanwhile, all employed dependents were in different forms of non-standard employment, as defined by the MBIE (2014) in Chapter 2. Findings reveal that most dependents transitioned from being full time employees pre-migration to undeclared, part-time and casual employees post-migration. In addition, dependents received lower wages than the locals. This study also documented one case of workplace bullying and a few cases of OHS concerns. None of the dependents were union members, and a few did not have employment contracts. For the dependents, the main concern was the lack and unpredictability of work hours, which translated into unpredictable income. In addition, women emphasised their limited labour market access due to discrimination, as well as their diminished access to benefits and protections.

These findings support general conclusions, discussed in Chapter 2, about the double disadvantage of migrant women. Firstly, the varying degrees of precariousness and vulnerability that migrant women suffered from, regardless if they were primary holders or dependents, indicate their marginalisation in the labour market. Studies by Iredale (2004), Beneria et al. (2012), and UNIFEM (2003) (see also Boyd, 1984; MBIE, 2014; UN-INSTRAW, 2007) conclude that migrant women are more likely to have poorer employment outcomes in comparison to migrant men and native-born women. This study found that while primary holders were in skilled and standard employment, precarious characteristics were present such as no union protection and limited labour market mobility. Also, this study documented a few cases of abuse and underpayment, which provide evidence to Oke's (2012) conclusion that 457 visa holders suffer from exploitative working conditions and salaries below market rates. Meanwhile, dependents were either unemployed or largely concentrated in low-skilled, unskilled, and non-standard employment. In addition, precarious characteristics documented among dependents include no union protection, OHS concerns, low income, limited autonomy and benefits, discrimination, and workplace bullying.

Secondly, the labour market outcome disparity between primary holders and dependents support conclusions in the literature that women dependents are more vulnerable, and face greater obstacles in the host countries' labour market in comparison to women primary holders. According to ABS (2009a as cited in Webb et al., 2013) and AMES Australia (2015), dependents were more likely to be unemployed and if unemployed, were more likely to be in part time jobs, and took longer to participate in the labour market. The findings indicate unemployment, underemployment, and career delay among dependents. In addition, dependents' concentration in non-standard employment and low-skilled or unskilled work indicate their vulnerability and precarity. Research by Fudge (2011) and the MBIE (2014) associate less skilled and non-standard employment with precariousness and vulnerability. Similarly, Oke (2012) argues that 457 visa holders who are low skilled are more vulnerable in comparison to high-skilled workers.

However, the findings also contradict conclusions by the IOM and OECD (2014), Iredale (2005), Ressia (2010), and Tharmaseelan et al. (2010) that the most common labour outcomes among skilled migrants are de-skilling and downward occupational mobility. In fact, the findings indicate that within Australia's 457 visa programme, migrant women, as long as they qualified as primary holders, were able to access skilled and full time employment. Instead, this study found that most dependents, in spite of their high education and skills, did not only suffer from de-skilling but were reduced to becoming trailing spouses and precarious workers. In this regard, the underutilisation of skills and potential value of migrant women in Australia as concluded by numerous research, for example, Iredale (2004) and Ressia (2010), may possibly be the case for dependents and not for primary holders. Considering that majority of women migrate as dependents (AMES Australia, 2016), the findings imply significant waste of human resources.

This study was limited by the smaller participation of primary holders, in the sense that there were fewer cases to draw on. The above findings, however, were not intended to arrive at generalisations, but sought to provide range and depth to the labour market experiences of migrant women. In the next section, the factors that shaped migrant

women's labour market outcomes will be discussed, as well as the possible reasons behind the labour market outcome disparity between primary holders and dependents.

7.3 WHAT FACTORS SHAPE THE LABOUR MARKET EXPERIENCES OF FILIPINA 457 VISA HOLDERS?

Many studies, such as by Beneria et al. (2012), the UN (2001), Boyd (1984) and Rubin et al. (2008) conclude that generally, labour market disadvantage shapes migrant women's labour market experiences (see also Killian & Manohar, 2015; UN-INSTRAW, 2007). Furthermore, in the context of temporary skilled migration, temporariness serves as another significant source of labour market vulnerability, as argued by Rosewarne (2010; 2012) and Ruhs (2013). This study demonstrates in concrete ways, how the intersection of gender, migrant status, and temporariness impact on Filipina migrants in the labour market.

Firstly, the findings show that both primary holders and dependents' labour market access was limited by the non-recognition of overseas educational qualifications and work experience by Australian immigration policy and employers. Australia's immigration policy does not recognise most migrant women's overseas educational qualifications to be of equivalent level in Australia. For instance, a 4-year Bachelor's degree in the Philippines was only equivalent to two years of university in Australia. In addition, most employers required local work experience. These findings support the conclusions by Iredale (2005), Webb et al. (2013), and the IOM and OECD (2014), which highlight that migrant women are excluded because their qualifications are not recognised in ways that would allow their fair access to the labour market (see also Killian & Manohar, 2015; Rubin et al., 2010; Tharmaseelan et al., 2010). Secondly, the findings indicate that Australian immigration's prioritisation of specific skills that largely favour men have prevented highly skilled Filipinas from migrating independently. Research participants have observed that most skills needed were trades-related, typically associated to be men's work such as carpentry,

mechanics, plumbing, and panel fitting. This reflects how the gendered nature of immigration policies, as argued by Bach (2009), Iredale (2005), the IOM and OECD (2014), and Rubin et al. (2008), restricts the capacity of women to enter into skilled jobs.

This study found that the combination of these two factors – non-recognition of overseas credentials and gendered immigration policies – might have contributed to the under-representation of Filipinas in skilled work in Australia in comparison to Filipino men. As discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, highly educated Filipinas have greater difficulty in coming to Australia as primary 457 visa holders because most occupations on the skills list were dominated by men and in cases where there were opportunities for women, their educational qualifications were not recognised. However, this study also reveals that skilled Filipina migrants, to some extent, were able to navigate around these barriers by coming to Australia on a student visa before transitioning into a 457 primary visa. In addition, the non-recognition of overseas credentials could explain the high incidence of de-skilling among dependents. The non-recognition of dependents' overseas educational qualifications and work experience prevented dependents from practicing their occupation of training and consequently, women take on jobs that were low skilled or unskilled. As Mylene explained, continuing the same career she had in the Philippines was “very challenging” and would require her to undertake further studies.

Thirdly, the 457 visa is associated with different sets of restrictions and freedom, which influence migrant workers' labour market mobility. As argued in Chapter 3, primary holders, in comparison to dependents, have greater labour market restrictions. According to Condition 8107, primary holders are obliged to work in their nominated occupation and for their employer sponsor during the duration of the visa, unless changes have been approved by the DIBP (DIAC, 2009 as cited in Bahn, Barratt-Pugh, & Yap, 2012; Power, 2014). The same policy also states that to be without employment and employer sponsor for 90 days would result in deportation. These findings demonstrate MBIE's (2014) conclusion that some conditions attached to certain visas, such as temporary visas, place migrant workers at a disadvantage. In contrast, dependents were not tied to a specific occupation and employer, were allowed to hold second jobs, and had no limits on working

hours. Surprisingly, in spite of the greater labour market freedoms afforded to dependents, findings indicate very limited labour market mobility. Of the 14 participants who were employed dependents for instance, only one switched jobs while on a dependent visa.

Fourthly, this study found that familial duties, especially childcare, were significant in shaping the dependents' decision-making around employment. It should be noted that all dependents expressed the intention to participate in the labour market when they first arrived in Australia. However, due to childrearing responsibilities, dependents delayed or gave up their careers, or opted for non-standard work. Dependents with children below primary school age were more likely to be underemployed or not in the labour force so they could focus on childrearing. Dependents believed that they would be able to participate in the labour market, or transition into better employment, when their young children start entering primary school, as this would allow them to have more time for work. For instance, as discussed in Chapter 6, Beth delayed her career in Australia for five years and waited until her youngest entered primary school before she could participate in the labour market.

This study's findings suggest that dependents' decision-making around childrearing and labour market participation was constrained by a number of factors. The high cost of childcare and dependents' diminished access to benefits also meant that women had no option but to stay at home to take care of the children. As explained by Boese et al. (2013) in Chapter 3, 457 visa holders do not have full access to Family Assistance, which includes family tax benefit and childcare benefit. For example, Clara was a full time IT professional in the Philippines, but decided to quit the labour force after her arrival in Australia. According to her, it was cheaper for her to stay at home to take care of the children than place them in childcare. Meanwhile, some women opted for part-time jobs so they could manage both productive and reproductive responsibilities. Finally, the presence of personal networks that could assist in minding children could hinder or facilitate dependents' labour market participation. For instance, Marissa and Mila, as discussed in Chapter 6, were able to take on casual jobs due to the availability of family and friends to babysit.

Fifthly, most dependents highlighted discrimination as a major factor in restricting their labour market access. According to the women, employers preferred to hire permanent residents and citizens. Gia shared that while she was qualified for the positions, employers would not call her for a second interview upon finding out that she was a temporary resident. This supports AMES Australia's (2016) finding that employers were hesitant to hire migrant women with a temporary residence visa believing that the women would only be available for short-term work. Meanwhile, a few participants believed that the 457 visa afforded women equal rights and treatment in the workplace.

Finally, as temporary residents, 457 visa holders' access to benefits was limited. Studies by the DIBP (2015) and Mares (2009) show that 457 visa holders pay full taxes on income earned, but do not enjoy the full benefits of government services in return. Specifically, dependents in this study highlighted their lack of access to Medicare, subsidised tuition for post-secondary education, and Family Assistance. As discussed earlier in this section, due to the non-recognition of overseas credentials, dependents believed that the only means by which they would be able to access the labour market was by acquiring locally recognised qualifications. However, most dependents forego taking courses in Australia due to unsubsidised and therefore expensive tuition. Marissa for example shared that the only way for her to get into an HR job was to take post-graduate studies. Being a temporary resident, however, meant she would have to pay international student rates for tuition. This also meant that her children's school fees were not subsidised. This led her to decide not to pursue studies in the meantime, and instead, temporarily take on unskilled work. In addition, as claimed by AMES Australia (2016), migrant women do not have access to employment services. The data shows that migrant women struggled with job seeking as they did not have the necessary information and were not familiar with local workplace culture. These findings demonstrate in what concrete ways the diminished rights and lack of entitlements and protection associated with a precarious migrant status are linked to labour market vulnerability, as concluded by scholars such as Fudge (2011), Goldring and Landolt (2011) and Vosko (2010).

In this section, the different constraints Filipina 457 visa holders confronted were also documented in the literature. In particular, studies by Bach (2009), Iredale (2005), the IOM and the OECD (2014), and Rubin et al. (2008) claim that the gendered nature of immigration policies significantly influences migrant women's labour market access. Also, the non-recognition of overseas credentials (Iredale, 2005; IOM & OECD, 2014; Killian & Manohar, 2015; Rubin et al., 2010; Tharmaseelan et al., 2010; Webb et al., 2013) and visa conditions (MBIE, 2014) impede migrant women from securing their preferred employment. The findings show that among primary holders, the most significant constraints were the non-recognition of overseas credentials, the gendered nature of immigration policies, and Condition 8107.

In addition, the findings also support the conclusions of AMES (2015), Iredale (2005), Piper (2005), and Webb et al. (2013) that women face greater challenges in the labour market if they come as dependents. The constraints identified in this study, which were significant for dependents include non-recognition of overseas credentials, discrimination, diminished access to benefits, and familial responsibilities. The greater number of challenges that dependents face could possibly explain the labour market outcome disparity between primary holders and dependents.

Furthermore, this study suggests that within Australia's 457 visa programme, gender inequality and stereotypes may have been reinforced by limiting women's access to skilled work and excluding them from benefits and services which could have facilitated their labour market participation and access. Filipinas have greater difficulty in coming to Australia as primary 457 visa holders, and are thus under-represented in skilled work in comparison to Filipino men. As men were mostly the primary 457 visa holders, their continued employment provided the legal basis for the family's stay in Australia. Consequently, policies and lack of support which limit women's labour market access reinforced a setup in which men served as the breadwinners for the family while the responsibility for the household and childrearing primarily fell on the women. Filipina migrants, regardless of their high education and skills, are therefore reduced from

being full time professionals pre-migration to what AMES (2015), Bach (2009) and Iredale (2005) refer to as trailing spouses or dependents, who delay or give up their careers, or who take on precarious work so they could manage their reproductive responsibilities. In addition, being temporary residents, women's access to benefits and gender equality services such as subsidised tuition and free childcare is limited. In this sense, as Kreimer (2004, p. 229) argues, a state could either weaken or strengthen the division of labour according to the breadwinner model through its social and family policies.

No data is available in this study to compare whether childrearing also shapes primary holders' labour market outcomes, and if so, in what ways. This is due to the fact that most primary holders who participated in the study were single and without children. This may suggest a pattern of Filipina migration, whereby single and highly educated women migrate independently for employment. Future research could look into this, and also whether the migration of women as primary holders enables a change in gender roles and dynamics within reunified families.

7. 4 HOW DO FILIPINA 457 VISA HOLDERS EXERCISE AGENCY IN THE LABOUR MARKET?

To cope with challenges in the labour market, migrant women have employed strategies similar to what has already been documented in the literature. Comparable to Tharmaseelan et al. (2010) and Killian and Manohar's (2015) findings, dependents in this study overcame local labour market barriers by studying short vocational courses and gaining local experience through volunteering and taking on low-skilled and low-paid jobs. For instance, Teresa volunteered in a childcare centre, while Aida took a short caregiving course. Linda shared that she took double shifts to save money for postgraduate studies to

be able to convert her nursing license. Meanwhile, Marissa and Mylene believed that taking on unskilled jobs in the meantime would equip them with local work experience that would allow them to access the labour market better in the future.

Filipina migrants also exercised what Limpangog (2013) refers to as tolerance to cope with poor labour market outcomes. Findings show that primary holders and dependents exhibited “tiis” (to bear/endure). Marissa, Mila, and Susan endured their labour market situations as they focused on the goal, which was to secure permanent residency. In cases where tolerance does not bring about the intended effects, Limpangog (2013) notes that migrant women change their strategy from tolerance to confrontational. A few women shared that they started to exhibit different forms of resistance in the workplace, such as speaking up, refusing to take on tasks that they believed were beyond their job description, and refusing to work unless their demand has been met.

Also, Achenbach (2014) found that migrant women make changes in their employment and reproductive situations in order to manage work and family responsibilities. According to this study’s findings, migrant women shaped their reproductive and family choices around their employment situation. To demonstrate, Gia and her husband decided to delay pregnancy until they secured permanent residency so Gia could work. Similarly, Anna and her husband decided to temporarily leave their children behind in the Philippines so that Anna could work in Australia.

This study also highlights the role of personal networks, organisations, and communities that migrants have created for themselves. To some degree, the networks and organisations fill the gap in support that dependents were not able to access from the government due to their precarious migrant status. For instance, migrants offered to babysit children during their free time for free or for a much lower fee, which allowed migrant mothers to work, as demonstrated by the cases of Marissa and Mila. Communities and networks support migrant women in their integration into Australia through provision of moral support, free English language lessons, and information about getting settled. Most dependents also found jobs through referrals from other women spouses. Cynthia

and Eden for instance, referred newly arrived dependents so they could work for their employers.

In some instances, organisations provide legal and other forms of assistance for migrant women who suffer from labour market abuse. Maricar noted that the Filipino migrant organisation provided her and her partner temporary shelter, as well as legal and moral assistance during the filing of cases against her employer. Other strategies documented in this study included taking on second jobs or even undeclared jobs in order to augment their income, and negotiated with employers regarding work shifts, such as Mylene's negotiation with her employer about work schedules so she could balance studying, working and childrearing at the same time.

As explained in Chapter 2, Bell & Piper (2005) and Ruhs (2013) argue that migrant workers have voice and are able to exercise agency, although to a minimal degree, in the sense that the workers decided to migrate and work in the host country in spite of the challenges. The findings in this study demonstrate that migrant women, regardless of whether their experiences have been positive or negative, still opted to stay in Australia and instead, employed strategies to cope with their current situation and towards better labour market outcomes.

7.5 HOW DO FILIPINA 457 VISA HOLDERS PERCEIVE THEIR OVER-ALL LABOUR MARKET EXPERIENCE?

Migrant women's perceptions of their over-all labour market experiences are varied. Some expressed great satisfaction with their employment, citing that the 457 visa afforded women equal rights and treatment in the workplace. Others perceived their jobs as great opportunities, especially in comparison to their working conditions in the Philippines and other countries. To some degree, especially among single primary holders, women's labour

market experiences were empowering in the sense they were able to do things on their own and experience new things, which they never thought would have been possible for them to accomplish. In some instances, coming to Australia on a 457 visa facilitated dependents' engagement in income generating activities, whereas previously in the Philippines, they were not in the labour force, as demonstrated by the cases of Cynthia, Beth, and Anna.

Despite these positive views, the most common experiences among the migrant women were that of uncertainty, insecurity, and powerlessness. These perceptions were significant among participants regardless of human capital, mode of entry, and marital status. Whether primary holder or dependent, with children or without children, or whether highly educated or less skilled, the findings show that women felt varying degrees of uncertainty, insecurity, and powerlessness. Firstly, primary holders and dependents confronted varying degrees of work-related insecurities. While primary holders were in long-term contracts for a minimum of four years, the threat of losing their jobs and being deported was always present. Based on interviews, primary holders and dependents "didn't feel secure because anytime", they "could be sent back to the Philippines". The pressure of lack of job security on primary holders was exacerbated by the fact that their legal stay, and that of their families in Australia, was contingent on their continued employment. This constant "fear of being sent home" was also shared by the dependents. Furthermore, for the dependents, being largely concentrated in part-time and casual work and unskilled work meant no security with regards to work hours, income, benefits, and tenure.

Secondly, migrant women felt some degree of powerlessness and lack of voice. Condition 8107 and the weight given to employer nomination and sponsorship in employment and application for permanent residency have contributed to a power imbalance between employers and the migrant workers (Boese et al., 2013; Deegan, 2008). The findings show that most Filipina 457 visa holders aimed to secure permanent residency and that most perceived the visa and employer sponsorship as opening doors to securing permanent residency. As argued in Chapter 2, 457 visa holders are vulnerable in the labour market

because their existence – their employment and residency in Australia – largely lies in the hands of their employer sponsors (Boese et al., 2013; Deegan, 2008; Oke, 2012; Dauvergne & Marsden, 2010). As Toh and Quinlan (2009) explained, employer sponsors have the power to decide whether 457 visa workers will remain long enough to qualify for application for permanent residency and whose reference may be critical in the assessment process. Similarly, Foulkes (2015) and the IOM (2004) found that temporary migrant workers are less likely to complain about labour market abuse if legal stay in the host country is contingent on employment contracts. Furthermore, according to Boese et al. (2013) and Deegan (2008), this power imbalance is heightened by the fact that primary holders do not have access to benefits, and thus the financial burden increases dependency on the employer sponsors. As a result, workers felt reluctant to resist mistreatment (Boese et al., 2013; Deegan, 2008). As presented in Chapter 5, primary holders felt “tied” to their employer sponsors and often, “cannot complain” or chose to endure violations of their labour rights so as not to compromise their jobs and their chances of securing permanent residency.

The dependents meanwhile were confronted with local labour market barriers, familial responsibilities, and diminished access to benefits and protections. As could be seen in Chapter 6, the convergence of these factors has resulted to a feeling of “powerlessness” in securing the jobs they wanted and having “no choice” but to “grab whatever opportunity comes”. And often, these opportunities came in the form of non-standard, unskilled and precarious work.

Nevertheless, over-all, primary holders and dependents registered no dissatisfaction with their labour market experience. Regardless of whether their experiences were positive or negative, migrant women accepted these realities as temporary and necessary towards their ultimate goal, which was to secure permanent residency. For the migrant women, the 457 visa would open doors towards settling permanently in Australia. For the primary holders, permanent residency would provide them security of stay in Australia, and would allow them to switch employers and jobs easily. For the dependents, permanent residency would also be their “golden ticket” towards skilled and/or permanent full time jobs.

Permanent residency would allow women access to support that would increase their capacity to participate and access the labour market. This includes subsidised tuition so they could secure locally recognised qualifications, free and subsidised childcare, and other benefits. However, approval of permanent residency was not always guaranteed and in some instances, temporariness was extended. Surprisingly, this study found that transition to permanent residency did not automatically mean transitioning to better labour market outcomes. The findings show that only a few were able to change jobs after securing permanent residency and that most former dependents stayed in their part-time and casual low-skilled and unskilled jobs. These support Goldring and Landolt's (2011) finding that precarious migrant status locks migrants into precarious work and that transitioning to other forms of legal migration status will not protect migrant workers from precarious work.

This study's findings indicate the usefulness of adopting precarious work in describing labour market experiences. Precarious work provides depth to migrant workers' experiences as opposed to a binary between standard and non-standard employment and skilled and unskilled work. The findings also challenge Tucker's (2002) proposal that preference should be taken into consideration when analysing precariousness of work. The author argues that some precarious characteristics such as part-time work, may be preferred by the worker, and are thus not considered precarious. What this study found is that while it would seem that dependents opted to sacrifice their careers for the sake of their families, this decision was made within a context whereby fundamental constraints limit women's choices. For example, Mila opted to get into part-time work for the sole reason that she could not afford the cost of childcare. Similarly, Marissa decided to get a job as a casual factory worker, because familial responsibilities and local labour market constraints limited her capacity to get into full time skilled work. Finally, the findings also suggest that precarious work may not necessarily be associated with dissatisfaction. In particular, a few migrant women (Catherine, Jean) registered high satisfaction with their employment circumstances in spite of the presence of precariousness.

7.6 CONCLUSION: PRECARIOUS YET OPTIMISTIC: THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF FILIPINA 457 VISA HOLDERS

The increase in temporary skilled migration and the feminisation of migration highlights the need to address the invisibility of women in temporary skilled migration. Studies on migrant women in the labour market within temporary skilled migration are scarce, and the few that are available mostly focused on measurable job-related characteristics. This study centres on how Filipinas on a 457 visa interpret or make sense of their experiences in the labour market, and hence their actual lived experiences. Adopting a qualitative approach, this study specifically sought women's perceptions of their labour market outcomes, the factors that shaped their experiences, and their labour market aspirations.

What this study found is that there is a labour market outcome disparity between Filipinas who migrated on a 457 primary visa and those who were on a 457 dependent visa. The temporariness of work, visa conditions, precarious migrant status, and women's aspirations for permanent residency converged to render migrant women insecure and vulnerable in the labour market. Specific to primary holders, visa conditions such as the employer sponsorship system acts as an additional source of vulnerability. Specifically for dependents, childrearing responsibilities were a significant factor in shaping labour market experiences. Dependents confront greater obstacles in the labour market and were more precarious workers in comparison to the primary holders. However, in spite of the labour market outcome disparity, the lived experiences of both primary holders and dependents were the same – that of varying degrees of precariousness and optimism.

Firstly, as temporary workers, primary holders and dependents do not have job security. Dependents, being largely concentrated in non-standard employment, had no way of knowing when and for how long they would work. For primary holders, losing their jobs would automatically mean the cancellation of their visa and cessation of their legal stay in Australia. As a result, primary holders and dependents were constantly worrying about losing their jobs and being deported.

Secondly, the women's precarious migrant status meant insecurity with regards to accessing benefits and protections. The lack of access to benefits and protection significantly diminishes the capacity of primary holders and dependents to participate and access the labour market. Thirdly, the dependency of women on their employer sponsors for their work visa and securing permanent residency results in a power imbalance that disadvantages primary holders. This dependency is increased by the lack of access to benefits and protections.

Finally, regardless of their labour market experiences, Filipina 457 visa holders endured, believing that the 457 visa was their ticket to acquiring permanent residency. For the women, their insecurity and vulnerability in the labour market are temporary; acquiring permanent residency would address their insecurity and vulnerability and only then would they be able to transition towards better labour market outcomes. For the primary holders, this meant acquiring the freedom of choice with regards to their jobs and employers. For the dependents, permanent residency would enable them to secure full time and permanent jobs.

The main implication of this study's findings on immigration policy and the 457 visa programme is how policies can be strengthened to 1) support the labour market participation and access of migrant women, and 2) protect migrant women's labour rights. This study puts forward two recommendations. Firstly, policies must be gender equal to facilitate the entry of highly educated and skilled Filipinas as primary holders and to address the invisibility of dependents in the migration process. The ANZCSO skills list could be widened to include skills typically associated with women. Also, support must be available for migrant women to overcome the non-recognition of their overseas credentials. This could include providing migrant women access to subsidised tuition and support with regards to training and accreditation of their skills. Also, temporary migrant women can be given access to services, which would help them manage their reproductive responsibilities such as subsidised childcare.

Secondly, the 457 visa programme could be made fairer and more ethical by addressing the power imbalance emanating from the employer sponsorship system. This includes affording migrant workers, regardless of visa status, equal rights and protection as that of local workers. In addition, pathways towards permanent residency must be widened. Stakeholders in this study have proposed that workers could be given the alternative to apply for permanent residency without employer sponsorship after working for two years. Finally, monitoring could be further strengthened to address issues such as visa rorting and discriminatory practices, such as employers overlooking temporary residents in job hiring.

Filipina migrants left their friends, family, and country in order to seek better opportunities in Australia. Such opportunities were mostly in the form of precarious work. However, the relatively poor labour market outcome was not only a disadvantage to the migrant women and their families, but to Australia as well. My time with Filipina migrants show that while life in Australia as a temporary resident and as a migrant woman may not be without challenges, most were determined to stay and longed to be productive and develop their potential in the labour market. With Australia's increasing demand for skilled migrant labour and the increasing migration of Filipinas, addressing the labour market issues of temporary migrant workers, and specifically migrant women workers, can potentially be a win-win situation. Providing migrant women a clear and easy pathway out of precariousness of work and residency will contribute to their empowerment, and would allow Australia to harness migrant women's skills and full potential.

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APPENDIX A

Invitation to Participate and Informed Consent Form

ABOUT THE STUDY

Mabuhay! Kumusta po? I am Ava Danlog, a student at Massey University in Palmerston North, New Zealand. Currently, I am doing thesis research as a requirement for my Master in International Development degree. The title of the research is **“Women and Work within Skilled Temporary Labour Migration: The Lived Experiences of Filipina Migrant Workers in the Labour Market under Australia’s Subclass 457 Visa Scheme”**. The purpose of the research is to explore the experiences of skilled Filipina migrants on a subclass 457 visa. Specifically, it aims to understand how skilled Filipina migrants perceive or assess their employment circumstances, and explore the ways by which they cope with their migration experience. Questions included in this survey would be focused around your work experience.

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

If you are a Filipina and hold a 457 visa (either primary or secondary), I would like to invite you to participate in the online survey and informal interview. Your knowledge and experience as a Filipina migrant working in Australia will be valuable to better understand the situation of skilled Filipina migrants. Please note that the online survey would take around 15 minutes to complete. In addition, should you agree to a follow-up informal interview, you may leave your contact details at the end of the survey, and I could arrange a time and place, at your convenience. The interview should take approximately an hour. The informal interview may be voice recorded, if you are happy with this. Please note that the identity of the participants will be kept confidential.

After the fieldwork, I am more than happy to share with you the results if you would like. Information from the research will be used solely for the production of the thesis, which will be available online. Additionally, it may be used for possible publications and conference presentations.

YOUR RIGHTS AS RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Please note that participation is voluntary and that you are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you do decide to participate, you have the right to withdraw participation from the study at any time without the need to explain. You can refuse to answer any particular question, and request for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the

interview. You can also ask any questions about the study at any time. Your names will not be used and records will be kept confidential. You also have the right to access results of the study once concluded.

RESEARCH PROJECT CONTACTS

We are more than happy to answer should you have any questions about the study. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with me, or with my supervisor.

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This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named above are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Dr Brian Finch, Director (Research Ethics), telephone 06 356 9099, extn 86015, email humanethics@massey.ac.nz

MARAMING SALAMAT PO!

CONSENT

Q1. I have read and understood the above consent form and desire of my own free will to participate in this study.

- Yes
- No

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Q2. Please state your age:

Q3. Where do you currently live? Please state town/city and state.

Q4. How long have you been living in Australia?

Q5. Civil status:

- Single (skip to Q8)
- Married/partnered
- I prefer not to respond (skip to Q8)

Q6. Is your partner based in Australia?

- Yes
- No
- I prefer not to respond

Q7. Is your partner working in Australia?

- Yes
- No
- I prefer not to respond

Q8. Do you have children?

- Yes
- No (skip to Q10)
- I prefer not to respond

Q9. Are your children in Australia?

Q10. Do you have other family members in Australia?

- Yes
- No
- I prefer not to respond

Q11. What is your highest level of schooling?

- Postgraduate or higher
- Bachelor
- Diploma/certificate
- Technical/vocation
- College undergraduate
- High school graduate
- I prefer not to respond

EXPERIENCES IN MIGRATING TO AUSTRALIA

Q12. Could you please tell me why you decided to come to Australia?

Q13. Are you currently a –

- 457 visa holder (skip to Q19)
- Former 457 visa holder

LABOUR MARKET EXPERIENCES

Q14. Please state your last occupation under a 457 visa?

Q15. Please describe how you found your work experience under a 457 visa.

Q16. Please rate your entire work experience while on a 457 visa.

- I love it
- I like it
- It's ok
- I don't really care
- I dislike it
- I prefer not to respond

Q17. Could you please explain this rating?

Q18. If you are currently employed, what is your current occupation? Otherwise, please leave blank and skip to the next item.

Q19. What is your current 457 visa status?

- Primary applicant
- Secondary/dependent

- I prefer not to respond

Q20. Where did you apply for your current 457 visa?

- In Australia
- Outside Australia
- I prefer not to respond

Q21. Did you have work experience before to coming to Australia on a 457 visa?

- Yes
- No (skip to Q23)
- I prefer not to respond

Q22. Please indicate your last two occupations and locations before coming to Australia on a 457 visa.

Q23. Are you currently employed?

- Yes (skip to Q27)
- No
- I prefer not to respond

Q24. What was your last occupation on a 457 visa?

Q25. Please tick which statement applies to your situation.

- I am currently looking for a job in Australia
- I have no plans of seeking employment in Australia

Q26. Could you please explain in a few words why you have no plans of seeking employment in Australia? (skip to Q49)

Q27. Please state your current occupation and location of your work.

Q28. How long have you worked with your current employer?

Q29. Have you had any work-related training under your current employment?

- Yes
- No (skip to Q31)
- I prefer not to respond

Q30. Who paid for the training?

- Employer

- Self
- Both employer and self
- Free
- I prefer not to respond

Q31. Do you have a signed work contract with your employer?

- Yes
- No (skip to Q34)
- I prefer not to respond

Q32. How long is the duration of your work contract?

Q33. In just a few words, please tell me how you feel about the conditions attached to your work contract.

Q34. Have you received any safety instructions/briefings at work?

- Yes
- No
- I prefer not to respond

Q35. What is your type of employment?

- Full time
- Part time
- Project-based
- Casual
- I prefer not to respond

Q36. How many hours do you work per week?

Q37. Are your work hours

- Fixed (skip to
- Flexible
- I prefer not to respond

Q38. Who determines your work hours?

- Employer
- Self
- I prefer not to respond

Q39. What is the method of your income payment?

- Contract lump sum

- Salary/hourly wage
- I prefer not to respond

Q40. Do you get paid overtime?

- Yes
- No
- I prefer not to respond

Q41. Would you be comfortable sharing your income information with me?

- Yes
- No (skip to 43)
- I prefer not to respond (skip to Q43)

Q42. How much is your annual income before tax?

Q43. Do you have a second job?

- Yes
- No
- I prefer not to respond

Q44. Are you a member of a union?

- Yes
- No
- I prefer not to respond

Q45. What are the benefits provided by your employer? Please tick all that apply.

- Airfare for self
- Airfare for dependents
- Housing on arrival
- Assistance with housing costs
- Medical insurance
- Superannuation
- Financial assistance with English studies
- Financial assistance with children's education
- Transportation to and from work
- Other _____
- I prefer not to respond

Q46. How would you rate the following aspects of your job?

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	I prefer not to respond
Salary	<input type="radio"/>					
Workload	<input type="radio"/>					
Shifts/roster	<input type="radio"/>					
Work hours	<input type="radio"/>					
Work environment	<input type="radio"/>					
Work arrangements	<input type="radio"/>					
Quality of work	<input type="radio"/>					
Holidays/leave	<input type="radio"/>					
Safety procedures and safety equipment	<input type="radio"/>					
Benefits	<input type="radio"/>					
Overtime payment	<input type="radio"/>					
Work resources	<input type="radio"/>					

Q47. Would there be anything else that you would like to say about your current job? Please state below.

Q48. Over all, how would you rate your experience with your current job?

- I love it
- I like it
- It's ok
- I don't really care
- I prefer not to respond

Q49. Overall, how do you find your work experience on a 457 visa?

Q50. Do you plan to extend your 457 visa?

- Yes
- No
- I prefer not to respond

Q51. Please explain why or why not you plan to extend your 457 visa.

Q52. What are your plans about permanent residency?

- I am currently applying
- I am planning to apply
- I have no plans to apply
- I am not sure as of the moment
- I prefer not to respond

Q53. Please tell me in a few words, how and where do you see yourself five years from now?

Q54. If you have a Filipina friend or relative who wants to come and work in Australia on a 457 visa, what would you tell or advise her?

Q55. Would you want the results of the survey sent to you once the study has been concluded? If yes, please leave your email address below. Otherwise leave it blank and skip to the next page.

Q56. Your experience is important in understanding the situation of female skilled migrants. Would you be willing to be contacted by me for a short follow up informal interview about your experience in Australia? I would be more than happy to arrange a time and place at your convenience. It could be face-to-face or via phone call or Skype, whichever is convenient for you. I will be in Australia in August. The interview will not take more than an hour. Your identity will be kept confidential.

- Yes
- No (skip to "Thank you and end of survey")

Q57. Please provide your email address, mobile and phone number and please indicate your preferred mode of initial contact. Please note that identity will be kept confidential.

Name:

Email address:

Telephone number:

Mobile number:

Q58. What is your preferred mode of contact?

- Email
- Telephone
- Mobile phone

THANK YOU, END OF SURVEY

I appreciate your participation in the survey. Maraming salamat po.

APPENDIX B

In-depth semi-structured interview guide
 Participants: Filipina 457 visa holders
 Duration: 30-45 minutes

Aims:

1. Investigate the employment circumstances;
2. Explore how women perceive or assess their current employment circumstances; and
3. Describe the ways by which skilled Filipina migrants exercise agency around their migration experience.

Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Thank you” • Introduction of self, the research and the objectives • Discussion of the interview process and participants’ rights • Ask participants if they have any questions • Consent <p style="text-align: center;">- START OF THE INTERVIEW PROCESS-</p>
Building rapport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talks about self <p><i>Kayo po? Kumusta po kayo? [How are you?]</i></p>
Their migration to Australia	<p><i>Paki-kwento mo naman sa akin bakit ka nag-desisyong pumunta ng Australia</i> [Please tell me the story of your migration experience to Australia.]</p> <p>Probes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivation/s for migrating • Decision-making process – agency in the decision to migrate • Experiences in migrating • Why Australia? Why 457 visa? • Experiences in processing the 457 visa

Labour market experience	<p><i>Ano yung prosesong pinagdaanan mo para makahanap ng trabaho?</i> [Could you please tell me how you found your current job?]</p> <p>Probes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current labour force status and employment • Motivations for entering the labour market • Work aspirations upon arrival vs labour market outcome • Recruitment and hiring process • Facilitating and limiting factors in looking for jobs
Employment history; labour market mobility	<p><i>Pagkwentuhan natin ang naging work experience mo. Ano na yung mga naging trabaho mo sa Australia on a 457 visa?</i> [Let's talk about your work experience while on a 457 visa].</p> <p>Probes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jobs held pre and post-migration • Jobs held while on a 457 visa and after transitioning to permanent residency
Perception of their employment circumstance; Coping strategies	<p><i>Yung kasalukuyan mong trabaho, pwede mo ba ikwento sa akin ano yung ginawa mo buong araw kahapon, para magka-idea ako tungkol saan ang work mo</i> [About your current job, could you please walk me through what you did at work yesterday to give me an idea?]</p> <p>Probes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working conditions • Perceptions about their working conditions <p><i>Kung ide-describe mo yung current work mo in one word, what would it be?</i> [If I would request you to describe your work in one word, what would it be?]</p> <p>Probes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likes and dislikes • How they perceive these challenges/issues? • Coping strategies to deal with challenges around employment
Work aspirations; Agency	<p><i>Over-all, paano mo ide-describe ang naging work experience mo dito sa Australia on a 457 visa?</i> [Over-all, how would you describe your entire labour market experience while on a 457 visa?]</p> <p>Probes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception of employment circumstances • Advantages and disadvantages of a 457 visa • What would be her ideal work circumstances? What is/are her job aspiration/s? • Strategies towards achieving work aspirations
Future plans	<p><i>Five years from now, paano mo nakikita ang sarili mo? Where would you</i></p>

	<p><i>be and what would you be doing- Pwede ba paki-expound yung sagot mo?</i> [Five years from now, how do you see yourself? Where would you be and what you would be doing? Could you please expound.]</p> <p>Probes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over-all life and livelihood plans; how the 457 visa and labour market experiences are situated within these plans
Over-all perception of 457 visa	<p><i>Kung mayroon kang kaibigan, kapamilya o kakilala na Pinay na gustong pumunta at magtrabaho sa Australia on a 457 visa, ano ang sasabihin mo sa kanya? Expound please.</i> [If you have a Filipina friend or relative who wants to come and work here in Australia on a 457 visa, what would you tell her? Please expound.]</p>
End	<p><i>* Is there anything that I might not have asked you that you would like to add to this interview?</i></p> <p><i>* Would you have any questions for me? About the study?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank you • If they want a copy of the interview summary, discuss process, turnaround time for feedback • Would they be willing to share with me photos for possible inclusion in the thesis • Give token of appreciation

APPENDIX C



FILE

MASSEY UNIVERSITY
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA

23 July 2015

Ava Danlog
c/o Norshuhaidah Jamalludin
110B Linton Street
West End
PALMERSTON NORTH 4410

Dear Ava

Re: The Labour Market Conditions of Women within Skilled Temporary Labour Migration: The Lived Experiences of Filipina Migrant Workers under Australia's Subclass 457 Visa Scheme

Thank you for your Low Risk Notification which was received on 9 July 2015.

Your project has been recorded on the Low Risk Database which is reported in the Annual Report of the Massey University Human Ethics Committees.

You are reminded that staff researchers and supervisors are fully responsible for ensuring that the information in the low risk notification has met the requirements and guidelines for submission of a low risk notification.

The low risk notification for this project is valid for a maximum of three years.

Please notify me if situations subsequently occur which cause you to reconsider your initial ethical analysis that it is safe to proceed without approval by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees.

Please note that travel undertaken by students must be approved by the supervisor and the relevant Pro Vice-Chancellor and be in accordance with the Policy and Procedures for Course-Related Student Travel Overseas. In addition, the supervisor must advise the University's Insurance Officer.

A reminder to include the following statement on all public documents:

"This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named above are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Dr Brian Finch, Director (Research Ethics), telephone 06 356 9099, extn 86015, e-mail humanethics@massey.ac.nz".

Please note that if a sponsoring organisation, funding authority or a journal in which you wish to publish requires evidence of committee approval (with an approval number), you will have to provide a full application to one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. You should also note that such an approval can only be provided prior to the commencement of the research.

Yours sincerely

Brian T Finch (Dr)
**Chair, Human Ethics Chairs' Committee and
Director (Research Ethics)**

cc Dr Maria Borovnik
School of People, Environment and Planning
PN331

Mrs Mary Roberts, HoS Secretary
School of People, Environment and Planning
PN331

Dr Sharon McLennan
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**Massey University Human Ethics Committee
Accredited by the Health Research Council**

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