“Just check-out my Friendster”: The impact of Information Communications Technologies on the Transnational Social Fields of Filipino Immigrants in Canada

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ABSTRACT

“JUST CHECK-OUT MY FRIENDSTER”: THE IMPACT OF INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES ON THE TRANSNATIONAL SOCIAL FIELDS OF FILIPINO IMMIGRANTS IN CANADA

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Contemporary international migrations take place during an “information age”, and information and communications technologies (ICT) have revolutionized transnational immigrant social networks. Immigrants can now maintain transnational connections with their source communities with less cost but more frequency than ever before. E-mail, web cameras, instant messenger services and social networking websites can be used to send very detailed reports about living and working in destination countries to contacts in social networks that span the globe.

Drawing upon findings from 54 semi-structured interviews with immigrants in Toronto and other locations in Southern Ontario, this study examines the impact ICTs have had on the transnational social networks of Filipino immigrants in Canada. In this work I employ Pierre Bourdieu’s theories of social fields and forms of capital as a theoretical framework to develop the concept of “digital” capital, a valuable resource that can be converted into multiple forms of capital within transnational social networks. I illustrate how immigrants use digital technologies, and in particular social networking
websites, to increase the size and diversity of their social networks, and to disseminate information about life in Canada. I also highlight how processes of social distinction and reproduction influence the accuracy of transnational information flows.

This PhD project fills important gaps in the geographic literature, a discipline where ICT have been a relatively understudied research topic to date. It also contributes to the migration studies and transnationalism literature. Many studies that investigate immigrant ICT use have overlooked the importance of geography, and do not consider how uneven power relations between migrant source and destination countries shape immigrants’ on-line transnational activities. This research also makes important theoretical contributions to labour market theory. Classical ideas related to labour shortage and recruitment, hierarchies in the labour market, and the mechanisms of segmentation in labour markets have traditionally been grounded in processes that take place almost entirely in the destination country. This work demonstrates why a global or transnational perspective must be adopted when considering the labour market experiences of immigrants. The findings from this study demonstrate how the economic integration of newcomers in destination countries clearly has transnational dimensions.
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### Introduction

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“Just check-out my Friendster”: The Impact of ICT use on the Transnational Social Fields of Filipino Immigrants in Canada

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Introduction

The purpose of this introduction is to outline the research context of this PhD project and state its goals and objectives. It also outlines the general structure of the thesis as its content is represented by three separate yet inter-connected manuscripts that are either published or will be submitted for publication. In addition, summaries of the main arguments advanced in each manuscript are included to outline their contributions and place within the overall PhD project.

This introduction consists of five sections. Section 1 provides a brief overview of contemporary international migration trends and the phenomenon of transnationalism to illustrate the geo-political context in which this PhD research is situated. In this section I also draw upon the Philippines as a case study to show how socioeconomic, political and cultural structures in migrant source countries are affected by migrant’s transnational activities. Section 2 outlines the purpose and objectives of this PhD research project. It establishes how this work fills topical and theoretical gaps in several areas including the geographic and immigration studies literature. Section 3 traces how the theoretical framework, based on the ideas of Pierre Bourdieu, was developed and demonstrates how it complements other work in the migration studies literature. Section 4 documents the
qualitative research methods employed in this study, and how data was collected and analysed. This section also explores some of the issues related to researcher positionality which I faced during this project. Section 5 explains how the three manuscripts presented in this document meet the thesis objectives. In addition this section details the continuity between the manuscripts in terms of their conceptual frameworks and topical matter.

**Section 1: International migration and transnationalism**

International migration is a key component of contemporary globalization (Sassen 2007). According to World Bank Statistics in 2010 the global “stock” of migrants was an estimated 215.8 million, or 3.2 percent of the world population (Ratha et al. 2011). There are also millions of “irregular” or “undocumented” migrants who have entered countries illegally or without official status. In 2009, for example, there were an estimated 11.1 million undocumented migrants in the United States (Donato and Armenta 2011). In 2008 the irregular migrant population in the European Union was estimated to be between 1.9 – 3.8 million (Vogel et al 2011).

Several characteristics make contemporary migrations distinct from previous population movements. One factor is geographical as today international migrations are more global in nature and have now expanded to include almost all regions of the world (Castels and Miller 2003). Gender dynamics are another key characteristic. Whereas in the past international migration streams were dominated by men, now almost one out of every two migrants is a woman (Audebert and Dorai 2010). A third characteristic relates to immigrant transnationalism. While sojourners have always maintained connections
with their home communities, modern information and communications technologies (ICT) have made it easier and more affordable for migrants to maintain social and economic linkages with their areas of origin (Vertovec 2003). Of the key components mentioned this thesis focuses on the role ICTs play in immigrant’s transnational activities.

The concept of transnationalism is based upon the idea that many immigrants continue to be linked with their source communities long after they have settled in the destination country. The classic definition of this phenomenon was coined by Linda Basch et al. (1994: 6) who argued transnationalism was the “...process by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement”. These social relations often take the form of social or economic remittances. Social remittances are the flows of information, images and ideas sent back to source areas by immigrants in the destination country. Recent developments in communications technologies have made the transfer of this form of remittances easier than ever before. For example, Steven Vertovec (2003) demonstrates how, as cheap phone cards have made long distance telephones more affordable, global telephone traffic has increased dramatically between migrant source and destination countries. Economic remittances are typically wages earned in the destination country which are sent to source areas. According to World Bank estimates in 2010 approximately 324.7 billion USD were sent to Developing Countries (Ratha et al. 2011). Figure 1 illustrates the top ten remittance receiving countries during this period, however it should be noted that these figures only record remittances flowing through official or commercial channels.
Additional billions are likely sent through undocumented methods such as hand-to-hand transfers.

![Top Ten Remittance Receiving Countries: 2010](image)

Figure 1: 2010 Top Ten Remittance Receiving Countries (Ratha et al. 2011).

Immigrant transnationalism has considerable socio-economic and cultural impacts on migrant sending countries. Social remittances paint a picture of life overseas and can often stimulate a longing to travel abroad (Levitt 2001). Economic remittances pay for new homes, cars, electronic appliances, private school educations and other locally recognized status symbols (Aguilar 1999; Leavitt 2001; Walton-Roberts 20003, 2004). Those individuals in source areas receiving economic remittances are no longer dependent on the local economy and class distinction is funded by overseas dollars (Smith 2006). Embodied forms of transnationalism also contribute to these processes of change in source areas. Returning immigrants are held in high regard, and become the centre of attention in their source communities, due to their emersion in modern
consumer culture (Levitt 2001; Sabry 2005; Brunnel 2007; Batnitzky et al. 2008). While many migrants are quick to display their material goods acquired in destination countries most are reluctant to discuss the conditions of employment that provided the wages used to purchase these commodities. Such practices reinforce the popular belief that destination countries are places of prosperity and fuel desires among non-migrants to migrate (Kandel & Massey 2002; Espiritu 2003; Fujita-Rony 2003; Schmalzbauer 2005; 2008; Taylor et al. 2007). In many migrant-sending countries, participating in a migration movement now holds considerable prestige in the local community. In countries such as Mexico, India and the Philippines, for example, the act of migration has become considered an important rite of passage and many would-be migrants aspire for the opportunity to work and live in another country (Batnitzky et al. 2008; Schmalzbauer 2008; Kandel and Massey 2002; Cohen 2004).

The Philippines can be used as an ideal case study to further illustrate the socioeconomic and cultural impacts international migration and transnationalism have on migrant source communities. International migration has been a part of Filipino culture since the turn of the twentieth century. The first international migrations were to the United States as a result of colonial linkages (Tyner 1999; Bonus 2000; Espiritu 2003). Contemporary international migrations are more global in nature and reflect the shifting economic and political conditions in destination countries. The liberalization of immigration policies and the demand for professional workers saw increased levels of Filipino immigration to North America in the 1960s. In the 1970s the Middle East became a popular destination when construction firms needed labour for infrastructure
projects. During the late twentieth century migrant flows shifted to East and Southeast Asia as demand grew for Filipina domestic workers (Ball and Piper, 2002). By the start of the twenty-first century Filipino migration patterns have become global in nature, and migrant communities have been studied in Canada (e.g. Cohen 2002; England and Stiell 1997; Kelly and Lusis 2006; Pratt 1997, 1999), the United States (e.g. Bonus 2000; Espiritu 1995, 2003), Hong Kong (e.g. Chang and Grooves 2000), Japan (e.g. Ball and Piper 2000; Lan 2003; Piper and Ball 2001; Suzuki 2000; Tyner 2004), Singapore (e.g. Yeoh and Huang 2000), the Middle East (e.g. Gibson and Graham 1986), Italy (Parrenas 2011) and France (e.g. Fresnoza-Flot 2009). In 2007 there were approximately 8.7 million Filipino migrants living outside of the Philippines, an estimated 25% of the nation’s labour force (Solomon 2009). The economic contributions this group makes to the Philippine economy are considerable. According to the World Bank in 2010 an estimated 21.3 billion USD was sent back to the country by Filipino’s overseas, making the Philippines the fourth highest remittance receiving country in the world (Ratha et al. 2011).

Considering the size and scale of international migrations from the Philippines, it is perhaps not surprising that it is a country which has a “culture of migration” that valorises the act of going “abroad”. Filomeno Aquilar Jr. (1999: 102) uses the metaphor of a ritual journey to describe the importance of migration in Philippine’s popular culture. He suggests that migration has become a modern variation of a religious pilgrimage where “…the higher-wage employment centres and semi-peripheries of global capitalism become the sites of this secular journey through vast distances across the earth’s surface.”
Migrants are “chosen ones” who maintain a privileged position in Filipino society. Anna Romaina Guevarra (2009) argues that the image of the nobleness of overseas migrations has been a project of the market, the state and Filipinos abroad themselves. From an institutional perspective the Philippine state has been initiating, supporting and facilitating large-scale migration in order to ensure the continuous inflow of foreign currency to the country to alleviate trade deficits and to combat problems associated with domestic unemployment since the 1970s (Semyonov and Gorodzeisky 2008). Thus, for over forty years, Filipinos migrants have been heralded by the government as “national heroes” due to the contributions their economic remittances make to the national economy\(^1\). Today the state grants Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) - a term that includes contract workers as well as permanent immigrants - special privileges and municipal governments have arranged lavish homecoming spectacles for returning migrants.

The media and corporations in the Philippines have also played a part in valorising overseas migrations. In the past television commercials portrayed the social mobility afforded by international migration. Michael Pinches (2001) records how a 1980’s television commercial featured a Filipino worker travelling home on a flying carpet laden with consumer goods. He is greeted by his family waiting for him outside a beautiful home. The message of this commercial was that only after a period overseas could Filipinos return with material prosperity. Today corporations directly promote overseas migrations in order to capitalize on migrant’s transnational activities. For

\(^1\) This discursive strategy appears to have been a successful, at least in the context of overseas workers themselves. In a relatively recent study by M. Scott Solomon (2009), the majority of OFWs surveyed by the researcher considered themselves as “heroes of the nation”.
example, Globe is one of the largest mobile phone companies in the Philippines. Every year it sponsors the “Model OFW Family of the Year Award”, a competition which recognizes a financially successful migrant family who members have maintained close family ties despite separation (Madianau and Auller 2011). Award recipients are honoured at a public ceremony with national media coverage and receive a cash prize. One can also see the extent to which the “national hero” discourse has permeated Philippine popular culture in the media circus which followed the kidnapping of an OFW in Iraq. In 2004 Angelo de la Cruz, a Filipino truck driver working in Bagdad, was kidnapped by Iraqi insurgents and threatened with death. In addition to the wide-spread coverage given to the kidnapping, one Philippine television network ran public service announcements in the form of a prayer which pleaded for his release, while others broadcast news that the statue of St. Thomas in Baguio City Cathedral was weeping tears of blood while churchgoers prayed for divine intervention to save him (De la Cruz 2009).

To recap, the Philippines is one of the most intensely migrant societies in the world (Madianau and Auller 2011). International migrations have been part of the country’s social and cultural fabric for over one hundred years, and today Filipino migrants can be found in all regions of the globe. Over time international migration and the social status of going “abroad” has become part of Philippine popular culture. This dynamic is reinforced by the media, state and corporate discourses, as well as the transnational activities of migrants themselves. Overseas dollars have become an important stratifying mechanism in Filipino society and a new social class has emerged whose social mobility is linked to overseas migrations (Pinches 1999; Semyonov and
The immigrants who were interviewed in this study are members of the global Philippine diaspora. Their transnational linkages with the Philippines follow similar patterns as to what has been cited in the reviewed literature. However, these immigrants are distinct from many other migrants in the Philippine diaspora because of Canada’s status as a sought-after migration destination. In comparison to other migration destinations, such as countries in the Middle East, Hong Kong or Singapore, immigrants in Canada have an opportunity to settle permanently. As such, this group differs from other migrants, such as contract workers, who will be returning to the Philippines after a period of employment overseas. In contrast, immigrants in Canada have travelled “abroad” and remain there by establishing roots in the destination country. This is the broader socioeconomic and cultural context in which this PhD study is situated.

Section 2: Research Purpose and Objectives

This research project examines how Filipino immigrants use ICT to maintain extensive transnational digital social networks, and how some forms of these transnational activities socially reproduce the uneven power relations that exist between migrant sending and destination countries. It investigates how immigrants use on-line technologies, such as social networking websites, to spread detailed flows of information about working and living in Canada.

In 2007, the Philippines became the top source country of immigrants to Canada, sending 19,064 immigrants and 15,254 temporary workers during that year (Jimenez 2008). The latter number illustrates the increasing number of Filipinos participating in
Canada’s Temporary Worker Program. According to Derrick Thomas (2008), in 2006 the Philippines was the main country of origin for non-permanent residents in the temporary worker stream, many of whom are part of the Live-in Caregiver program. This work primarily focuses on the experiences of a group of Filipino immigrants who entered Canada under the skilled worker and family reunification category. Only a few of the research participants had come to Canada as temporary workers. As a result, the findings of this research reflect the migration experiences of a specific segment within the broader Filipino immigrant community in Canada.

The purpose of this PhD research project is to explore a central aspect of contemporary transnationalism which had received relatively little attention across academic disciplines. For instance, few geographers have studied the impacts communications technologies have had on spatial processes, and qualitative research about online environments remains in its infancy in this discipline (Dwyer and Davies 2010). With the exception of some studies in economic geography (e.g. Symons 1997; Malecki 2002; Fields 2006), research on ICTs from a geographic perspective has remained scarce (notable exceptions include Walton-Roberts 2010). As an empirical study of how immigrants use ICTs such as social networking sites to maintain expansive transnational networks and circulate information about working and living overseas, this PhD project will add to the growing body of work by geographers on on-line environments.
This research will also contribute to the migration studies and transnationalism literature. ICT use has been a topic of interest for some time in the migration studies field. Researchers have primarily focused on how migrant communities utilize the Internet to create on-line cultural organizations. Studies include work on the virtual Indian, Greek, Chinese, Mexican and Salvadoran communities (e.g. Adams and Ghosh 2003; Benitez 2006; Graham and Khosravi 2002; Mahler 2001; Mirta 2000; Ong 2003; Parham 2004; Parker and Song 2006; Panagakos 1998, 2003; Smith 2002; Van Den Bos and Nell 2006; Yang 2003). Despite this rather extensive body of work topical gaps still exist in this literature. Because of the focus on larger group and organizational activities less attention has been paid to migrant’s “everyday” technology use.

A more general gap exists in the transnationalism literature where, surprisingly, detailed studies of ICT use do not appear to be on the collective research “radar” in this discipline. For example, in their review article titled “Transnational Migration Studies: Past Developments and Future Trends”, Peggy Levitt and Bernadette Jaworsky (2007) provide an overview of the existing literature and identified promising areas for research yet make no mention of the role Internet technologies will play in shaping migrant transnationalism in the future. Similarly, Mimi Kim’s (2009) more recent review of the work in this field outlines current trends but essentially overlooks the important role ICTs play in these processes. This PhD dissertation therefore contributes to the migration studies and transnationalism literature by providing examples of immigrants’ “everyday” uses of ICTs as well as fleshing out the important role digital technologies play in contemporary transnational activities.
This research also makes important theoretical contributions to labour market theory. Traditional labour market theories used to explain the segmentation of immigrant workers have typically focused on factors at the national or local scale (notable exceptions include Bauder 2006 and Kelly 2009). Classical ideas related to labour shortage and recruitment, hierarchies in the labour market, and the mechanisms of segmentation in labour markets have been grounded in processes that take place almost entirely in destination country. These theories therefore overlook the phenomenon of immigrant transnationalism, and how factors at the global scale influence segmentation processes at the local level. This PhD illustrates how transnational networks of immigrants circulate very accurate labour market information back to the Philippines about working overseas. Such findings demonstrate why a more global perspective could be integrated into traditional labour market theories when considering the labour market experiences of immigrants in destination countries, as the economic integration of newcomers clearly has transnational dimensions.

Finally, this research will complement the existing migration literature that draws upon the work of Pierre Bourdieu (e.g. Bauder 2003, 2005, 2006; Girard and Bauder 2006; Kelly and Lusis 2006; Nee and Sanders 2001). Bourdieu’s work has been used by immigration scholars to explain the social and economic experiences of migrants in a variety of contexts, however thus far researchers have focused primarily on his theories of capital (e.g. social, cultural and economic capital). This PhD makes an important contribution to this body of work by introducing a new form of capital which I have
termed “digital capital”. Furthermore, this research will also explore Bourdieu’s concepts of social fields, a theoretical tool which has been relatively overlooked by immigration scholars. Field theory is an important conceptual tool for migration studies researchers. It can be employed to explain the broader context in which transnational forms of capital circulate. Field theory can also be used to reveal the power dynamics between different “players” within the field, as well as between migrant sending and receiving countries.

**Section 3: Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework used in this research draws upon Pierre Bourdieu’s theories of social class relations in capitalist societies. The main concepts explored in this work are Bourdieu’s ideas of social fields and capital. According to Bourdieu (2005: 30) social fields can be defined as “... a field of forces within which the agents occupy positions that statistically determine the positions they take with respect to the field, these position-takings being aimed at conserving or transforming the structures of relations that is constitutive of the field”. Fields have general boundaries which delineate them from other social fields in society. Some have relatively permeable boundaries while others maintain more rigid standards for entry. The literary and artistic fields, for instance, are two fields which have permeable boundaries when compared to the educational field which requires formal types of recognition such as grades or transcripts for entry (Bourdieu 1992). A second general characteristic of all fields is that they are competitive arenas. Thus fields can be seen as “…a space of play within which holders of capital (of different species) struggle in particular over the …granting power of the different species of capital and over their reproduction (Bourdieu 1999: 58). There are fundamental divisions between the space of positions of the different actors in the field. For example,
in the French Artistic field these divisions include the distinction between “pure” and “commercial” artists, bohemian and bourgeois clientele, and “Left Bank” versus “Right Bank” theaters (Bourdieu 1992:237). The various groups within this field all strive to establish their view of the social field as the legitimate one. Each field has its’ own rules and logic which govern the social space. These parameters, influenced in part by historic and national factors, are not transferable. Actions or activities which are highly valued in one field could have no value in a different social field.

Social fields are the structure in which different forms of capital circulate. From this perspective, an understanding of different forms of capital is vital to field theory as they are the ‘energy’ that drives the development of a field through time (Grenfell 2008). Loic Wacquant (1989:39) maintains “A capital does not exist but in relation to a field: it confers a power over the field, over the material or embodied instruments of productions or reproduction whose distribution constitutes the very structure of the field, and over the regularities and the rules which define the ordinary functioning of the field, and thereby over the profits engendered in the field”. Bourdieu (1985: 724) stresses the importance of capital in relation to an individual’s relative position in a field when he states that fields are “ multi-dimensional spaces of positions where agents are located in the first dimension based upon the overall (of capital) they possess and in the second dimension according to the composition of their capital”. In his work Bourdieu identified several different varieties of capital ranging from general to very specific forms that only exist in certain social fields. In this work my focus will be on social, informational and symbolic capital. Social capital is related to group membership, collective agency and social
distinction and reproduction. It consists of two key elements. The first is the social relationship that secures access to these resources and second is the amount and quality of these resources (Portes 1998). Informational capital is found in the bureaucratic field and centers on knowledge transfer activities. Governments are the main source of this form of capital as they are the institutions most often responsible to assemble, treat and redistribute information through activities such as census taking, statistics, cartography and archives (Bourdieu 1999). Symbolic capital is a more general form of capital than the previous two types. It relates primarily to an individual’s social status and can be defined as “…any property (any form of capital whether physical, economic, cultural or social) when it is perceived by social agents endowed with categories of perception which cause them to know it and recognize it, to give it value.” (Bourdieu 1999:62).

Various academics have applied Bourdieu’s concepts to studies of immigration and transnationalism. For example, Victor Nee and Jimy Sanders (2001) attempt to quantify the various forms of capital brought by immigrants to Los Angeles to determine whether the composition of these ‘resources’ can predict labour force integration. Johanna Walters (2005) examines how accumulating institutional cultural capital plays a motivating role for many transnational migrations between Hong Kong and Canada. Harald Bauder (2003; 2005a, 2005b, 2006) looks at how the cultural capital of newcomers influences employment trajectories in Canada and Germany. In a similar vein, Eric Girard and Harald Bauder (2006) examine how Bourdieu’s concept of “habitus” can be used to explain the exclusion of foreign-trained engineers from Canadian labour markets. Speaking specifically of transnationalism, Bourdieu’s (1986)
theories of capital have provided a conceptual vocabulary with which to describe the changes migrants undergo while overseas (Kelly and Lusis, 2006; Lusis, 2005; McKay, 2001). In this thesis I contribute to this body of work with the development of a new form of capital called “digital capital”. As will be demonstrated in the third manuscript of this thesis, digital capital is an important resource which can be converted into social, informational and symbolic capital within immigrant’s transnational social networks.

In comparison to the increasing number of studies that utilize Bourdieu’s concepts of capital, few academics have drawn upon his theories of social fields in the context of immigration studies. In this regard only two studies come to mind. Peggy Levitt and Nina Glick Schiller (2004) use the concept of social fields to illustrate how transnational activities encompass both those in and on the periphery transnational networks. More recently Folke Glastra and Paul Vedder (2010) have employed field theory to examine the learning strategies of highly educated refugees in the Netherlands. Despite being relatively overlooked by researchers, I consider Bourdieu’s field theory compatible for the goals of this PhD project and well suited to study participant’s transnational social networks. In this regard I am building upon the work of Levitt and Schiller’s (2004) who have argued that migrant’s social networks could be conceptualized as a “social field” where individuals manoeuvre in pursuit of desirable resources or capital. This stance allows me to draw upon field theory to determine; the “rules of the game” that govern social processes within the social network, to identify the different groups that form part of the network, and to examine what forms of capital are valued within these networks.
Furthermore, field theory could be used to explore how uneven power relations influence social processes within transnational networks.

**Section 4: Research Methods**

This project used semi-structured interviews as the primary qualitative research technique. Interviews are a socially accepted form of data collection. David Silverman (2010) argues that social interactions in the past 30-40 years have created an “interview society”, where interviews have become increasingly common to everyday life and are central to the ways in which we make sense of our lives. From a research perspective this method has several advantages, and Bridget Bryne (2004:182) lists four main benefits:

1) Open-ended and flexible questions are likely to get a more considered response than closed questions and therefore provide better access to interviewees’ views, interpretations of events, understandings, experiences or opinions.

2) This method is suitable for assessing complex issues such as values, as the flexible medium allows interviewees to speak in their own voice and with their own language.

3) This method allows flexibility as research topics can be approached in a variety of ways, and sensitive issues may be approached tactfully to open up a dialogue and produce fuller accounts.

4) Interviews are able to achieve a level of depth and complexity that is not available to other approaches (e.g. surveys). The non-standardized interview enables the researcher to become attuned to subtle differences in other peoples’ positions and
respond accordingly, both at the time of the interview and in the subsequent analysis.

Interviews are also an inclusive form of communication, and Gill Valentine (2005: 111) stresses the benefits for the research participant and claims this approach is “…sensitive and people oriented, allowing interviewees to construct their own accounts of their experiences by describing and explaining their lives in their own words.” On the other side of the coin, Kevin Dunn (2000) outlines some of the benefits of semi-structured questioning for the researcher and points out how opinions and tentative conclusions can be checked, verified and scrutinized during the interview processes. Furthermore, Dunn argues that this research method is organized around ordered but flexible questioning, and therefore allows the researcher to redirect the conversation if it has moved too far from research topics. Thus, although the conversation is based on specific questions or research themes, semi-structured interviews allow a flexible and free interaction between researcher and participant.

In this study I utilized snowball and opportunistic sampling to secure interview participants. Snowball sampling has been identified as a useful tool when studying social networks (Biernacki and Waldorf 1981; Bernard 1988; Noy 2008). A second reason this sampling technique is well suited for this study is outlined by Marinus Spreen and Ronald Zwaagstra (1994) who contend the results from this method can be improved if the analysis of the structure of networks is made an explicit part of both the study’s methodology and theory (e.g. via Bourdieu’s field theory). A key informant started the
sampling processes and provided access to a social network of Filipino immigrants from the island of Bohol, located in the central Visayas region. After the interview the key informant connected me with several other individuals from this network who in turn, suggested additional participants. It should be noted that ICTs were central to participant recruitment. Cell-phone texting, e-mails and instant messenger services were used by key informants to facilitate the interview process, to make electronic “introductions” on behalf of the researcher, and to confirm the time and date of meetings. The key informants also aided the research process by pointing out salient issues that I needed to be aware of during the interview process, and provided explanations to behaviours observed in the field. I also employed “opportunistic sampling” in this study. This sampling technique is one way to take advantage of new opportunities to recruit participants that may develop after the fieldwork has begun. Unexpected opportunities that occur during the research may be used to facilitate sampling (Liamputtong and Ezzy 2005). In the context of this research, opportunistic sampling helped me get invitations to several social functions where I was able to observe how immigrants used digital technologies in a group setting.

The location of the interviews varied throughout the Greater Toronto Area and other locations in South-western Ontario. The variety of interview venues reflected the geographic distribution of the nodes in the social network under study. The majority of the individual interviews took place in homes throughout the Toronto suburbs of Mississauga and Scarborough. One node of the social network was located in the City of Guelph. I was also present at several functions where members of this social network
gathered as a complete group. These included Christmas and birthday parties, and a sports festival. The focus group interview was carried out at one of these social gatherings in a park located in Southern Ontario. Attendance at these events allowed me to observe how immigrants used ICTs, such as digital cameras and video recorders, to document their lives in the destination country. These “snapshots” and movies were later disseminated among the transnational network via social networking websites or e-mail exchanges.

During my fieldwork I conducted individual and group interviews with 54 immigrants, as well as utilizing participant observation to note ICT use at social functions. The primary data collection method was semi-structured interviews with individual subjects although at times a husband and wife requested to be interviewed together. One focus group interview was also conducted. Interviews were digitally recorded and I also collected notes throughout the fieldwork. Interviews were transcribed and the data was coded according to six general themes; patterns of technology use, information about Canadian labour markets, information about life in Canada, technology and transnational social networks, technology and the implications for labour market integration, and accurate/inaccurate flows of information. The coding scheme was based upon deductive and inductive reasoning, where codes are produced from pre-existing concerns, questions and hypothesis, as well as from the data itself (Spicer 2004). This approach was based upon Mike Crang’s (2005:224) argument that although codes provide a means of conceptually organizing interview material they are not an explanatory framework in themselves, rather coding structures the data so that interesting
relationships can be seen. Once the initial coding was finished I used a variation of Michael Agar’s (1986) “long couch or short hall” method of organizing transcripts and cut the text (electronically) and pasted sections into folders according to similar codes. These folders were then checked and recoded if any sections have been miscoded or misunderstood. Once the initial coding process was finished the transcripts were compared to my field notes to ensure that important themes had not been overlooked. The data was then reviewed and broken down further to the themes presented in the empirical sections of the paper. Participants were quoted anonymously to maintain confidentiality.

To complement the interviews I also used questionnaires to collect data. According to Pranee Liamputtong and Douglas Ezzy (2005) this combination of research methods can be used as a triangulation with the results of each method testing the validity of the information gathered.

Issues of epistemology, power, and positionality are unavoidable when conducting research. I consider this project an example of situated knowledge, recognizing that the notion of a omniscient, detached observer is not possible in any form of scientific research (Harraway 1991; Rose 1997; Nightingale 2003). According to Andy Merrifield (1994:50), situated knowledge provides a point “…from which to organize, conceptualize and judge the world. Yet this is always partial, never finished or whole…” I also position myself as a “situated researcher” who acknowledges that my class, gender, ethnicity, and sexual preference, individual background, education, beliefs and theoretical affiliations influence the choice of research topic, the course of the research, and its eventual results. This acknowledgement involves a continual process of “critical
reflexivity” where the researcher tries to understand their own position in the world and then conducts and writes their study in ways that make this position visible rather than obscure (Hay, 2004). Issues of critical reflexivity are important in all forms of qualitative analysis, particularly in interviews (Dowling, 2000) and participant-observation (Evans, 1988). As such, throughout this project I tried to always consider my own social position and how it influenced the research process.

I agree with Kim England (1994:87) who states “…the positionality and biography of the researcher plays a central role in the research process, in the field as well as in the final text.” There were two main issues related to positionality in this project. The first dealt with the power relations embedded in the research process. According to Robyn Dowling (2000:24), “Interactions between two or more individuals always occur in a societal context. Societal norms, expectations of individuals and structures of power influence the nature of these interactions.” Bronwyn Williams and Mary Brydon-Miller (2004:251) give some indication where the researcher is placed on social hierarchies when they suggest “The researcher carries with him [sic] all of the power and privilege associated with being a member of the academic elite. He has business cards, access to a language of theory, and esoteric knowledge that, even when he chooses not to display it, is available to him and recognized by others. Privilege does not disappear; you cannot make it go away or pretend it does not exist.” Thus, being a doctoral student would have shaped the power relations between myself and interview participants. A related issue can be traced to broader power relations between the “West” and the “Third World” which is in part based upon colonial linkages (Howard 1994;
Valentine 2005). Although there is no historical relationship of colonization between Canada and the Philippines this issue still remains relevant. For example, Canada holds considerable status as a migration destination in the Philippines because of the perceived standards of living and the opportunity for immigrants to settle permanently in the country. Therefore, there is a power dynamic for me to consider as a Canadian-born researcher who is asking Filipino immigrants about their migration experiences in Canada.

A second ethical issue revolved around my position as an “insider/outsider” in the Filipino-Canadian community. My mother is Filipino, and I am a second-generation immigrant who holds “balikbayan” status in the Philippines (the “balikbayan” or “returning Filipino” maintains high social status in the Philippines and are entitled to special treatment during a visit to the homeland). My graduate research has been based upon the Filipino community and I have been to the Philippines twice, and still maintain connections with family there. I also have an extensive family network in Toronto and Detroit. These social connections afford me some “insider” status within the community. However, I do not speak Tagalog and have not been brought up according Filipino traditions in Canada. Furthermore, with the exception of participation in a few social events, I have not been active in the Filipino community. This renders me an “outsider” to some degree even among my family networks. Such issues of positionality are not easily resolved, and it was crucial for me as a researcher to continually practice critical reflexivity throughout the fieldwork.
Section 5: PhD Structure

The following sections outline the thesis structure and explains how the three manuscripts are inter-connected and build upon one-another. The main arguments presented in each manuscript are also summarized in this section.

Manuscript 1 is titled “Immigrants in the Labour Market: Transnationalism and Segmentation”. It is a co-authored journal article by myself and Harald Bauder. It was published in 2010 in Geography Compass 4 (1) pp. 28-44.

The main goal of this article was to provide an alternative view of traditional arguments presented in labour market theory which had been developed to explain the economic integration of immigrants in destination country economies. More specifically, in this article we advance the argument that traditional labour market theories used to describe why foreign-born workers are found in the least desirable forms of employment in destination country labour markets primarily consider socioeconomic factors in the destination country, and remain rooted at the local or national scale of analysis. In contrast, the literature on transnationalism illustrates how socioeconomic processes which operate at the global scale also shape the employment trajectories of immigrants. We contend it is therefore important to integrate a transnational perspective to traditional labour market theories in order to provide a more complete picture when trying to understand the segmentation of an immigrant workforce.
The theoretical framework for this article draws upon the work of Pierre Bourdieu with a focus on different forms of transnational capital (e.g. social and cultural). From this perspective it complements the existing work in the migration literature which also utilizes Bourdieu’s theories of capital. Of note is the section of the paper (pg. 35) which discusses cultural capital in context of migrant sending countries and the social status assigned to international migrations. The perceptions of life overseas, and the cultural capital of being “abroad”, are part of a culture of migration which is explored in more depth in the empirical study which is the third manuscript of this PhD project.

Manuscript 2 is titled “Migration and labour markets: an interpretation of the literature”. It is a co-authored book chapter by myself and Harald Bauder. It was published in 2011 in the *Edward Elgar Research Handbook on the Future of Work and Employment Relations* Northampton: Edward Elgar Publishing LTD.

The goal of this book chapter was to make a theoretical contribution to the body of literature which utilizes the work of Pierre Bourdieu to understand immigration experiences. As was previously mentioned most research has focused primarily on Bourdieu’s concepts of capital, while this work introduces Bourdieu’s ideas of social fields in the context of immigration studies. It develops a framework which identifies three separate but overlapping fields. First is the state field which encompasses national governments and other institutions responsible for establishing the basic rules of international migration (e.g. immigration policies, requirements, quotas etc.) and which influence the relative value of different forms of capital which circulate in this field (e.g.
The second field is the migration industry field. This field includes recruitment and broker firms, migration agencies, training schools and other organizations which provide the institutional context through which “industry” capital circulates. The third field is the transnational social field. This field consists of immigrant’s transnational social networks and ethnic economies, and defines how social capital circulates throughout these networks.

The theoretical framework for this chapter provides a more detailed concept of social fields than has been advanced in previous studies (e.g. Glastra and Vedder 2010). It identifies how fields are hierarchical structures and can be mechanisms of social reproduction. For example, the transnational social field has characteristics, such as ethnic economies or the relative placement of migrant social networks in destination country labour markets, which help reproduce the segmentation of an immigrant workforce. Our use of field theory in this chapter also speaks to why traditional labour market theory should develop a transnational perspective. In particular, the migration industry field demonstrates how institutions such as recruitment firms or training schools in the migrant source country facilitate the labour market segmentation of immigrants in the destination country labour market. Thus, this manuscript highlights the transnational nature of many fields which influence the economic integration of immigrants. It provides further evidence from the literature why a global perspective needs to be incorporated into traditional labour market theories which focus on immigrant labour market segmentation.
Manuscript 3 is titled “Just check-out my Friendster”: The impact of ICT use on the Transnational Social Fields of Filipino Immigrants in Canada”. This is a single author piece to be submitted for publication consideration in the Annals of the American Association of Geographers.

The main objectives of this manuscript are three fold. First is to provide qualitative evidence of some of the conceptual arguments laid out in the previous two manuscripts (e.g. the incorporation of a transnational perspective to labour market theory). Second is to fill some topical gaps in the geographic, migration studies and transnationalism literature with an empirical study of the “everyday” uses of ICT by immigrants in Canada. Third is to make a theoretical contribution to the immigration literature which draws upon the work of Pierre Bourdieu by utilizing a rigorous application of field theory.

The findings of this manuscript provide empirical backing to positions advocated in the previous two manuscripts, namely that traditional labour market theory needs to consider the phenomenon of immigrant transnationalism and not just factors at the local or national scales. This manuscript documents how Filipino immigrants in Canada use ICT to send extremely detailed flows of labour market information to their global contacts. Immigrants circulate information about working conditions, wages, barriers and opportunities in the local labour market, as well as the types of support services available to newcomers. From this perspective, it is clear that the economic integration of
immigrants has transnational dimensions, and is not only influenced by socioeconomic processes in the destination country.

This manuscript will also fill topical gaps in the geographic, migration studies and transnational literature. It is an empirical study of immigrant’s ICT use which is situated from the perspective of the individual, rather than the scale of the cultural or political community, and documents the main types of technology used by immigrants to maintain their transnational connections. The manuscript also outlines the geography of this digital social network and highlights where nodal points in this network are located. Furthermore, this work raises attention to the important function social networking sites such as Friendster and Facebook play in contemporary transnationalism.

Finally, this manuscript makes theoretical and empirical contributions to the immigration literature which draws upon the theories of Pierre Bourdieu. In this work I introduce a new form of capital which I have termed “digital capital”. The main components are economic capital (e.g. the financial resources needed to access or acquire digital technologies) and cultural capital (e.g. the knowledge and skills needed to utilize digital technologies efficiently). It is an important resource that can be converted into three other forms of capital. First is social capital in the form of a globally located social network which consists of a mixture of friends, family, long-lost acquaintances and school friends, as well as on-line “friends”. Second is informational capital in the form of accurate labour market information gathered from members of this social network or on-line resources such as government web-pages. Third is symbolic capital in the context of
the Philippines culture of migration. Immigrants can use their Facebook pages to give the impression that they are financially and materially prosperous in Canada, thereby ensuring their social status as someone who has made it “abroad”. This manuscript also employs a detailed application of Bourdieu’s field theory. In this work field theory is used to; provide a conceptual structure to Filipino immigrant’s transnational digital social networks, identify different groups in the field, and highlight the power dynamics between migrant source and destination countries. For example, migrant source and destination countries represent the internal hierarchies of the field, and the differences in social status between Canada (as an attractive migration destination) and the Philippines (as a place where it is believed to get ahead one must go abroad) speaks towards how geographic factors remain an important part of the dynamics of transnational migrations.
Manuscript #1

**Immigrants in the Labour Market: Transnationalism and Segmentation**

As published:

**Introduction to the manuscript**

This article provides an alternative view to the traditional arguments presented in labour market theory which had been developed to explain the economic integration of immigrants in destination country economies. More specifically, in this article we advance the argument that traditional labour market theories used to describe why foreign-born workers are found in the least desirable forms of employment in destination country labour markets primarily consider socioeconomic factors in the destination country, and remain rooted at the local or national scale of analysis. In contrast, the literature on transnationalism illustrates how socioeconomic processes which operate at the global scale also shape the employment trajectories of immigrants. We contend it is therefore important to integrate a transnational perspective to traditional labour market theories in order to provide a more complete picture when trying to understand the segmentation of an immigrant workforce.

The theoretical framework for this article draws upon the work of Pierre Bourdieu with a focus on different forms of transnational capital (e.g. social and cultural). From this perspective it complements the existing work in the migration literature which also
utilizes Bourdieu’s theories of capital. Of note is the section of the paper (pg. 35) which discusses cultural capital in context of migrant sending countries and the social status assigned to international migrations. The perceptions of life overseas, and the cultural capital of being “abroad”, are part of a culture of migration which is explored in more depth in the empirical study which is the third manuscript of this PhD project.

Abstract

Various theories speak towards the labour market segmentation of an immigrant workforce. Theoretical frameworks such as Dual Labour Market Theory or Hierarchy Theory provide some value in outlining why immigrants are often found in the least desirable forms of employment. However, most theories do not consider the phenomenon of immigrant transnationalism and how forces at multiple scales shape labour market trajectories. In this paper we argue that traditional theories primarily consider socioeconomic factors in destination countries, and focus on factors at the local or national scale of analysis. In contrast, the literature on transnationalism illustrates how socioeconomic processes that operate at the global scale also influence the employment trajectories of immigrants. The integration of transnationalism with traditional labour market theories therefore provides a more complete picture when trying to understand the segmentation of an immigrant workforce.

Introduction

One of the common features of contemporary globalization is that a foreign-born workforce will often be found in the least desirable labour market positions. In
industrialized countries, many foreign-born workers are part of a labour pool utilized for the most unpopular forms of work, commonly referred to “3D” employment: dirty, dangerous, degrading (Stalker 2000, 2001). There is ample evidence to support these broad generalizations. For example, in the United States, foreign-born workers are found in the garment industry (Grasmuck & Grosfoguel 1997; Ong 2003), janitorial services (Cranford 2005), and the low status service sectors of the urban economy (Sassen 2000; Waldinger & Lichter 2003; Wright & Ellis 2000). In Canada, they are employed as farm labourers (Bauder 2008), nannies and sex trade workers (Folson 2004). In Greece, migrants are seasonal workers in agriculture, fishing, construction and tourism (Cavoundis 2006; Hatziprokopiu 2004). In Italy, they work in agriculture, construction and domestic services (Kosic & Triandafyllidou 2003). In Germany, migrants work in occupations with low wages, limited career opportunities or under substandard conditions (Herbert 2001). In England, they are found in industries characterized by long hours and low wages (Batnitzky et al. 2008). In Japan, they work in factories (Maeda 2006; Tsuda 2004) or the construction and service industries (Ball & Piper 2002). In Israel, foreign workers are employed as semi and unskilled labourers (Levy 2004; Remmenick 2007), and, finally, in the oil producing Middle East the employment conditions for this group have been likened to “slavery” (Gardezi 1995).

Although not all migrants work in low-paid and low-status employment, the disproportionate allocation of migrants to the lower segments of the labour market is an important mechanism of contemporary economies (Bauder 2006; Peck 1996). What are the mechanisms that assign migrant workers to these lower segments of the labour
market? In this paper we illustrate that segmentation processes operate beyond the geographical boundaries of the destination country. Rather than searching for the causes of labor segmentation only at the national scale, we show that a transnational perspective of labour migration is necessary to fully understand why of foreign-born workers are generally found in the secondary segment of the labour market. A transnational perspective permits integrating the social and cultural linkages migrants maintain with their home communities into theories of segmentation and the reproduction of a vulnerable labour pool of migrants.

The Segmentation of Immigrant Labour

In this article we concentrate on migrants in the lower segments of the labour market. A different a body of literature explores the experiences of highly skilled, entrepreneurial and business migrants in Canada (e.g. Ley 2006; Marger 2006; Walton-Roberts & Pratt 2005; Wong 2004), the United States (e.g. Kalnins & Chung 2006; Liu & Lin 2009; Shinnar & Young 2008; Tienda & Raijman 2004; Wang & Li 2007), France (e.g. Mung & Dinh 2007), Sweden (e.g. Hjerm 2004), Norway (e.g. Vinogradov & Kolvereid 2007) the United Kingdom (e.g. Altinay & Altinay 2008; Levie 2007; Ram et al. 2008) and Germany (e.g. Miera 2008; Pecoud 2004). The less privileged group of migrants in “3D” employment are nevertheless central to the functioning of the contemporary global economy. If these foreign-born workers one day decided to simply return home, economies in migrant destination countries would grind to a halt, as the 2004 mockumentary A Day Without a Mexican illustrates in an entertaining way. Traditional labour theories provide a point of entry into a discussion explaining why foreign-born
workers concentrate in the secondary labour market segment in destination countries. Our focus will be on three general theories: 1) labour shortages and recruitment theory, 2) hierarchy theory, 3) segmented labour market theory.

Labour shortages and recruitment theory conceptualize the segmentation of migrant labour as processes of economic expansion or recruitment. Michael Piore (1979) argues that economic expansion absorbs the native workforce in the upper and middle segments of the labour market and creates shortages of labour in the lower segment of the labour market, offering low paying, and low-status jobs. A foreign-born workforce is used to fill shortages. In many cases migrants are self-motivated to follow this demand for labour by seeking permanent residence in a country, applying for temporary visas or crossing the border without obtaining status. In other cases, firms and government actively recruit foreign labour. For example, Aihwa Ong (2003, 165) illustrates how migrants from Bangalore are recruited by high-tech companies in Silicon Valley’s under the United States H-1B visa program, serving as “glorified indentured servants”. Stephen Castles and Mark Miller (2003, 190) document how the French automobile manufacturer Citroen looked for “physically able but poorly educated” migrant workers, as they were considered “… better suited for monotonous and often physical taxing jobs.” Michael Samers (1998) gives the geographic dimensions of the French firms recruitment practices when he records how car markers avoided urban areas and instead went to the most isolated regions of Morocco and Tunisia looking for workers who were inexperienced with industrial trade-unionism. In general, this model sees labour migration as the product of a spatially uneven distribution of labour demand and supply.
Labour demand in the secondary segment of the labour market in industrialized countries is met by migrant workers with corresponding skills from abroad.

According to hierarchy theory, the labour market is a social hierarchy where the accumulation of social status, rather than purely income, induces people to work (Piore 1979). People engage in the labour market to maintain or advance their positions in the hierarchy. Under this hierarchical system an acute motivational problems exists to work in jobs at the bottom of the hierarchy and in “dead-end” jobs. Foreign-born workers provide a solution to filling these jobs, as they come from outside of and remain apart from the social structure that frame the hierarchies in which jobs are located. Hierarchy theory introduces ideas explaining the allocation of migrants in the labour market. For example, Roger Waldinger and Michael Ira Litcher (2004, 229), argue that immigrants are prepared to take “bad” jobs because their “…dual frame of reference and less-entitled status make them ideal candidates to fill jobs that others do not want,” or that discriminating employers don’t want to fill with an existing but racialized workforce (Wilson 1996). In other words, immigrants take jobs in the secondary segment of the labour market because they continue to reference their social status in their community of origin. Whether they possess a high or low status job in the place of destination is not important to their status in this community.

Segmented labour market theory offers a third explanation of the segmentation of immigrants into secondary labour market (Bonacich 1972; Fevre 1992; Gordon et al. 1982). Peter Stalker (2001) sees the segmentation of labour markets as part of a capitalist
economy that continually requires labour for the unpleasant or unpopular jobs that give firms flexibility. According to this theory labour markets split into primary and secondary segments (Clairmont et al. 1983; Ryan 1981) or into more complex patterns of multiple segments (Gittleman & Howell, 1995; Lee & Wrench, 1987; Rumberger & Carnoy 1980). Working conditions differ between segments. For example, in the primary sector work is typically stable, well paid and offers upward mobility while, in contrast, the secondary segment is often characterized by unstable work with low pay, poor working conditions and few prospects for promotion. While functionally interdependent, the boundaries of the segments are rigid, making it difficult for workers to switch from one to another segment. What keeps these boundaries rigid are the rules guiding labour market engagement, which differ between segments (Peck 1996). Recent literature has also stressed that cultural factors enforce the rigidity of boundaries between labour market segments (Bauder 2001). If the rules of labour market engagement exclude immigrant workers from working in the primary segments of the labour market, these workers are relegated the lower segments. In a Canadian context, for example, immigrants are excluded from primary segment occupations by institutionalized cultural practices of credential non-recognition (Girard & Bauder 2007) and by expected cultural conventions and performances of professionalism, which many immigrants do not have access to (Bauder 2005).

While these three theories speak towards the labour market segmentation of foreign-born workers, they also have a critical shortcoming in that they focus on the national scale and the destination country. All three theories explain segmentation by
referring to processes that occur in the destination country. This focus effectively overlooks how economic, social and cultural factors in migrant source areas contribute to the segmentation processes. Thus, the literature on immigrant transnationalism should be integrated into an explanation of the segmentation of migrant labour. In addition, an expansion of the geographical perspective beyond the destination country to the transnational context permits including both labour market dynamics and forces of social reproduction in such an explanation. With this approach we build on existing work of on the international labour migration segmentation, which introduces global factors to segmentation processes (Samers 1998, 2005, forthcoming; Bauder 2006, 19-34). For example, in contrast to traditional labour market theories which often suffer from a narrow geographical focus, Samers sees segmentation at three inter-related tiers: the sorting of labour at the global scale, the sorting of labour within national economies, and the sorting of migrants within specific firms. Further, Samers highlights the importance of transnational factors in the social reproduction of a migrant workforce. For example, the dynamics between economic remittances and household budgets in source areas can influence what types of jobs migrants are willing to accept in destination country labour markets.

**Transnationalism, Forms of Capital and Social Field**

Transnational perspectives of international migration recognize that the lives of immigrants are not only grounded in the country in which they settle but also include complex social and economic linkages with communities at the places of origin. The seminal definition of transnationalism was coined over a decade ago by Linda Basch et
al. (1994, 6) who suggested it was the “process by which immigrants forge and sustain multistranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement”. Since then, studies of migrant transnationalism have exploded in number and now cover subjects too numerous to explore in detail here (for overviews see Levitt & Jaworsky 2007; Portes 2001; Portes et al. 1999). In addition, researchers developed various spatial concepts, such as “translocalism” (Barkan 2006) or “bi-localism and trans-state activity” (Waldinger & Fitzgerald 2004), to describe how transnationalism occurs in multi-layered and multi-sited social-spaces, linking home and host countries as well as other geographically dispersed sites (Levitt & Jaworsky 2007). While we recognize the complexity of contemporary migrant experiences, our use of the term transnationalism is more closely related to Bash et al.’s (1994) classic definition. Our use of the term “transnationalism” refers to the economic, social, and cultural linkages that bind migrants’ home and destination areas. These linkages include, for example, social and economic remittances and the return visits of migrants. Although this use may not apply to entire range of all labour migrations (e.g. step-migrations and seafarers), it does permit us to investigate transnational segmentation processes. It particular, it highlights the geographical dimension of the term transnationalism and allows us to consider how transnationalism affects the labour segmentation process.

An important theme in the migration literature is the relationship between transnationalism and global capitalism. For instance, Nina Glick Schiller et al. (1992) suggest that transnational migration is shaped the encompassing global capitalist system. Philip Kelly (2003) follows a similar argument when he claims that transnationalism is a
constitutive part of globalization and uneven capitalist development. Within the global capitalist system, power relations between countries shape the transnational experiences of labour migrants. The work of Immanuel Wallerstein is particularly useful to understanding these relationships. Wallerstein (1976, 1990) argues that the world capitalist economy is divided into core-areas, semi-peripheral areas, and peripheral areas, each with different function in a globally integrated economic system. Tasks requiring higher levels of skill and capital are reserved for core areas, while peripheral areas are structurally constrained and experience a kind of development that reproduces their subordinate status (Chase-Dunn & Grimes 1995). This world system is characterized by a process of uneven exchange, which systematically transfers surplus value from the periphery to the core (Emmanuel 1972; Goldfrank 2000), and the dominance of peripheral regions through different economic, military and cultural forms of imperialism.

Even though Wallerstein developed his ideas in relation to capitalist agriculture in the sixteenth century, his work informs contemporary labour migrations. For example, Bill Jordon and Franck Duvell (2003, 71) argue that international migration “…reinforces a hierarchical structure of economies in both world and regional systems…and reflects the dominance of the leading actors.” These leading actors, or “core countries”, are the destinations of migrants from the periphery and semi-periphery who constitute a subordinate labour force. Christopher Chase-Dunn and Peter Grimes’s (1995) position, that peripheral countries experience a form of development that reproduces their subordinate status, is illustrated by the “brain drain” affecting migrant-sending areas
when highly skilled workers leave. In recent decades increasing numbers of highly educated professionals have migrated in pursuit of better opportunities from countries where their human capital is needed for development. Philippe Legrain (2007) argues that these migrations slow the economic and social development of sending countries, because talented workers who left won’t start companies, train or mentor younger workers, or boost productivity. The resulting financial costs to migrant source areas can be considerable. Efurosibina Adegbija (2007) claims that in recent decades approximately one third of skilled professionals have left peripheral and semi-peripheral regions of Africa, costing the continent nine billion dollars annually to replace with expatriate labour from the core. The countries of the core deliberately support this process through immigration policies, temporary and seasonal migration program, and other incentives and institutional mechanisms for attracting skilled labour (Commander et al. 2004). Similar dynamics and power relations reflect the labour migration of African football players to Portugal (Darby 2007) or the employment of Mexican migrants in the U.S. export industry (Wise 2006).

Labour migrations link core and periphery countries in the contemporary global economy. Moreover, migrant transnationalism reproduces the uneven core-periphery relations through the segmentation of a foreign-born labour pool. To illustrate this process we draw on the notion of capital as developed by Pierre Bourdieu, which has recently received significant attention among migration researchers (e.g. Bauder 2006; Kelly & Lusis 2005; Nee & Sanders 2001; Walters 2003). Bourdieu (1984, 1986, Bourdieu & Passeron 1977) identifies various forms of capital as mechanisms of
distinction and social reproduction. In the context of transnationalism, social capital and cultural capital offer valuable insights into the segmentation of migrant labour. Recent studies have shown that the value of different forms of capital shifts with migration from one place to another (e.g. Bauder 2005, Kelly & Lusis 2005). We will show below how the shifting value of migrants’ social and cultural capital leads to segmentation in the destination country and socially reproduces the available migrant labour pool in the source context. This process, in turn, reproduces the global core-periphery relations between migrant sending and receiving areas.

Social Capital

In recent decades the concept of social capital has become a common theoretical framework in the work by education researchers, economists, geographers, sociologists, and in development studies (e.g. Airriess et al. 2007; Bebbington et al. 2004; Cleaver 2005; Francois & Zabojnik, 2005; Guiso et al. 2004; Helliwell 2006; Perna & Titus, 2009; Pichler & Wallace, 2007; Radcliffe 2004; Rupasingha et al. 2006; Zhou & Kim 2008). A full review of the applications and critical debates of this concept is beyond the scope of this paper (for overviews of various critiques see Bebbington 2004, 2007; Fine 2008; Foley & Edwards, 1999; Portes & Landolt, 1996). Some critics observe, for example, that the popularity and widespread use of social capital has created a nebulous concept devoid of critical application. Ben Fine (2008, 443) argues that social capital is now “…definitionally chaotic, potentially incorporating any variable and method and open to any application” while overlooking issues of power, class and conflict. Peter Li (2007) has similar concerns and suggests that while being universally promoted as means
of creating social well-being and economic prosperity, in reality the effectiveness of social capital is determined by the class-based resources available to a social group. Other critics articulated many gender-based concerns about social capital. For example, Maxine Molyneux (2002) laments the lack of attention to gender-based subordination in much of the social capital literature. Rachel Silvey and Rebecca Elmhirst (2002) echo these concerns, and call for the acknowledgement of various gendered hierarchies within the broader social networks through which capital circulates. In this article we apply the term social capital to illustrate how the labour segmentation processes in a migration context. By doing so, we compliment Li’s (2007) position that the effectiveness of social capital is shaped by the class-based resources of the social group.

The migration literature commonly associates the notion of social capital with social networks, membership in social groups and associated social identities. In the English-language literature, the term’s popularity was facilitated by the work of James Coleman (1990) and Robert Putnam (2000) who understood it as social connectivity between individuals and groups. To follow Bourdieu’s understanding of capital, the notion of social capital should also be understood in the context of collective agency and as a mechanism of social distinction and reproduction. It is a resource connected with group memberships and social networks which actors can use in their pursuit of their self-interests (Siisianen 2003). Social capital consists of two primary elements. Firstly, the social relationship, which allows individuals to claim access to this resource; and secondly, the amount and quality of these resources (Portes 1998).
In the context of labour migrations, social capital in the form of membership in a transnational network is an important form of distinction in migrant source communities. Individuals with social capital can access information about migration destinations that may not be available to the wider community about immigration laws, housing and labour market conditions (Ghosh 2007). In the context of labour migrations, these flows of information can hold important implications for migrant’s economic integration in destination countries. For example, Filipino immigrants in Canada are using the Internet to inform their family members and friends in the Philippines about working in Canada (Lusis & Bauder 2007). These information flows include personal narratives of labour market experiences and also hyperlinks to government and professional association websites to give a clear idea of what employment was like in the destination country. Such information shapes labour market expectations among prospective migrants and is used by workers prior to migration to make decisions on where to locate, how to prepare for credential transfer and other labour market related matters. At times, social capital can be used to secure employment in destination countries through transnational channels. Tamar Diana Wilson (1998) outlines the transnational connections between the Mexican village of Chamitlan and the farm economy in the San Joaquin Valley. In this case, an immigrant foreman returns to Mexico where he hires some “paisanos” from his village to work as farm labourers in the United States. Here social capital results in employment opportunities that are only to the foreman’s friends or family rather than the wider labour pool in Mexico and the United States. In a similar vein, social capital resources can also be found in chain migrations. Families and kinship groups devise a strategy where some members travel abroad and lay the foundation for the rest of the family to follow (Taylor
et al. 2007). This strategy allows kin and family members in source areas to accumulate social capital, which in turn, can be used for social distinction. These members have an established network overseas who can send back social and economic remittances, and can provide support when migrants re-unite in the destination country (Kelly & Lusis 2005). Transnational social capital is an important factor in the migration process and labour market engagement of migrants.

In the destination country, social capital continues to be a valuable resource. A classic example of the economic functions of immigrant networks is that they assist finding employment in the destination country. Research has shown that immigrant networks include family, kinship, religious, sport and employment-based affiliations (Cheong 2006; Cranford 2005; Ebaugh & Curry 2000; Fong & Ooka 2002; Granberry & Marcelli 2007; Hatziprokopiou 2003; Iosifides et al. 2007; Li 2004; Poros 2001; Saunders et al. 2002; Tillie 2004; Walseth 2008). For instance, Carlos Garcia (2005) documents how the social contacts of Mexican immigrants in rural, North Eastern Oklahoma consist of three distinct yet interconnected groups based on kinship, church and employment networks. Regardless of the composition of networks, social capital opens opportunities due to the nature of employment. Roger Waldinger and Michael Ira Litcher (2004) examined immigrant groups in “bad” jobs in the United States and record how immigrant networks are central to these industries. They argue that work is a social process in which workers functions best when they are able to interact effectively with each other, for example in the context of on the job training. Immigrants quickly fill employment openings with friends or family, ensuring effective on the job interaction.
Jacqueline Hagan (1998) presents an example of an “institutionalized” immigrant network in his study of a Mayan migrant community in Texas. This group established an ethnicity-based labour system in a Houston supermarket chain and controlled work schedules, promotions for certain jobs, such as janitorial and cleaning services, and served as the main source of new workers for the store. Other ethnic groups were excluded from any employment opportunities in the supermarket due to the dominance of the Mayan community.

Social capital contributes to the segmentation of foreign-born workers when established networks funnel newcomers into “3D” forms of employment (e.g. Bonacich 1993). For instance, Ankica Kosic and Anna Triandafyllidou (2003) show how the social networks of migrants in Italy have conditioned the labour market trajectories of newcomers. Recent arrivals who relied on their social capital (e.g. family and friends) to find them a job ended up in the same low status employment as previous cohorts. This networks-driven dynamic also operates at the transnational scale where segmentation processes take place before the migrants have even left their home community. For example, transnational employment searches are a common strategy for Filipino workers leaving their country for Canada. Prospective migrants used the Internet to arrange a place to stay and a job in Canada before leaving the Philippines (Lusis 2005). The use of their transnational social-capital channeled these migrants into low status employment unrelated to their educational credentials or work experience and thereby enforced the segmentation process.
In summary, social capital is a form of distinction for migrant workers in the source community and in the destination country. In source areas social capital can provide potential migrants with information not readily available in the wider community or transnationally arrange employment opportunities in destination countries. These assets in the migration process are not available to individuals lacking similar capital resources. In the destination context, transnational social capital resources can facilitate employment trajectories. Here membership in a group is crucial, as these opportunities are often open only to migrants with the right transnational social connections. The relative “quality” of these resources is what socially reproduces the segmentation of a migrant workforce. Existing immigrant networks are typically based in low-status employment. Thus, when newcomers use their transnational social capital to get a job, they often end up working beside previous cohorts in occupations belonging to the secondary segment of the labour market.

Cultural Capital

Bourdieu (1986) outlines three different categories of cultural capital: institutionalized (e.g. university or college diplomas, certificates), embodied (e.g. corporeal appearance and performance) and objectified (e.g. material status symbols such as art/fashion). In the context of the reproduction of a segmented immigrant labour force, embodied and objectified forms of cultural capital are particularly important. The following sections examine migrant’s cultural capital from a transnational perspective, and illustrate how this form of capital contributes to the segmentation of a migrant workforce.
As with social capital, the concept of cultural capital has been subject to much scrutiny (e.g. Kingston 2001; Savage & Bennett 2005; Robbins 2005). For some critics, Bourdieu’s framework has conceptual and methodological shortcomings. Ben Fine (2007) claims that many academics are miss-applying the concept and that empirical studies refute Bourdieu’s theories of social reproduction. Annette Lareau and Elliot Weininger (2003) argue that the dominant interpretations of cultural capital focus on “highbrow” status practices rather than alternative family resources. Marios Vryonides (2007) highlights additional methodological issues and points out how current research may not be subtle enough to explore practices related to non-monetary forms of capital. Despite such criticisms, Bourdieu’s concept of cultural capital has been employed in multiple disciplines and is useful for studying migration and segmentation.

In many migrant-sending countries, participating in a migration movement holds considerable prestige in the local community (Cohen 2004). Filomeno V. Aguilar (1999, 100) illustrates that in the Philippines migrants are considered “chosen ones” and seen as an exclusive group. In other countries, such as India and Mexico, labour migrations have become considered rites of passage (Batnitzky et al. 2008; Cohen 2004; Kandel & Massey 2002; Schmalzbauer 2008). The cultural capital of labour migrations is in part framed by historical and colonial relationships. In former colonies, in particular, the former colonial power was typically painted as a place of modernity and prosperity. For example, in the Philippines the United States was considered a land of “milk and honey” (BONUS 2001; Espiritu, 2003). In Algeria, France was seen as a place of opportunity; in India and Pakistan England held similar status for migrants (Martin et al. 2006).
Diasporic ties also shape perceptions of place, often characterized by a mythology of the distant homeland being like the Garden of Eden (Aneteby-Yemini 2004) or paradise (Pattie 2004). In the contemporary context, the mass media help construct and disseminate images that paint migration destinations as places of culture, prosperity and consumer freedom (Fujita 2004; Mai 2003, 2004, 2005). Therefore, even before migrants leaves their home community they accumulate cultural capital and elevate their status by making the decision (and having the opportunity) to migrate. The opportunity to join a labour migration stream acts as a mechanism of distinction between migrants who are anticipated to soon experience the prosperity and modernity abroad, and non-migrants who must remain in their source communities.

In addition, the values of some forms of cultural capital shifts during the migration process. The role of this shift in value of cultural capital in allocating migrant workers to segments of the labour market in the destination country has been demonstrated by the existing literature (Bauder 2005; Hatziprokopi 2004). For instance, migrants soon discover that their institutional capital cannot secure decent employment in the destination country. In Germany and Canada, the non-recognition of foreign educational credentials and work experience deny immigrants access to the institutionalized cultural capital necessary to work in the upper segments of the labour market (Bauder 2003; 2006). In Australia, the educational and formal skills of migrants have been only partly recognized and as a result foreign-born workers are relegated to low status employment (Colic-Peisker 2005). Similar trends of where relatively well-
educated migrants are working in employment unrelated to their educational credentials can be found in Japan (Tsuda 2004), Italy (Cavoundis 2006), and Taiwan (Lan 2003).

The value of migrants’ embodied cultural capital follows a slightly different trajectory. If migrants work in ethnic economies, they are often able to apply their language proficiencies, literacy, social presentations and familiarity with cultural norms. However, these ethnic economies, ranging from restaurants, grocery stores, and garment industries to transnational recruitment agencies, typically offer jobs in the secondary segment of the labour market (Ong 2003; Nee & Sanders 2001; Saunders et al. 2002). Whether ethnic entrepreneurs in destination countries, such as the Canada, Israel and United States, hire workers from their own ethnic community or from other immigrant groups, or act as “middle men” liaisons between ethnic economies and wider society (Bonacich 1973, Portes & Sensenbrenner 1993), they often take advantage of the vulnerability of their workforce and offer few possibilities for language development, skill improvement and upward mobility (Bonacich 1993; Fong & Ooka 2002; Fong & Ooka 2006; Mesch 2002; Remennick 2007). Although foreign-born workers apply their cultural capital in the ethic economy, they remain separated from the mainstream economy.

A second area where cultural capital holds value is in some labour market niches. A classic example refers to Filipina domestic workers. Filipino women have been marketed by the Philippine state and employment agencies as a well educated but cheap labour force (Tyner 1999, 2004) recognized as the “Mercedes Benz” of the global
domestic worker industry (Parrenas 2001). For instance, due to the American colonial influence in the Philippines Filipino workers possess English language skills. In Taiwan, these skills have made Filipina domestics preferable to Indonesian nannies, and a source of social status for their Taiwanese employers (Lan 2003). These skills are also appreciated by European employers (Andall 2000; Chell-Robinson 2000) In Canada, employers choose Filipinas domestic workers, rather than their Jamaican or English counterparts, because they are perceived as docile, hardworking, good natured, domesticated and willing to work long hours with little compliant (England & Stiell 1996; Pratt 1997). The cultural capital scripted onto the bodies of Filipina migrant women serves as a mechanism of distinction between Filipinas and other workers and therefore opens doors to employment. But this form of capital only holds its value in the unpopular segments of the labour market in the destination country and re-enforces the segmentation of this particular migrant community.

This literature on the role of cultural capital in the segmentation of migration labour in the destination country must be complemented with a transnational perspective of cultural capital. When migrants return to the source community, they are often held in high regard and are the centre of attention (Bunnell, 2007). The embodied and objectified cultural capital that they accumulated while being abroad are often put on display. Thus, in the context of Mauritanian emigration, Tarik Sabry (2005, 14) argues that “…arrivals from the West become the talk of the Derb (local gathering spot for young men in Casablanca), the car, clothes, presents and the appearance of the émigré (italics in original) are all scrutinized, becoming objects of gossip”. Similarly, during their return
trips to India, immigrants working in England’s hotel industry focused on their status symbols of Western consumerism (e.g. an Ipod) (Batnitzky et al. 2008). In the Dominican Republic, returnees flaunt the clothes and goods they brought from the United States, and social status is no-longer based on qualities such as family life or community service but rather on material possessions and consumer culture (Levitt 2001). The new forms of capital which migrants and their family members have been able to acquire permit them to assert status in the places of origin (Aguilar 1999; Taylor et al. 2007; Tyner 2004).

In addition, a transnational exchange between different forms of capital takes place. In particular, economic capital earned through participation in the labour market at the destination country is often sent to the source community as remittances. Families and entire social segments are no longer dependent on the local economy and class distinction is funded by remittance flows (Smith 2006). Family members in source areas then convert these remittances into cultural capital that serves as a mechanism of distinction within the source community. For example, in Mexico and the Philippines remittances enable the children of migrants to attend prestigious schools and universities, accumulating institutional cultural capital and middle-class status not accessible to many relying on the local economy (Kelly and Lusis 2005; Schmalzbauer 2008). Remittances also enable the family members of migrants to objectified cultural capital. Overseas dollars pay for new homes, cars, electronic appliances and other locally recognized status symbols (Aguilar 1999; Leavitt 2001; Schmalzbauer 2008; Walton-Roberts 2004). These remittance flows also provide many migrants with a degree of class mobility in their home countries. Returning migrants use wages earned in 3-D employment to fund
businesses ventures, which in some cases allows them to join the upper classes in their source communities (Gibson-Graham 1996).

The labour segmentation of migrants at the destination is related to processes of social reproduction of labour in the source community. Remittance flows and cultural capital acquired with migration fuel this cultural dynamic. Remittances convert into locally recognized symbols of prestige and families in source areas become dependent on remittances to maintain their social status. This dependence locks migrants into cycles of overseas employment to maintain the social status of their families in the source communities (Aguilar 2001, McKay 2001). In this way, transnationalism fans the continuation, if not growth, of labour export (Gibson et al. 2001). By extension, it reproduces a labour pool of migrants to be incorporated in the secondary labour market segment in destination country.

This transnational practice of reproducing and segmenting labour is enabled through the geographical separation of the acquisition of economic capital and conversion into cultural capital. Many migrants are quick to display their new forms of embodied and objectified cultural capital yet are reluctant to discuss the conditions of employment in destination countries (Schmalzbauer 2005; 2008; Batnitzky et al. 2008). This practice cements the belief that destination countries are places of prosperity and fuel desires among non-migrants to migrate (Espiritu 2003; Kandel & Massey 2002; Fujita-Rony 2003; Taylor et al. 2007).
Conclusion

In this paper we have reviewed the literature, which illustrates that a transnational perspective of the migration process is necessary to fully understand the segmentation of a foreign-born workforce. In particular, we applied Pierre Bourdieu’s concepts of capital to illustrate how segmentation processes involve the transnational scale. Our review of the literature has also shown how the social and cultural capital of the ‘immigrant’ holds different value in different geographical contexts.

A migrant’s social capital is a resource which migrants can use to gather knowledge about life abroad and to facilitate employment in the destination country. It is a form of social distinction and reproduction because, migrants need to belong to the group or network in order to access labour market and settlement information. Thus, in the source community, potential migrants with social networks extending to a destination country are at an advantage as they have access to resources unavailable in the wider community. In the destination country, however, social capital often connects migrants to occupations at the lower end of the labour market. Even though migrants can use their social capital to find work, they likely find opportunities through these channels in the secondary labour market segment.

Segmentation primarily takes place in the destination country when migrants’ cultural capital is devalued in the labour market. Foreign degrees and work experience are not recognized as the best jobs tend to be reserved for non-migrants, relegating migrants to employment with lower skill demands or unrelated to their skills and training.
The areas of the labour market where migrants’ cultural capital holds value are either workplaces with poor working conditions, such as in ethnic economies, or in low-status ethnic niches. Migration, however, also enables migrants to acquire cultural capital that is valued highly in the source community. Returning migrants are seen as heroes, having experienced the modernity abroad. Their embodied and objectified capital makes them the centre of attention and role models to community members who stayed behind. Their remittances raise the social status of family members in the source communities. The display of objectified cultural capital reproduces the belief that foreign destination countries are places of prosperity and consumer freedom, fueling desires among the non-migrant population to travel abroad. Such cultural and economic transnationalism contributes to the social reproduction of a migrant labour force in the secondary segment of the labour market at the destination countries.

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Migration and Labor Markets: An Interpretation of the Literature

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Introduction to the manuscript

The goal of this book chapter was to make a theoretical contribution to the body of literature which utilizes the work of Pierre Bourdieu to understand immigration experiences. To date most research has focused primarily on Bourdieu’s concepts of capital. In contrast this work introduces Bourdieu’s ideas of social fields in the context of immigration studies. It develops a framework which identifies three separate but overlapping fields. First is the state field which encompasses national governments and other institutions responsible for establishing the basic rules of international migration (e.g. immigration policies, requirements, quotas etc.) and which influence the relative value of different forms of capital which circulate in this field (e.g. citizenship). The second field is the migration industry field. This field includes recruitment and broker firms, migration agencies, training schools and other organizations which provide the institutional context through which “industry” capital circulates. The third field is the transnational social field. This field consists of immigrant’s transnational social networks and ethnic economies, and defines how social capital circulates throughout these networks.
The theoretical framework for this chapter provides a more detailed concept of social fields than has been advanced in previous studies (e.g. Glastra and Vedder 2010). It identifies how fields are hierarchical structures and can be mechanisms of social reproduction. For example, the transnational social field has characteristics, such as ethnic economies or the relative placement of migrant social networks in destination country labour markets, which help reproduce the segmentation of an immigrant workforce. Our use of field theory in this chapter also speaks towards why traditional labour market theory should develop a transnational perspective. In particular, the migration industry field demonstrates how institutions such as recruitment firms or training schools in the migrant source country facilitate the labour market segmentation of immigrants in the destination country labour market. Thus, this manuscript highlights the transnational nature of many fields which influence the economic integration of immigrants. It provides further evidence from the literature why a global perspective needs to be incorporated into traditional labour market theories which focus on immigrant labour market segmentation.

**Introduction**

In a 2007 publication titled ‘Immigration, Labour Markets and Employment Relations: Problems and Prospects’, Patrick McGovern argues that immigration has been largely neglected in the employment relations literature. This research gap is problematic, he believes, as immigration can provide a theoretical lens for areas of study in the field. In this chapter we build on these suggestions. We base our analysis on three topics identified by McGovern as typical topics of interest to employment relations researchers.
Topic one deals with the role of the state. The state is heavily involved in regulating the movement and selection of labor migrants. Government immigration policies are increasingly based upon an economic rationale, and labor migrants are seen as a means to meet the short and long-term needs of both source and destination country economies. Topic two examines the role of institutions. There are a wide range of organizations in the ‘migration industry’ whose business is recruiting, training and ultimately supplying labor to fill various employment niches. These organizations provide an institutional structure to migrations. Topic three investigates transnational migrant social networks and ethnic economies. These social networks stimulate labor migrations in source areas, and are central to the economic integration of migrants in destination countries. A theme connecting all topics is labor market segmentation. Processes of segmentation are found throughout all areas of labor migrations and work to relegate foreign-born labor forces to secondary sectors in global labor markets.

While immigration has not been extensively studied in the employments relations literature (notable exceptions include Andall 2007; Datta et al., 2007; Dustman & Weiss 2007; Williams 2007; Fang & Heywood 2010), the topic is of considerable interest in disciplines such as geography, economics, sociology, health sciences, gender relations and rural studies. The sheer size of this latter literature renders a comprehensive review of global labor migrations beyond the scope of this chapter. We therefore limit our examples to Europe, Asia and North America, paying particular attention to Canada, representing a traditional immigration country, and the Philippines, which has a long history of emigration and recently became the world’s largest labor exporting country
Our primary focus is on migrations into the lower segments of the labor market at the destination countries. Our theoretical framework relies on the work of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu and his notions of the social field and capital.

The remainder of the chapter is structured as follows. First, we briefly introduce the concept of the field and its relevance to the topic of labor migration. Next we provide an overview of the ‘state’ field. Section three examines the field of the ‘migration industry’ and the role of institutions that facilitate labor mobility and economic integration. The fourth part of the chapter explores the ‘transnational social field’ of migrant social networks that extend into transnational space and ethnic economies. Finally, in the fifth section we present our conclusions.

Field and Labour Migration
In the context of migration studies, Bourdieu’s work of capital has provided concepts and vocabulary used by several researchers interested in the social, cultural and economic integration of migrants (e.g. Nee & Sanders 2001; Bauder, 2003, 2005, 2006a, 2006b, 2008; Kelly & Lusis, 2006). Migration scholarship has paid less attention to the concept of the social field (but see Glastra & Vedder, 2010). According to Anheier et al. (1995), Bourdieu’s located fields encompass the relations among the totality of relevant and individual actors in functionally different parts of society such as education, health, politics, art and literature. Bourdieu saw society made up of various fields where players compete for different forms of capital (Bourdieu 1969, 1975, 1980, 1989, 1990, 1993, 1996, 1999). Fields possess their own institutional structures that shape field-particular
hierarchies. In France, for example, the academic field possesses tiers of universities and colleges, with the *Grande Ecole* maintaining the highest position of prestige. The field of art has a different hierarchy of galleries and theatres (e.g. left bank vs. west bank). Both fields are competitive arenas where different forms of capital circulate. There are multiple categories of capital, all specific to the characteristics of a social field. Although Bourdieu has identified various forms of capital (1984, 1986), our interest in this chapter focuses on institutionalized cultural capital and social capital. Institutionalized cultural capital refers to credentials, such as a university degree, college diplomas, or professional certifications. These credentials can be used as a form of social distinction and reproduction. For example, educational certifications have been used by elite groups to acquire privileged employment thereby reproducing the group’s social standing. Social capital is a resource of distinction and reproduction based on group membership that actors can utilize for their self-interest (Siisianen 2003). According to Alejandro Portes (1998) social capital is comprised of two primary components, the social relationship which allows individuals to claim access to this resource, and the amount and quality of these resources. Thus, the effectiveness of social capital will ultimately be determined by the class-based resources available to a social group or network (Li, 2007).

Below, we apply Bourdieu’s concept of the field to the topic of migration and economic integration. Labor migrations can be examined as several overlapping fields. Institutions of the state field, such as national governments, establish the basic rules of labor migrations and influence the relative value of different forms of capital, such as citizenship, that circulate in the field (Bauder, 2008). In addition, the migration industry
field, consisting of recruitment and broker firms, migration agencies, training schools and other institutions, provides the institutional context in which ‘industry’ capital circulates. The transnational social field defines how social capital circulates through migrants’ social networks. These three fields will provide the main points of entry into our examination of contemporary labor migrations and their related processes of segmentation.

**The State Field**

The state plays a central role in regulating and facilitating labor migrations. Governments in both migrant source and destination countries create, revise and abolish migration policies to meet particular national objectives. State policies provide the primary structure and the formal ‘rules’ according to which labor migration occurs. Many governments in migrant destination countries consider foreign-born workers as a central component of their country’s demographic growth. In traditional immigration countries, immigration has historically been a catalyst for territorial expansion and demographic development. More recently, the populations of many European states are declining or forecasted to decline. Governments in North America and Asia have also turned increasingly to migration as a solution to slowing demographic development.

An often-greater concern to the state is economic in nature. Destination countries may gain from the additional human capital provided by migration, in particular if the national workforce is inadequate in meeting the demands of the labor market (Tomas & Palme, 2006). Long-term economic trends shape state migration policies. As highly
industrialized economies are changing new types of workers are needed. Government are actively regulating migrant flows to ensure foreign-born workers can meet the new demands of their national economies. For instance, in the late 20th and early 21st centuries Canada moved from “equal opportunity and humanitarian” to ‘skills based’ immigration policies due to the increasing demand for highly skilled labor associated with an increasingly knowledge-based economy (Watt et al., 2008). As early as 1967, Canada introduced a points system aiming to combine the principle of ethnic and racial equality with a focus on the economic characteristics of applicants, including education and training, occupational skills, occupational demand, occupational training and the age of the applicant (Arat-Koc, 1999). In the mid 1990s, the points system was revised in order to ensure that foreign workers possess the flexibility needed to adjust to changing Canadian labor market conditions (Green & Green 1996).

In recent years the economic rationale of immigration policy accelerated around the globe. Many destination countries have undertaken intense immigration drives with expedited processes for skilled workers, or are in the process of expediting immigration policies on behalf of employers (Watt et al., 2008). In Australia, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and several Asian countries there has been an increased emphasis on admitting migrant workers in key sectors such as technology, health and education.

At the same time, many countries still have a need for cheap labor. In advanced knowledge-driven economies, a trend towards skilled immigration to give these
economies an international competitive advantage coincides with the employment of immigrant and temporary migrant labor in lower-level services and manufacturing, partly to cushion the effects of competition from manufacturing in low-wage countries. As the globalization of capitalist production has intensified, advanced industrial economies have come to rely on migrant labor to cut production costs in the face of competition from developing countries with cheaper labor forces (Tsuda, 2004). Employers in developed countries rely heavily on migrants as a temporary and disposable workforce; countries such as the United States, Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Taiwan have become major importers for these types of workers.

Gender relations and cultural attitudes towards work are other contributing factors creating a demand for low-skill workers in destination countries. In the post-WWII period, services connected to the reproduction of the labor force moved out of the home and into the private sector. Industries such as fast food, child care and elder care became rapid growth sectors. At the same time, women who performed these tasks in the traditional households increasingly moved into the paid labor force. These developments created the need for a low-wage labor force for work that was once part of the unpaid domestic sphere (Chomsky, 2007). Migration policies were created in Canada, the United States, Italy, Saudi Arabia, Hong Kong and Taiwan to fill the demand in this sector. In many destination countries, native-born workers are not interested in jobs at the lowest levels of the labor market. This creates openings that are often quickly filled with migrant workers. For example, Jennifer Cavoundis (2006) argues that cultural perceptions towards certain types of work are major factors explaining labor migrations
into Southern Europe. As the education levels of young southern Europeans increased, so did their desire and aspirations to secure non-manual, secure and high-status jobs. This fuelled the need for migrant labor, which now fills the roles previously assigned to the more marginal groups of southern European society.

Migration policies are also used to address short-term economic problems, such as temporary labor market shortages. In this case, standards of entry have been developed in response to a relatively rapid shift in economic conditions. When migration programs are aimed at filling short-term gaps, foreign-born workers are primarily seen as a temporary source of labor for specific projects rather than permanent immigrants. States have put in place contract or guest worker schemes, negotiated with the sending countries with no provisions for settlement or family reunification. These types of policies typically provide migrants with fewer rights than citizens, effectively rendering them vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. One historic example are the labor migrations of ‘guest workers’ to West Germany, Belgium, France and Sweden following the Second World War. According to James Hollifield (2003):

Guest worker migrations were primarily economic in nature and workers represented a kind of economic shock absorber. During the 1970s (in Europe) there was a recession and unemployment in heavy industry and manufacturing. The expectation was that migrants would behave like any other commodity, according to the law of supply and demand, and go home (p.70).
Similar policies were implemented in the Middle East during the oil boom in the 1970’s. Countries embarked on massive building and infrastructure projects and needed workers for the construction and service sectors. Following this period, the workforce of the oil-rich Arab Gulf states of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar consisted between 50% and 90% of non-national residents (Chompsky, 2007). In recent years, temporary or contract migrant programs have become increasingly popular among destination countries to fill labor market shortages. The rationale behind this trend is that temporary workers are a more efficient way to address labor market shortages relative to permanent immigration. In Canada, temporary workers are the fastest growing migrant category (Watt et al., 2008). These migrants are increasingly employed in low-status occupations, such as agriculture and domestic services (De Vortez, 2008).

On the source side of the migration flow, many states are also actively involved in facilitating labor migrations. For example, some developing countries, including Turkey, the Philippines, South Korea, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Jamaica, Cuba, Barbados, Mexico, El Salvador and Nicaragua, have identified labor export, and the resulting remittance flows, as a tool to reduce unemployment, improve the balance of payments, securing skills and investment capital, and stimulating development (Castles, 2007). The states of many countries support emigration indirectly, through elevating the social status of emigrants in official state discourses. In Mexico, for example, migrants to the USA are referred to as ‘VIPs’ due to their contribution to the national economy made in the form of remittances (Stalker, 2001). The states of some countries also offer direct support to encourage the movement of workers out of the country. The Philippine
Overseas Employment Agency (POEA), for example, is an official government agency that has been responsible for overseeing the overseas migration of Filipinos for almost three decades. The POEA globally markets Filipino workers as a highly educated and flexible workforce (Kelly, 2000).

As we have illustrated, the field of the state sets the basic rules and parameters under which labor migration occurs. The state can influence the movement of labor migrants at both ends of the migration stream. On the one hand, the state in source countries plays an important role in triggering the migration process. On the other hand, state policies in destination countries are the main factor in establishing the standards and conditions of entry and shaping the economic integration of foreign-born workers. These state migration policies are complex systems which select the workers for migration and deny mobility to others (Samers, 2005). The state and its institutions provide the basic structure to labor migration. For example, ‘institutionalized cultural capital’ in the form of citizenship distinguishes between workers based on their origin and thus influence the circumstances of migration, entry and labor market integration (Bauder, 2008). Migrants who lack the ‘proper’ ‘citizenship capital’ are often relegated to the informal or shadow economy. Citizenship capital may act as a source of social distinction between citizens, regular immigrants and non-status migrants, but it does not guarantee a prestigious place in the labor market for those who possess it. In many destination countries highly skilled migrants are still found in the most unpopular forms of employment. Other state-regulated forms of institutionalized cultural capital often devalue skilled migrant labor. Professionals with foreign degrees and work experience are employed as unskilled
laborers, in sectors unrelated to their educational qualifications or in jobs where they cannot apply previous work experience. Thus, Albanian migrants with university degrees in the United Kingdom can be found in low-paid restaurant employment (King et al, 2003). In Japan, migrants from Brazil are performing unskilled or semi-skilled jobs involving simple, repetitive tasks that require no training and can be learned within a week, despite being well-educated, white collar workers in their home country (Maeda, 2006). In the Canadian context, the point system selects skilled immigrants based on their foreign degrees, credentials and experience, which then are not recognized in the labor market, leading to the effective deskilling of these migrants. It should be noted that deskilling is often a result of actions beyond the control of the state. For example, Canadian employers may not trust the experience and foreign credentials ‘earned in far-off lands’ (Reitz, 2003, p.173) and professional associations may discriminate against immigrant workers to ensure the occupations reproduction of native-educated workers (Bauder, 2003; Girard & Bauder, 2006). The disconnect between the economic goals of state policies and the actual labor market experiences of migrants illustrates that the ‘state’ field does have total control over the labor migration process. Although governments can facilitate entry, other actors in the field (e.g. professional associations) see migrants as a threat to their social reproduction and effectively act as barriers to the migrants’ economic integration.

The Migration Industry Field

The field of the ‘migration industry’ includes organizations, such as recruitment and broker firms, migration agencies and training schools. These are organizations which
facilitate the departure of migrants and their integration into the labor market of the destination country. The actors in this field have interests and motivations that differ from actors in the state field.

Labor recruitment has been initiating migrations at the source for centuries. One of the major advantages of recruitment for governments or firms in destination countries is that these migration policies can be used to customize a foreign-born workforce. During the early twentieth century American recruiters travelled to China, Japan and the Philippines in search of labor for plantations in Hawaii and the U.S. mainland. Filipinos eventually become preferred labor for unpopular agricultural sectors because their smaller physiques enabled them to perform ‘stoop work’ more easily than other migrant groups (Fujita-Rony, 2003). Similar models of recruitment were used in the 1960s when representatives of French auto firms travelled to the most isolated regions of Morocco and Tunisia in order to secure a docile labor force for French car manufacturing plants (Samers, 1998). Today recruitment companies provide labor for high tech firms in Silicon Valley (Ong, 2003), the American meatpacking industry (Kandel & Massey 2005), the construction industry in Italy, Portugal, Germany, the UK, the Netherlands and Switzerland (Fellini, 2007), the hotel industry in London (McDowell et al., 2008), and Filipina Hostess bars in rural Japan (Faier, 2007). The recruitment company Mexi-Can Labour Force is a typical example of this type of business. The company is based in Calgary, Canada, and has four regional offices in Mexico. In recent years, it has brought in more than one thousand temporary Mexican migrants to Canada to work in a wide range of low skilled and semi-skilled occupations, such as construction, hospitality or
transportation (Watt et al., 2008). Labor brokers operate in a similar fashion and are also an important part of the migration industry. These brokers can be involved in all stages of the labor migration process; they arrange employment, visas or work permits, travel and accommodations and sometimes outfit their clients in easily recognized uniforms which are becoming a common sight at some international airports (Stalker, 2001). In Japan, broker firms provide manufacturing firms with migrant workers from Brazil. These firms have contacts with Japanese companies that ‘borrow’ foreign workers for limited periods. When production slows and workers are no longer needed, migrants are returned to the broker firms which then shift these workers to other companies. This system allows permits Japanese companies to maintain a flexible workforce that can be adjusted to meet production fluctuations in a cost-effective manner (Tsuda et al., 2003).

Other actors in the migration industry field are migrant employment agencies and training schools. These businesses start the movement of labor and influence economic integration of migrants in various ways. For example, a Filipino employment agency referring domestic migrant workers has posted pictures of their clients on their websites, offering ‘one-stop’ shopping with “complete packages starting from only $388.00” (Tyner, 1999, p.200). Some agencies encourage workers to pose for their pictures with children or with household appliances. Although these visual representations obscure the fact that many domestic workers have a professional careers in the Philippines correspondingly high-levels of education, the images supposedly signify competence as nannies and housekeepers (Pratt, 1997). Professional entertainer training schools are also part of this field. These schools emerged in the Philippines in order to stimulate the flows
of female migrants to parts of Asia to work as entertainers. Schools train the prospective migrants to dance and shape their physical appearances through exercise routines and cosmetic enhancements that aesthetically appeal to the clientele of men’s clubs in countries such as Japan. The goal of these schools is to create a ‘professional’ workforce for export and bring legitimacy to the migrations of Filipina’s to overseas men’s clubs (Tyner, 2004).

In summary, the migration industry field is characterised by institutions that directly facilitate the economic integration of labor migrants. These institutions are located in both source and destination countries and entertain a complex relationship with the state. Many of these institutions and their programs, especially in the case of labor recruitment, are enabled by the state. Within this field capital circulates in an institutionalized form, for example, as a contract with a broker firm that secures work on a Saudi Arabian construction site, or a professional certificate from an entertainer school in the Philippines that leads to work in a men’s club in Japan. This form of capital holds value as a resource to facilitate employment. This value, however, is restricted and typically provides only accesses to employment in the secondary segments of the labor market and to positions that can otherwise not be filled, including temporary work. In Canada, for example, the migration industry supplies temporary workers to the service sector, agriculture, and the agro-food business (Watt et al., 2008). Many temporary worker programs, in particular, have specific conditions of employment that severely disadvantage migrants. In Canada, foreign domestic workers are only eligible for permanent residence after working in the country for two years. This probationary status
discourages these workers to complain about working conditions and abuse because they may jeopardize their chances for residency and eventually citizenship (Pratt, 1997). In a similar vein, Canada’s seasonal agricultural workers program does not give participants free choice of employer. Workers may be reluctant to speak out about poor working or housing conditions out of fear of losing their job and thus being subject to deportation (Basok, 2002). Many migrants will not only end up in the secondary segment of the labor market but they are often bonded to their employers until their contracts are completed (Sharma, 2006). Thus, institutions and capital in the migration field are central mechanisms in the segmentation of migrants into the secondary labor market.

The Transnational Social Field

The ‘migrant social field’ differs from the state and migration industry fields in that it is positioned primarily within the interpersonal networks of individuals. Peggy Levitt (2006) defines the social field as

…A set of multiple interlocking networks of social relationships through which ideas, practices and resources are unequally exchanged, organized and transformed. Social fields are multi-dimensional, encompassing interactions of differing forms, depth and breadth such as organizations, institutions and movements (p. 25).

A particular characteristic of the migrant social field is transnational spatial expansion. Migrant networks span source and destination countries and are linked by
transnational flows money, goods, information and people. According to Linda Basch et al. (1996, p.6) transnationalism refers to “the process by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement”. Communications technology has been central to the development of contemporary transnational social networks, as this technology has allowed global migrants networks to keep in touch for less cost and effort than ever before. Steven Vertovec (2004) argues that cheap phone cards have made long distance calling more affordable and, as a result, global telephone traffic has increased dramatically between migrant source and destination countries. Digital technologies such as e-mail provide migrants the opportunity to keep in touch with their transnational networks on a daily basis and allow migrants to paint a very detailed picture of living and working overseas to those remaining in source areas (Luis & Bauder, 2008). Social networking sites like Friendster and Facebook add further layers to these interactions. Migrants can now maintain extensive social networks across the globe.

Within this social field, transnational linkages act as a form of labor recruitment mechanism in source areas. Social remittances provide information, knowledge and ideas from destination countries to people who have remained in the source countries (Levitt, 2001). Migrants also send extremely detailed information about labor markets and employment conditions overseas (Luis & Bauder 2008). When migrants return to source areas for visits, they can be a source of information about employment opportunities in destination countries and sometimes play the role of a professional recruiter. Returning South Asian migrants who praise the working conditions in the US have lured graduates
of the Indian Institute of Technology to Silicon Valley (Chattarji, 2004). Similarly, domestic workers who have returned to the Philippines from overseas have become role models in local communities, and give advice to prospective domestic workers on how to successfully initiate and implement their own migration (McKay, 2001). In this case, detailed labor market information is circulated by returnees, improving the chances that would-be migrants will find employment as domestic workers. Some migrants return to their source communities with the specific task of recruiting workers for particular firms in destination countries. Here the line between the migrant and migration industry sub-fields has become blurred, as individuals use their kinship and ethnic networks to gain access to potential recruits (Heckman, 2007).

In the destination country, social capital can be an important resource for economic and social integration (Potocky-Tripoli, 2004; Trinci, 2006; Poros, 2008; Pfeffer & Parra, 2009). The presence of established social networks is often an important criterion when migrants choose a destination. These networks can support newcomers upon arrival and help them orientate themselves in the labor markets of new country. For example, migrants use social networks as a source of information about vacancies before employers fill openings through formal channels or about which firms have the best wages and overtime opportunities. Roger Waldinger (2001, p.81) illustrates that migrant social networks work to fill gaps in the labor market and observes that “immigrant ranks quickly proliferate, veterans tap the newest arrival to fill each subsequent vacancy; the process consolidates once the most established among the immigrants moves up the pecking order and gains influence over hiring decisions, a factor further opening the door
to kith and kin”. Furthermore, some employers prefer to hire new applicants linked to established social networks because newcomers are accustomed to the social and cultural norms of their co-workers; and are more easily trained and integrated into the workforce when such networks are present at the workplace (Waldinger & Lichter, 2003).

A similar dynamic operates in ethnic economies, where businesses are run by ethnic entrepreneurs and staffed by workers from their co-ethnic community. In Israel, for example, Russian ethnic economies have a niche in social and personal services, geriatric care and the music industry (Remmenick, 2007). In Canada, Chinese businesses are a source of employment in restaurants, grocery stores and retail outlets for migrants (Fong et al., 2005; Lo, 2009). Ethnic economies relate to the labor market integration of migrants in two ways. First, ethnic concentrations increase the likelihood that news about job openings will reach other members of the ethnic community. Employers commonly prefer to hire workers who resemble the existing workforce, which provides an advantage to job-seeking migrants with connections to the ethnic community (Waldinger, 2001). Jan Rath’s (2003) study of the ethnic garment industry shows how the circulation of labor market information within ethnic economies has transnational dimensions. In Amsterdam, garment workers had been transnationally recruited from Turkey to perform skilled tasks in the garment making process. In this case, information about employment opportunities spread by word of mouth through social networks that extended over long distances. A second important characteristic is that ethnic economies typically possess cultural workplace characteristics that set them apart from employment in the ‘mainstream’ economy. The language spoken in these businesses is often the native
language of the migrants, rather than the official language of the destination country. In addition, shared culture and habitus within the workplace makes them attractive to recent migrants who are still adjusting to their new lives (Bauder, 2005).

To summarize, the transnational social field consists of informal transnational social networks but also contains an institutional framework, for example, in the form of ethnic economies. In this field, social capital constitutes a resource that holds value and that can be converted into employment. But once again, the issue is what kind of employment that can be secured through this social capital. In many cases, it segments migrants into the secondary segment of the labor market. Roger Waldinger and Claudia Der-Martirosian (2003) confirm that

…Immigrant networks may perform wonderfully in linking up newcomers with jobs yet also possess the considerable drawback of filtering immigrants into positions of entirely the wrong type. Concentration may essentially involve the development of dead-end mobility traps, in which immigrants pile up in occupations or industries from which these are no outlets (p. 244).

The continuous, social reproduction of ‘dead-end mobility traps’ is a distinct possibility when one considers the relative location of many labor migrants in destination country labor markets. As we have previously noted, in most destination countries foreign-born workers can be found in the most unpopular sectors in the economy. Such trends would suggest that when future cohorts of migrants call upon their social capital as
a resource to find employment, movement is most likely within or to the secondary labor market as this is where most migrant networks are situated. Newcomers joining compatriots who are segmented in a particular industry are likely to be incorporated into the labor market in the same industry, irrespective of their job qualifications (Model & Lin, 2003).

Ethnic economies have similar drawbacks. Social networks are often used by migrant entrepreneurs to gain access to a labor pool of vulnerable workers. Ethnic loyalties and obligations as well as family linkages can serve to pressure migrants into exploitative employment relations within ethnic economies (Bonacich, 1972, 1993). Many migrants who end up in ethnic economies face unregulated work environments and can be exploited with little recourse. It is particularly difficult for the state – assuming that it is indeed interested in preventing the exploitation of migrant labor – to regulate ethnic economies because they rely precisely upon networks of trust (Jordan & Duvell, 2003). For example, many ethnic businesses in the garment industry are informal and unregulated, and do not meet safety and wage standards. Furthermore, ruthless competition between local and international producers renders these businesses unstable and dependent on low-cost labor. Studies in Canada, the UK and Finland generally confirm that employment in ethnic economies have been characterized by low wages, long hours and poor working conditions (Nee & Saunders, 2001; Wahlbeck, 2007; Ahmad, 2008).
Conclusion

The economic, institutional, social and cultural factors of labor migrations, which we discussed above, show how foreign-born workers continue to be a segmented workforce in the secondary sectors of destination-country economies. We have used Bourdieu’s concept of social fields to illustrate some of the main processes that produce this effect and thereby reinforce and reproduce existing inequalities between source and destination countries. Of particular interest to employment relations scholars should be the role state policies, the migration industry and migrant social networks play in the segmentation of foreign-born workers in destination country labor markets.

In recent years governments in many destination countries have been refining migration policies along an economic rationale. Immigration programs are adjusted to act as filters to predominantly allow entry to migrants with high levels of human capital and/or those qualified to work in specific occupations such as information technologies or healthcare fields. However, the policies which facilitate entry do not guarantee employment in the primary labor market. Once in destination-country labor markets professional and white-collar migrants face institutional and cultural barriers that, in effect, push them into the low-status employment unrelated to their skills or educational credentials. This segmentation de-skills workers and defeats the basic purpose of government immigration policies as workers do not fill the gaps in the national economy as originally intended. Instead, highly educated and skilled foreign-born workers are relegated to the secondary labor market.
At the same time immigration policies can be directly linked to the segmentation process. There has been increasing use of foreign temporary and contract labor for jobs that the native-born population do not want, such as domestic work, fruit harvesting, office cleaning, and laboring in manufacturing and meat processing plants. In this case state-sponsored programs fill labor market openings quickly and efficiently. Institutions in the migration industry, such as recruitment firms and training schools, provide important services linking labor in migrant source areas to overseas labor markets. From the initial recruitment to economic integration in destination country, this industry is involved in all stages of labor migrations. In this instance, the state and the migration industry are working together to supply labor for the secondary labor market in destination countries.

Segmentation processes also operate through migrant social networks. Here segmentation is socially reproduced due to migrants’ location in employment hierarchies. In destination countries, these networks are usually based in the secondary labor market. As a result when newcomers rely upon established migrants to help find them work, they end up in the same types of low-status jobs as previous cohorts. Similar dynamics exist in ethnic economies. The primary mechanisms facilitating labor movements and economic integration are fundamentally linked to segmentation processes.

Labor migrations involve movements of people in search of a better future. The circumstances under which they migrate and how they are economically integrated in destination countries illustrates that social and cultural reproduction continues to be as
much a characteristic of contemporary global capitalism as production. The most
common trend among destination countries with so-called advanced economies is the
segmentation of foreign-born workers in the secondary segment of the labor market. As
such, migrations tend to reproduce the privileges of citizens of wealthy nations and the
subordinate situations of vulnerable and exploitable populations. These trends should be
of interest to all who study labor markets, in particular in the employment relations
discipline. As a relatively neglected topic in this discipline, employment relations
scholars have an opportunity to make original contributions to the growing literature on
labor migrations.
Manuscript#3

“Just check-out my Friendster”: The Impact of ICT use on the Transnational Social Fields of Filipino Immigrants in Canada

By: Tom Lusis

Status:

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Introduction to manuscript

The main objectives of this manuscript are three fold. First is to provide qualitative evidence of some of the conceptual arguments laid out in the previous two manuscripts (e.g. the incorporation of a transnational perspective to labour market theory). Second is to fill some topical gaps in the geographic, migration studies and transnationalism literature with an empirical study of the “everyday” uses of ICT by immigrants in Canada. Third is to make a theoretical contribution to the immigration literature which draws upon the work of Pierre Bourdieu by utilizing a rigorous application of field theory.

The findings of this manuscript provide empirical backing to the position advocated in the previous two manuscripts, namely that traditional labour market theory needs to consider the phenomenon of immigrant transnationalism and not just factors at the local or national scales. This manuscript documents how Filipino immigrants in Canada use ICT’s to send extremely detailed flows of labour market information to their
global contacts. Immigrants circulate information about working conditions, wages, barriers and opportunities in the local labour market, as well as the types of support services available to newcomers. From this perspective, it is clear that the economic integration of immigrants has transnational dimensions, and is not only influenced by socioeconomic processes in the destination country.

This manuscript will also fill topical gaps in the geographic, migration studies and transnational literature. It is an empirical study of immigrant’s ICT use which is situated from the perspective of the individual, rather than the scale of the cultural or political community, and documents the main types of technology used by immigrants to maintain their transnational connections. The manuscript also outlines the geography of this digital social network and highlights where nodal points in this network are located. Furthermore, this work raises attention to the important function social networking sites such as Friendster and Facebook play in contemporary transnationalism.

Finally, this manuscript makes theoretical and empirical contributions to the body of immigration literature which draws upon the theories of Pierre Bourdieu. In this work I introduce a new form of capital which I have termed “digital capital”. The main components are economic capital (e.g. the financial resources needed to access or acquire digital technologies) and cultural capital (e.g. the knowledge and skills needed to utilize digital technologies efficiently). It is an important resource that can be converted into three other forms of capital. First is social capital in the form of a globally located social network which consists of a mixture of friends, family, long-lost acquaintances and
school friends, as well as on-line “friends”. Second is informational capital in the form of accurate labour market information gathered from members of this social network or on-line resources such as government web-pages. Third is symbolic capital in the context of the Philippines culture of migration. Immigrants can use their Facebook pages to give the impression that they are financially and materially prosperous in Canada, thereby ensuring their social status as someone who has made it “abroad”. This manuscript also employs a detailed application of Bourdieu’s field theory. In this work field theory is used to provide a conceptual structure to Filipino immigrant’s transnational digital social networks, identify different groups in the field, and highlight the power dynamics between migrant source and destination countries. For example, migrant source and destination countries represent the internal hierarchies of the field, and the differences in social status between Canada (as an attractive migration destination) and the Philippines (as a place where it is believed to get ahead one must go abroad) speaks to how geographic factors remain an important part of the dynamics of transnational migrations.

Abstract
Contemporary migrations take place during an “information age”. Recent advances in information and communications technologies (ICT) have revolutionized how information flows through transnational immigrant social networks. Immigrants can use e-mail, web cameras, instant messenger services and social networking websites to send very detailed reports about living and working in destination countries to their source areas. Drawing upon Pierre Bourdieu’s theories of social fields and forms of capital, this study examines the impact ICTs have had on the transnational social networks of Filipino
immigrants in Canada. In this work I develop the concept of “digital” capital, a valuable resource that can be converted into multiple forms of capital within transnational social networks. I illustrate how immigrants are using digital technologies including social networking websites to increase the size and diversity of their global social networks, and to disseminate information about life in Canada. I also highlight how processes of social distinction and reproduction influence the accuracy of transnational information flows. This paper fills important gaps in the geographic literature, a discipline where ICT have been a relatively understudied research topic to date. It also makes valuable contributions to the migration studies literature. Many studies in this field have overlooked the importance of geography, and do not address how uneven power relations between migrant source and destination countries shape on-line transnational activities.

**Introduction**

Transnational social networks can play an important role in global migrations. Established migrants in destination countries can be a vital source of information throughout the migration process. In the pre-migration stage, social networks can initiate movements by disseminating information about methods of travel, the economic prospects in local labour markets, housing opportunities, immigration laws, and potential supports available during the initial phases of settlement (Ghosh 2007; Klavona, 2010; Lusis and Bauder 2008). Once in the destination country social networks can facilitate labour market integration by providing newcomers with information about job openings, thereby increasing the chances that recent arrivals will find work (Drew and Hoffmeister 2008). In the workplace migrant networks can engage in knowledge transfer activities
that aid in the economic integration process. Established migrants can give newcomers on the job training in their language of original, making the transition and retention process easier for recent arrivals (Waldinger and Lichter 2003).

At first glance it would appear that migrant social networks are a productive source of information. ICTs such as e-mail, web cameras, cellular phones, long-distance phone cards, and texting services have enabled instant communication over space and time (Roy 2005). Today’s migrants can send their social networks more information about destination countries, with greater frequency and at less cost than ever before. Yet the literature suggests that for many the opposite is true. An increasing body of research documents how migrant networks often spread insufficient, inaccurate and misleading facts about life abroad (e.g. Akcapar, 2010; Klvanova 2010; Ros 2010). In this work I use questions about the depth and accuracy of transnational information flows as the point of entry for the article. I document how Filipino immigrants in Canada use ICTs to maintain transnational ties with the Philippines and to spread information about living and working abroad. Utilizing Pierre Bourdieu’s field theory to conceptualize transnational networks as a social field where different forms of capital circulate and are converted, I also illustrate how processes of social reproduction are shaped by the uneven power relations between migrant source and destination countries. In turn these power relations influence the accuracy of information flowing through migrant social networks.

The remainder of the article is structured as follows. The literature review outlines current themes and research gaps in the recent work on migrant transnationalism and ICT
use. Section 3 summaries my theoretical framework and develops the concept of “digital capital”. Section 4 reviews the research methods employed in this study. Section 5 demonstrates how digital capital can be converted into social, informational, and symbolic capital. This section also draws attention to how processes of social distinction and reproduction shape transnational information flows. Section 6 offers conclusions.

**Literature Review**

In many respects research on ICT use can be considered an emerging field in the geographic literature. Economic geographers have been examining the impact technologies such as the Internet have had on economic and social processes for over a decade (e.g. Symons 1997; Malecki 2002; Fields 2006), however in the broader geographic literature research on ICTs outside has remained scare (notable exceptions include Walton-Roberts 2010). Few geographers have studied what impacts communications technologies have had on spatial processes, and qualitative research about online environments is still in its infancy in this discipline (Dwyer and Davies 2010) As a result, the majority of the literature cited in this review is drawn from migration studies where ICT use in the context of immigration has been a topic of interest for some time.

In recent years ICTs have become a central component of contemporary transnationalism (Levitt and Jaworsky 2007; Wilding 2006). According to Bruno Giussani (2007) migrants, rather than “geeks”, are the most aggressive adopters of new communications tools. In part this is because Internet technologies, such as free e-mail
accounts, have effectively reduced the costs of international communications and have created more opportunities for migrants to maintain transnational connections (Franda 2002). Migrants can use ICTs to be more actively linked to their source areas in more interactive ways than in the past (Levitt 2001). For instance, migrants can use the Internet to maintain a presence in their home communities (e.g. via webcam) while their social networks can experience life in the destination country through on-line sharing of photographs, films, music, news stories, and web links (Metykova 2010).

Internet technologies have also created an electronic infrastructure for migrant communities to establish novel forms of transnational social networks. An increasing body of work examines on-line migrant communities (e.g. Adams and Ghosh 2003; Benitez 2006; Graham and Khosravi 2002; Mahler 2001; Mirta 2000; Ong 2003; Parham 2004; Parker and Song 2006; Panagakos 1998, 2003; Smith 2002; Van Den Bos and Nell 2006; Yang 2003). Ramesh Srinivasan and Ajit Pyati (2007: 1735) argue that “The traditional notion of immigrant communities in isolated, localized pockets in different parts of the world…simply does not hold true in an age of accelerated media, information production and ICTs. Instead, the global and the local interact at levels of increasing complexity and fluidity.” The Internet now acts as a medium through which transnational migrant communities can maintain and reinforce a sense of unity across space and time, and can experience community-like feelings and behaviors in on-line settings similar to those in physical communities (Navarrote and Huerta 2006). Some of these community-like feelings revolve around political activity. Many migrant community websites post news, host political forums and serve as spaces of public expression and protest (Yang...
Aihwa Ong’s (2003) analysis of the website “Global Huaren” (Global Chinese People) illustrates the logistics of digital protest movements. Here the on-line Chinese community organized coordinated rallies in front of Indonesian embassies and consulates in the United States, Canada, Australia and Asia to protest the anti-Chinese violence in Indonesia. The Tamil diaspora is another group who has used the Internet to promote political causes and organize resistance movements, in this case against the national government in Sri Lanka (Tekwani 2003). Mark Graham and Shahram Khosravi (2002) provide a vivid example of how online diaspora communities organize for political action this time in response to events in the destination country. The researchers document how in 1997 a radio talk show host in the San Francisco Area made derogatory comments about a tragedy in Iran\(^2\). In reaction, the Iranian Times website sent out a message to online subscribers asking they send e-mails to the radio station. When protest e-mails streamed in, the radio show was canceled.

On-line communities are a place for the formation and retention of cultural identities. For example, the mission statement for the website PersianOutpost.com reads, “We are especially motivated to provide a medium to develop and present a cultural resource, assisting an immigrant generation establish their new identity based on the roots of their parents” (Graham and Khosravi 2002:231). On-line cultural identities are often formed through social practices. Christine Ogan and Kursat Cagiltay (2006) record how the Turkish website Itiraf.com has become a space for a “uniquely Turkish” phenomenon.

\(^2\) According to the authors Turi Ryder on radio KPIX asked why should anyone care about the 1996 earthquake victims in Iran when the people concerned were “only” Iranians.
Every day an estimated 60,000 to 80,000 members from Turkey and the Turkish diaspora log on to the site to tell their stories. Users have even created a new language based on their on-line interactions. Similarly, the website Hindu Universe allows members of the immigrant community to feel and become a “virtual Hindu” through the conduct of a specific ritualized practice while being on the web (Mitra 2006). Other on-line communities support identity formation through more subtle means. The “Greek Global Village” acts as an outlet for cultural expression, where individuals can follow their favorite Greek sports teams, read Greek news, and follow the release dates of Greek music albums (Panagakis 2003). In all cases, on-line communities have become digital spaces where second and third generation immigrants can cultivate their ethnic roots.

Virtual communities also shape family dynamics. Many websites provide an electronic infrastructure for the social reproduction of traditional cultural practices such as arranged marriages (Adams and Ghosh 2003). Here traditional methods of family formation have been incorporated into the online community, and the scope of networking activities associated with these practices can expand greatly. The search for prospective partners now takes place at the global scale rather than being restricted to local or regional social networks.

On-line environments are not without conflict. The same websites that foster the development of cultural identities are spaces where global diaspora groups engage in debates about identity politics (Ignacio 2005; Mitra 2000). Typically battle lines are drawn between those with traditional values and other members who are part of a hybridized, diaspora community. Geography is important in these debates. Among on-
line diaspora communities the “homeland” holds special status. Those who reside in source areas consider their definitions of cultural identities as the legitimate ones (Alinejad 2011). Gina Gibau (2010: 110) notes how the diasporic Cape Verdeans utilize colonial, post-colonial and transnational discourses in on-line discussion forums to leverage their positions on the “…never-ending conundrum that is Cape Verdean identity formation” and argue about the importance of race, nationality, language and culture in the construction of “Cape Verdeannes”. Internet usage often mirrors and reinforces existing social divisions and is inextricably linked with factors such as education, income and family background (Hopper 2007). For example, Caroline Nagel and Lynn Staeheli (2010) document how many recent Arab immigrants in Los Angeles had low incomes and little access to computers. This group had to rely upon more traditional methods of social networking for their group activities. Jose Benitez (2006) details how a “digital divide” exists among the Salvadorian community in Washington in terms of their networking capacities. Only an estimated 35-40% of the migrants in the study had access to the Internet. Participation in on-line communities does not depend solely on having the financial resources needed to access the Internet. Anastasia Panagakos (2003) highlights how class and language proficiency are central to participation in the online Greek diaspora and claims the internet gives younger, wealthier and educated members literate in English an advantage over others within the home community and the “global Greek family”. The issue of language proficiency is also raised in Angel Parham’s (2004) study of Haitian immigrants in Florida. Since English is the dominant language used on the Haiti Global Village forum, the opinions of individuals who are not familiar with this language do not get heard. Among the Iranian on-line blogger community language
proficiency in Farsi is a source of social distinction similar to the English in the Haitian and Greek diaspora websites. Individuals who do not have the ability to compose messages in Farsi cannot participate and are considered “foreign observers” rather than full members of the on-line community (Alinejad 2011: 34). Thus, among digital communities divisions are based on economic, linguistic and geographic characteristics.

In summary, the migration studies literature details how increasingly complex configurations of transnational social networks are emerging. Yet these new formations are only accessible to those with the economic means to acquire the technology and who posses the skills required to participate in the on-line community (e.g. language proficiency). Virtual spaces are also sites of power and social reproduction where different groups engage in debates over the legitimacy of traditional practices or cultural identities. Despite the recent attention paid to on-line environments gaps still exist in the migration studies literature that obstruct a complete understanding of how ICTs influence migrant transnationalism. The most pressing relate to geography and power relations. Much of the current research on ICT use creates the impression that migrant’s transnational activities are somehow dislodged from the places where they actually live (Nagel and Stachelli 2010). Studies have overlooked the uneven power relations that exist between migrant sending and receiving countries, and which in turn, influence transnational activities. This research aims to fill some of these topical gaps. It also represents an important addition to the geographic literature by contributing to the small body of work which examines on-line environments from a geographic perspective.
Theoretical Framework

For several years now researchers have drawn upon Pierre Bourdieu’s theories of social distinction to explore the social, economic and cultural experiences of immigrants. To date, most studies have focused on Bourdieu’s theories of capital (e.g. Nee and Sanders 2006; Bauder 2003; 2005; 2006a; 2006b; 2008; Kelly and Lusis 2006) with less attention being paid to his concept of social fields (notable exceptions include Glastra and Vedder 2010). According to Patricia Thompson (2008:74) at its’ core Bourdieu’s field theory is “…a scholastic device – an epistological and methodological heuristic – which helps researchers makes sense of the world”. Bourdieu used field theory to examine many different aspects of modern society. His work included the educational field (1969, 1975, 1989), the cultural field (1980, 1984), the artistic field (1990), the literature field (1992, 1993, 1996), and the bureaucratic field (1999). The chief advantage of this theoretical framework is adaptability. Field theory can be applied to any context and be used to identify different groups in society as well as the power dynamics and symbolic struggles between them (Grenfield and Hardy 2003).

Bourdieu defined social field as “…a space of play within which holders of capital (of different species) struggle in particular over the …granting power of the different species of capital and over their reproduction (Bourdieu 1999: 58). A general characteristic of all fields is that they are competitive arenas. Each field has its own logic and rules which, in part, are based on historical or national influences. For example, James Ladwig (1994) has used Bourdieu’s field theory in his work on American educational policies during the 1980s. He contends that policies were shaped by a
combination of specific factors. These included a collapse of the education cultural market in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the poor economic climate, and the fact that educational reform had become an important part of the male dominated public discourse at the time. The US educational field in the 1980s would therefore be different than educational fields in other countries subject to dissimilar socio-economic factors. Ladwig’s work also demonstrates the central role geography can play in field theory. Since field rules are heavily influenced by national characteristics they are not transferable and act as boundaries. His work also shows how fields are not isolated from events in broader society. Political, scientific and technological changes can disrupt existing field structures.

Every field has different groups or social classes whose position is based upon the distribution of capital and who struggle to define the features of the field. According to Bourdieu (1980: 83), “Those in dominant positions operate essentially defensive strategies, designed to perpetuate the status quo by maintaining themselves and the principals on which their dominance is based…in order to gain a foothold in the market (the dominated) have to resort to subversive strategies which will eventually bring them the disavowed profits only if they succeed in overturning the hierarchy of the field without disturbing the principals on which the field is based. Thus, their revolutions are only ever partial ones.” In the artistic field social distinction rests between contemporary and fine artists. The former challenge the bourgeois values of fine artists with their hybridization of traditional forms, their objection towards commodification and popular culture, and their focus on novelty, shock and taboo breaking (Greenfield and Hargy
In the literary field authors who have made their names want continuity, identity and reproduction. In contrast, newcomers seek discontinuity, difference, revolution and to ultimately displace the established figures (Bourdieu 1980). In the academic field, social distinction between groups is based upon what problems, theories and methods are regarded as “scientific” (Bourdieu 1975). All of these examples highlight the dynamic and antagonistic nature of social fields. In every area actors engage in struggles to reproduce or advance their positions. The built environment is also linked to processes of social distinction in a field. In the cultural field, for instance, social status and class membership is associated with individual institutions as well as city neighbourhoods. Paris theaters considered part of the ‘Left Bank’, typically on the verge of bankruptcy, are characterized by risky undertakings and offer unconventional shows at relatively low prices to a young intellectual audience. On the other hand ‘bourgeois’ theaters are profit driven ventures which take no risks. The audience is older and more affluent. They are willing to pay high prices for “entertainment whose conventions and staging correspond to an aesthetic that has not changed for a century” (Bourdieu 1980:270). Similar institutional and geographic hierarchies exist in the educational and artistic fields.

An understanding of different forms of capital is vital to field theory as they are the ‘energy’ that drives the development of a field through time (Grenfell 2008). Loic Wacquant (1989:39) maintains “A capital does not exist but in relation to a field: it confers a power over the field, over the material or embodied instruments of productions or reproduction whose distribution constitutes the very structure of the field, and over the regularities and the rules which define the ordinary functioning of the field, and thereby
over the profits engendered in the field”. Bourdieu identified several different varieties of capital ranging from general to very specific forms that only exist in certain social fields. In this work my focus will be on social, informational and symbolic capital. Social capital is related to group membership, collective agency and social distinction and reproduction. It consists of two key elements. The first is the social relationship that secures access to these resources and second is the amount and quality of these resources (Portes 1998). Informational capital is found in the bureaucratic field and centers on knowledge transfer activities. Governments are the main source of this form of capital as they are the institutions most often responsible to assemble, treat and redistribute information through activities such as census taking, statistics, cartography and archives (Bourdieu 1999). Symbolic capital is a more general form of capital than the previous two types. It relates primarily to an individual’s social status and can be defined as “…any property (any form of capital whether physical, economic, cultural or social) when it is perceived by social agents endowed with categories of perception which cause them to know it and recognize it, to give it value.” (Bourdieu 1999:62).

In addition a new form of capital will be developed in this study, which I have labeled “Digital capital”. Digital capital’s two key components are a) economic capital - the financial resources needed to acquire or access ICT and b) the knowledge needed to utilize technology to its fullest³. Economic capital in combination with knowledge can

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³This is a crucial component of this form of capital. A digital divide still exists even after information “have-nots” have gained access to the Internet because computer and cognitive skills are required if the technology is to be used meaningfully and productively (e.g. to seek information, develop community networks, construct social capital) (Hargittai 2002).
be exchanged into digital capital. It is a form of capital that is accumulated through the use of ICT and is a source of social distinction between individuals who can use technology, such as the Internet, for productive uses. Further, digital capital is a resource that can be converted into other forms of capital, and is a valuable asset in the “information age”.

Bourdieu’s field theory can provide a conceptual framework to immigrant’s transnational social networks. Immigrant networks can be theorized as distinct social fields. As will be demonstrated in the empirical section of this article, these networks have logics and rules based upon cultural and geographic factors. They have internal hierarchies between locations within the field, for example, between migrant source and destination countries. Different forms of capital are key to membership and social distinction between the different players in this field. These networks are also sites of conflict and social reproduction where different groups seek to legitimize their views of the migration experience.

Research Methods

This research examines the patterns of ICT use among a transnational social network of Filipino immigrants in Canada. It is guided by three main research questions. First, what types of ICTs are immigrants using to maintain their transnational social networks? Second, what impact do ICTs have on the relative size and composition of immigrant networks? Third, how do ICT facilitate knowledge transfer about living and working in Canada, and are these flows of information accurate? In total 54 migrants participated in
this study. The study sample was designed to include some variance in terms of participants’ time of arrival and employment histories. As a result there were differences in how long the group had been in Canada. Two main cohorts of participants emerged. Some had arrived during the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s. The other main cohort was more recent arrivals, and in several cases participants had only been in Canada for a few months. Almost all participants had professional qualifications and work experiences in the Philippines. Interviewees included university professors, accountants, nurses, doctors, public sector employees, healthcare workers, engineers and computer programmers. It should however be noted that relatively few were working in the same jobs in Canada. The most common form of employment was in the manufacturing sector with notable exceptions in the nursing and information technologies fields. The study sample consisted of an almost equal number of male and female participants.

In this study I utilized a variety of qualitative research methods including snowball sampling. This method has been identified as a useful tool when studying social networks (Biernacki and Waldorf 1981; Bernard 1988; Noy 2008). Another factor which made snowball sampling suitable for this study has been outlined by Marinus Spreen and Ronald Zwaagstra (1994) who contend the results from this method can be improved if the analysis of the structure of networks is made an explicit part of both the study’s methodology and theory (e.g. via Bourdieu’s field theory). A key informant started the sampling processes and provided access to a social network of Filipino immigrants from the island of Bohol, located in the central Visayas region. After the interview this respondent connected me with several other individuals from this network who in turn,
suggested additional participants. The key informants also aided the research process by pointing out salient issues that I needed to be aware of during the interview process, and providing explanations to behaviours observed in the field. I also employed “opportunistic sampling” in this study. This sampling technique is one way to take advantage of new opportunities to recruit participants that may develop after the fieldwork has begun. Unexpected opportunities that occur during the research may be used to facilitate sampling (Liamputtong and Ezzy 2005: 174). In context of this research, opportunistic sampling secured me invitations to several social functions where I was able to observe how immigrants used digital technologies in group settings. It should be noted that ICTs were central to participant recruitment. Cell-phone texting, e-mails and instant messenger services were used by key informants to facilitate the interview process, to make electronic “introductions” on behalf of the researcher, and to confirm the time and date of meetings.

The location of the interviews varied throughout the Greater Toronto Area and other locations in South-western Ontario. In most cases this variety of interview venues reflected the geographic distribution of the nodes in the social network under study. The majority of the individual interviews took place in homes throughout the Toronto suburbs of Mississauga and Scarborough. One node of the social network was located in the City of Guelph, approximately an hour’s drive from Toronto. The way interviews were secured in Guelph illustrates how fluidly participants use ICTs to circulate information through this transnational migrant social network. A key informant based in Toronto knew that some of her friends had settled in Guelph but had not been in direct contact with them in recent years. She e-mailed one of her contacts in Detroit City, who then forwarded the information to a friend in New York City, who then

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functions where the migrant social network under study gathered as a complete group. These included Christmas and birthday parties, and a sports festival. The focus group interview was carried out at one of these social gathering in a park located in Southern Ontario. Attendance at these events allowed me to observe how immigrants used ICTs, such as digital cameras and video recorders, to document their lives in the destination country. These “snapshots” and movies were later disseminated among the transnational network via social networking websites or e-mail exchanges.

During my fieldwork I conducted individual and group interviews with 54 immigrants, as well as utilizing participant observation to note ICT use at social functions. The primary data collection method was semi-structured interviews with individual subjects although at times a husband and wife requested to be interviewed together. One focus group interview was also conducted. Interviews were digitally recorded and I also collected notes throughout the fieldwork. Interviews were transcribed and the data was coded according to six general themes; patterns of technology use, information about Canadian labour markets, information about life in Canada, technology and transnational social networks, technology and the implications for labour market integration, and accurate/inaccurate flows of information. Once the initial coding process was finished the transcripts were compared to my field notes to ensure that important themes had not been overlooked. The data was then reviewed and broken down further to the themes presented in the empirical sections of the paper. Participants were quoted anonymously to maintain confidentially. To complement the interviews I also used connected with migrants in Guelph who in turn, re-connected with the key informant in Toronto to arrange a meeting which took place in Guelph.
questionnaires to collect data. According to Pranee Liamputtong and Douglas Ezzy (2005) this combination of research methods can be used as a triangulation with the results of each method testing the validity of the information gathered. As can be seen in Figure A, the most common ICT use among participants are Internet technologies. E-mail is the most popular with Facebook second. As can be seen in Figure B, the participants used ICT mainly to connect with people in the Philippines and North America, although some nodes in this social network were located in Europe, the Middle East and Australia.

Figure A: Study Participants' Primary Methods of Communication
Results: Digital Capital and its Conversion to Social Capital

The Philippines has a notable history of ICT use. In 2001, for example, activists used cell-phones to organize massive political demonstrations that lead to the peaceful overthrow of President Joseph Estrada (Alonso and Olarzabal 2001). By 2009 the Philippines was known as the “Texting Capital of the World” as the average Filipino cellular phone subscriber sent over 600 text messages per month, 43 percent more than their counter parts in the United States (Tuazon 2010). Similar trends are emerging with social networking websites. In 2011 the Philippines was considered the “Social Networking Capital of the World”. 95% of Internet users have a social networking profile and Facebook is the country’s most popular website (Stockdale and McIntyre 2011). The Philippines also has the highest percentage of Internet users who watch videos over the Internet. Over ninety-eight percent of active users watch videos and 67.5% of active users
also upload or share videos (Reyes 2010). However, Internet use in the Philippines remains restricted to select social groups and is primarily reserved for members of the upper-middle classes. In 2010 there were approximately four million active Internet users in the Philippines, a country with an estimated population of 94,013,200 in the same year (Reyes 2010).

Some study participants had been active Internet users in the Philippines. This group had relied upon ICTs to maintain connections with their social networks in the Philippines and overseas. A small number had the luxury of a home computer. For these individuals, checking their e-mail accounts and messenger services were part of a daily ritual. Others were able to access the Internet in their workplaces. In these cases the differences in global time zones made office web-cams a preferred way to communicate with social networks in Canada. When workers in the Philippines were signing on to their computers, their contacts in Canada had finished the workday and were at home waiting for the e-mail connection. Web-cafes were another location where participants utilized digital media. In comparison to other locations, such as private homes or places of employment, web-cafes were more accessible to the general public.

One of the more fascinating ways in which study participants utilized digital media was through membership in social networking sites (SNW). SNWs were a very

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5 The global average for video viewing is 82.8%. The global average for uploading or sharing videos is 35% (Reyes 2010)

6 Participants who had migrated to Canada in the late 1980s and early 1990s were not online in the Philippines. However, they had quickly adopted this technology to maintain their transnational connections with source areas as ICTs, such as e-mail and instant messenger services, became more wide spread and accessible.
common method used to maintain transnational social networks second only to e-mail. These types of websites have been popular among Internet users in the Philippines for almost a decade. Before Facebook, “Friendster” was the main SNW in the Philippines. Friendster was launched in 2002 and was the premier on-line networking service until it was overtaken by MySpace in April 2004 (Rivlin 2006). During Friendster’s peak years most users were from outside of North America and Europe, and primarily from Southeast Asian countries. Members could create personal profiles, post pictures and videos, and form friend networks. The website also allowed newcomers to introduce themselves and request to join existing friendship groups. Until recently, Friendster was the main SNW participants used to connect with their social networks after migrating to Canada. As Facebook became more popular worldwide, it became the main SNW used by participants.

Digital media play an important role in maintaining transnational social networks. For participants, Friendster was an efficient way to maintain connections with people inside and outside of the Philippines. The more layers of a social network linked via an SNW, the better. The expansion of on-line social networks to include family members was seen by many participants as one advantage to having a Friendster or Facebook account. For some participants SNWs had re-activated dormant family ties. The following quote is from one participant who migrated to Canada in the 1980s but joined Friendster when it became popular in the Philippines.

“I have some cousins that I was never really close or communicated with…but because
they found me on Friendster we just started communicating more. It really keeps everyone close.”

Family networks were digitally expanding because of the ease of locating someone online. To connect with a family member with whom they had lost touch participants searched Friendster. Most likely someone with ties to that individual would be on the website and a connection could be made.

The same search process took place with old friends, work colleagues and classmates. Previously it would take much greater effort to locate these individuals. Many participants had old friendships re-established via Friendster or Facebook as can be in the next quotes from two relatively recent arrived, married young professionals.

“I get to see friends that you haven’t communicated with for years. They were looking for you but they didn’t know how to reach you. Now they are here.”

“There are friends...you don’t talk to them too much in the Philippines, now they are talking (on-line) and we’re closer and I think it’s gonna expand.”

Participant’s social networks were also expanding through the addition of on-line “friends”. International migrations played a key role in this process. Many SNW list the geographic location of a user in their on-line profile. Other users noticed this
characteristic and sent participants questions about life in Canada.

“I get requests from people from the Philippines...they say ‘Hey, how is it going, where (in Canada) are you?’...most of them are interested in emigrating or in the process of migrating. So they see that I am here, they ask some questions.” Participant #10: Male, migrated to Canada in 2000.

“We’re not reaching out to them, they are reaching us. We are answering questions for them, telling them of our experiences.” Participant #2: Female, migrated to Canada in 2006.

“...my connections...they do raise those questions ‘how’s life, where did you apply and how much did it cost you’, stuff like that.” Participant# 45: Female, migrated to Canada in 1992.

The majority of participants had received these types of requests. For most, questions about Canada were acceptable even if they came from a stranger. Participants usually would answer but admitted there were risks involved when communicating with someone they did not know. It was, however, unusual for on-line “friends” to become fully integrated members of the participant’s social network in Canada. Most times participants would enter into an on-line dialogue with these “friends”, answer questions and offer advice but they would never meet in person. The on-line dialogue may continue in
Canada but would cease once the “friend” established their own, non-virtual social networks.

Participants used SNWs to enhance their social capital. ICT use therefore can be seen as a form of capital which could be converted in this field. Digital capital allowed immigrants to create and manage transnational social networks that could include hundreds of on-line members. Furthermore, these social networks were not homogeneous but consisted of family, friends, old classmates and on-line “friends”. In this way participants had used digital media as a resource to enhance the two key components of their social capital resources. They had increased the relative size of the network through which their social capital can circulate, and they had also created a network with a diverse membership. From this perspective, on-line contacts played a similar role to what Mark Granovetter has termed “weak ties” (1973, 1983). It is worth noting that migrant social networks primarily based upon family ties often suffer from high closure and do not provide members with new and valuable labour market information. Such networks

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Granovetter argues that and individual’s social networks are comprised of various ties and contacts. These ties can be categorized as strong (close relationships between family members and friends), weak (social connections formed between acquaintances or co-workers) and absent. He contends that one of the advantages of weak ties is that they can be a source of novel information or ideas, as “…those to whom we are weakly tied are more likely to move in circles different from our own and will thus have access to information different from which we receive…” (1973: 1371). He elaborated on these ideas in a 1983 text where he detailed differences between social networks with an abundance or lack of weak ties, and argued “…individuals with few weak ties will be deprived of information of the social system and will be confined to the news and views of their close friends. This deprivation will not only insulate them from the latest ideas and fashions but may put them in a disadvantaged position in the labour market, where advancement can depend…on knowing about appropriate job openings at just the right time.” (1983:202). SNW allowed immigrants to have many on-line friends who could be considered “weak ties” within their respective social networks.
are not effective for making headway in the labour market (Lance 2010). The immigrants in this study had large social networks that were a mixture of close and extended family connections, old school and work colleagues, and new “on-line” friends. As a result of this diversity, the participants had access to a wide range of labour market information, advice and strategies.

The Conversion of Social Capital into Informational Capital

Ruben Gielis (2009: 280) maintains that since the rapid spread of ICTs, “…migrant places are no-longer localities, but have become translocalities – places where transmigrants reach out to other places.” Following this line of thinking, immigrants reach out to other places and become a source of what Bourdieu has termed “informational capital”. Immigrants collect and disseminate information about living and working in the destination country. This information circulated back to the Philippines in a variety of digital methods including e-mail and instant messenger correspondence, as well as posts on SNWs.

Participants were an essential source of labour market information for their social networks in the Philippines as well as newly arrived immigrants in Canada. One of the most common questions posed to participants related to wages. Would-be immigrants in the Philippines wanted to know about the economic returns of working in Canada. The participants in this study mentioned that this was always a topic of interest for those in migrant source areas.
“To be honest about this, I’ve been working at KFC. I’ve been working 4-8 hours a day for two days only. Then to compare it with my salary in the Philippines. For only two days work it’s the equivalent to five days salary in the Philippines, I’ve been honest about that to me my friends, especially those who want to come here.”

In this quote an immigrant compares working part-time at a minimum wage, fast-food chain in Toronto with his compensation as the Chief of the Administrative Department in a regional municipal government in the Philippines. Due to the low value of the Philippine Peso, the income from part-time work in a low status position in Canada is the same as full-time professional employment in the migrant source areas. Employment benefits were also brought up as an additional economic incentive to working in Canada. Most participants did not have similar types of health plans or unemployment support in the Philippines.

Participants also told friends and relatives about how the social relations in the workplace differed in the destination country. In Canada the workforce was much more culturally diverse, and participants had colleagues from many different national backgrounds. For some participants this took some adjustment as they were used to a more culturally homogenous workforce. In general it was considered a positive aspect of working abroad since participants could learn about different cultures and form more diverse friendship networks. Furthermore, in Canada supervisors were seen as more approachable and friendly in comparison to their counterparts in the Philippines. The work environment was considered less hierarchical and with less nepotism. In
combination with the higher wages and benefits, the Canadian labour market was seen as a more favourable place to work.

“Definitely much better in terms of pay...it’s so much better here. Plus we also have a good relationship with the higher-ups...In the Philippines the thought of having drinks with your boss was more uncommon. Here you can be friends...” Participant#4: Male, migrated to Canada in 2001.

“...we are more lenient here. In the Philippines we command respect and punctuality at all times...the supervisors who are the ones managing would always have the last say. Here it is very open.” Participant#15: Male, migrated to Canada in 1989, focus group interview.

Being able to learn about the intricacies the Canadian work environment is a clear advantage for would-be immigrants or newcomers just entering the labour market. If an individual can gain an understanding of the differences between working in the Philippines and abroad before or shortly after they arrive in Canada, they will be better prepared for their employment experiences in the destination country.

Participants were also a source of information about which sectors of the Canadian labour market were the easiest to access for newcomers. The information technologies (IT) sector in Toronto, for instance, was considered by many a promising place for recent immigrants to search for work as can be seen in the following quote by
an immigrant who was one of the recent cohorts in the study sample.

“I’ve mentioned about people who have IT jobs here. Those are technical persons and if they can show a company here what they’re able to do, then they can get a job in that field, because you don’t need a certificate...as long as you know what you’re doing. Yeah, it really helps out a lot that they are technologically savvy.” Participant #2: Female, migrated to Canada in 2006.

This sector was attractive because there were no professional organizations that regulated entry into the labour market. Newcomers did not need to undergo an expensive and time-consuming upgrading or accreditation process to be qualified for employment. Employers were more focused on technical skills that could be demonstrated during an interview process than professional qualifications. Several participants entered this sector because it was easier to find work than in their original fields and it was not manual labour.

Not all the reports about working in Canada were positive. Many immigrants felt that the pace of work was very hectic and stressful. The distance between home and the workplace was also considered a negative. Most participants had to spend a considerable amount of time each day commuting in traffic to work. Participants also warned those in the Philippines about how immigrants were de-skilled in Canadian labour markets.

“My cousins, they ask me, but then I tell them that it’s not easy because you will struggle. Even though you are a university graduate you can’t use that here...so don’t expect...
Almost all participants were university graduates with professional experience. Many worked in jobs unrelated to their educational or professional backgrounds. Immigrants were sure to disclose such realities. A third barrier cited was a lack of Canadian experience. Immigrants were considered unqualified for professional employment because they had no experience working in these jobs in the destination country. Many participants were extremely frustrated with this “catch 22” facing immigrants. Since no employer was willing to give them a position based on their foreign work experience, how were they expected to gain Canadian experience? In an extreme case one immigrant was even turned away from unpaid, volunteer work because he did not have Canadian experience in that field.

Immigrants were an important source of information about how newcomers should deal with barriers in the Canadian labour market. The following two quotes are examples of responses given to SNW “friends” who had posed questions about working in Canada via Facebook.

“If you are persistent to look for your kind of job, you will get it. I inspire them (newcomers) not to lose hope, not to end up working like a factory worker. We’re going to support you and help you on how to get a job, what are the first steps, the right plan.”

“Now that I’m here, I want people from the Philippines who have desires or have applied for Canada...I want to be a big help by way of informing them of what I have learned here through Internet searches that I have done or even on what I have learned during that two-week seminar...because in a way it would prepare them better as compared to my preparation when I was there.” Participant#29: Female, migrated to Canada in 2004.

Here participants encourage newcomers not to settle for low-status employment in the destination country. They are prepared to help recent immigrants find work in their professional fields. Part of this support process was spreading knowledge about the electronic resources available, such as governmental and professional association websites, which would supply accurate and up to date information about the regulatory structures in Canadian labour markets.

“...there was this particular website...I found out that there (in Canada) are so many regulated jobs but there are those that are not regulated. It has given me an idea that for my husband’s case, you can’t just be an engineer here just because you were an engineer in the Philippines.” Participant#44: Male, migrated to Canada in 2003

The participant quoted used the Internet to research working in Canada shortly after arriving in Toronto in late 2003. Once she learned about the upgrading needed to work in the educational and engineering fields, both she and her husband decided to work in
different areas due to the time and financial costs involved in the regulatory process. Whenever these individuals received questions about working in Canada they directed people to the aforementioned website. For them this ensured that those with questions would have a clear idea of the accreditation process from an official source, rather than just rumours or hearsay circulating among immigrants in Canada.

A final form of informational capital disseminated among this network was knowledge about employment support programs for immigrants in the Greater Toronto Area. These orientation programs taught important skills such as resume writing and how to conduct a job search.

“The Newcomers in Canada program, which is a non-profit organization but is partly funded by the Ontario government. We attended that one during our first two weeks of stay here in Canada and it was really helpful in our job search because we learned how to make resumes, what to expect in a Canadian business environment, where to go...”
Participant#17: Female, migrated to Canada in 2005.

“It was very helpful, it was set up by the government for newcomers, it teaches how to write resumes, how to find jobs and connect you with computers. It was a wake-up call...oh, I have to do this!” Participant#43: Male, migrated to Canada in 2006.

Several participants attended these types of employment programs and felt that they were very beneficial for recently arrived immigrants. The advantages were similar to
government or professional websites. The courses provided important labour market information from a reputable source, in this case the Provincial Government.

To recap, participants were a source of informational capital about working in Canada. Informational capital is derived from personal experiences, the experiences of friends and relatives, and sources such as institutional websites and government programs. Social capital is key to this conversion, as group membership is needed to access this information. Those with access will learn about the financial and social benefits of working in Canada, barriers in the labour market, and the support systems available to ease their economic integration. These findings are at odds with the research that suggests migrant networks are a poor source of information (e.g. Akcapar 2010; Klvanova 2010; Ros 2010). In terms of working in Canada, this immigrant network is able to provide their contacts with very accurate and useful information. Transnational information flows become less precise when informational capital about life in the destination country is converted into the symbolic capital of being “abroad”. As will be seen in the final empirical section of the paper, this conversion can paint a distorted picture of immigrants’ lives in Canada.

The Conversion of Informational Capital into Symbolic Capital.

As was mentioned earlier, critics have argued that the information flowing through immigrant social networks is often inaccurate and creates unrealistic expectations for would-be immigrants. One can question how, in the information age, does this misinformation take place? In part it can be traced back to a “culture of migration” which
is characteristic of many migrant-sending countries including Mexico, India, Algeria and Romania (Batnitzky et al. 2008; Cohen 2004; Kandel and Massey 2002; Mai 2003, 2004, 2005; Martin et al. 2006; Schmalzbauer 2008). The migration destination is envisioned as the land of “milk and honey” where economic prosperity is open to all who reside there. For example, Jenna Burrell and Ken Anderson (2008) argue that in the popular imagination in Ghanaian society “abroad” is the source of innovation, opportunity and material success. Contacts and information from abroad are highly prized in Ghana and convey status to the recipient of these resources. A similar dynamic exists in the Philippines, influenced by American colonialism and a history of labour migrations (e.g. Aguilar 1999; Fujita 2004). The participants in this study have the symbolic capital associated with someone who has firsthand experience with the innovation, opportunity and material success found abroad. Immigrants therefore maintain a high status position within transnational social networks because they are among the select few who have become part of the overseas diaspora.

All of the participants in this study recognized that within Philippine culture those who embarked on overseas migrations held special social status. Once an individual left the Philippines they automatically became associated with material prosperity and economic success.

“…it has become part of Filipino culture that once you work outside the Philippines and earn dollars, they think you are earning a lot.” Participant#39: Female, migrated to Canada in 1987, focus group interview.
“Actually in the Philippines...abroad is like a big leap. Generally...you’re associated with money when you’re from abroad.” Participant#26: Female, migrated to Canada in 1990.

“It’s the mentality. If you’re out of the Philippines, they just think you are earning a very good amount of money without any extra effort. They think we just pick it up on the street. That’s what the mentality is of people who are not going outside the country.

“Participant#44: Male, migrated to Canada in 2003.

Many participants in this study also considered themselves part of an elite class of overseas migrants because they had settled in Canada. The country held special status for various reasons including; it was part of the “West” and in close proximity to the United States, immigrants could settle permanently in comparison to countries, such as Saudi Arabia and Singapore, where there was no chance to gain citizenship, and the Canadian government had strict entry criteria in the form of the Points System and therefore only high caliber applicants were allowed admission.

Most participants spoke about how immigrants themselves play a central role in the social reproduction of the status of being abroad. It was common to send exaggerated reports about success in Canada to the Philippines. Although none of the participants admitted engaging in these activities, all knew “other” immigrants who did.
“…they spend everything and go like ‘ok, we’re gonna have a party’. But people there (in the Philippines) never know what they are doing here, so they could be just be doing dish washing or mopping the floor…” Participant#19: Female, migrated to Canada in 1990.

“In Canada, you all have the opportunity to buy, even if you can’t pay, you can’t afford. I think most people (immigrants) are hooked with that. There’s no person here that doesn’t have that debt.” Participant#37: Female, migrated to Canada in 2001.

“I guess people don’t want to tell the bad things…If you work ten hours a day, it’s not very glamorous to them…to some people the whole point of coming here is to be successful, to live the dream. You’re not going…say that you work in a factory” Participant#28: Male, migrated to Canada in 2000.

“They are showing off that they are outside of the country, from Canada…so they are showing off. Even though they don’t have the money, still they are showing off” Participant#49: Male, migrated to Canada in 2005.

“…that is something about (the) attitudes of Filipino people. Because they left the Philippines for greener pastures…he is not prepared to admit what is the real scenario happening here…It’s misleading.” Participant#12: Female, migrated to Canada in 1985.

Exaggerated reports of success were compounded when immigrants embraced Canadian consumer culture. Consumer friendly mortgages, “buy now pay later” schemes, “zero
percent down” promotions and credit cards made it easier for immigrants to acquire material possessions that were symbols of success including large homes, sport utility vehicles and designer clothing. All of these markers of a high standard of living could be acquired on credit. Immigrants could show off the material trappings of their success when in actuality they were burdened by large financial debts.

SNW add an additional layer of complexity to this misinformation process. Critics have pointed out that the visual images sent back to migrant source areas often contribute to the distorted view of life overseas. Adela Ros (2010:24) cites a migrant in Catalonia who claims “People see images, but they do not know what lies behind them.” This is an important point since participants in this study used e-mails, web-cams, blogs, digital pictures and movies to visually document their lives in Canada.

“(we post) our family pictures. The places that we’ve visited, we take pictures so they can see what Canada looks like. Sometimes we picture the snow when it is snowing so they will have an idea of what the snow looks like…” Participant#46: Female, migrated to Canada in 1989.

“They’ll be saying, instead of e-mail, just check-out my Friendster. It’s good because you are not only communicating by words, you can upload pictures all the time.” Participant#21: Female, migrated to Canada in 2005.
Many of the participant’s Facebook profiles were full of pictures from recent social events in Canada. Several of the social events I attended were very elaborate affairs. For example, one of the Christmas parties was held at a banquet hall. There were close to two hundred people in attendance, and the evening’s entertainment consisted of individuals and groups performing North American pop songs or dance routines. One birthday party, also held at a hall, had an estimated two hundred and fifty people in attendance. Everyone was dressed in suits and evening gowns and the celebrant was prominently seated at an elevated table with his entire family. At this event friends and family from Canada, the United States and the Philippines gave speeches and the entire proceeding was digitally recorded to be sent back to the Philippines. One of the most common phrases I heard at social events was “Facebook picture, Facebook picture!” When this call went out individuals quickly gathered and posed for a digital picture for a Facebook page. What was not posted was the cost of the event, whether those individuals in attendance could truly afford the extravagant proceedings, and how much deeper in debt individuals were after the party. Thus, through the use of digital media, participants paint a picture of life in Canada but arguably not a complete one.

Some participants were trying to actively combat the practice of sending misleading reports back to the Philippines. This small group of individuals stressed the importance of telling the truth and de-mystifying the uncritical notion of Canada as the land of economic affluence. They represent what Bourdieu would term the “avant-garde” within this social field, as they are challenging the value of the established symbolic capital. For them, the symbolic capital of being an immigrant in Canada should be based
on providing an accurate picture of life in the destination country, and not on false representations of material prosperity. They are in direct conflict with the class of “other” immigrants who socially reproduce the popular perception that Canada is the land of milk and honey.

“So, I told them, if you really want to come here, you come here and see for yourself. But always remember it’s really not (the land) of milk and honey. You really have to sacrifice. Sometimes, you really have to cry.”

Participant#12: Female, migrated to Canada in 1985, focus group interview.

“...some of the would still have this perception that “Oh you’re living in Canada, you’re like wow! Like living the good life over there, earning dollars...’ But I guess with the stuff that I tell them about what we do here, or little things like I’m not really liking the weather these days...let them think twice or give them the real score.” Participant#49: Male, migrated to Canada in 2005.

“I think it’s not good for them not to tell the truth, especially to those who they care about. Honestly with me, I cannot be responsible for somebody, for telling people that everything’s gonna be okay. And they end up here (in Canada) miserable...I think unfortunately...people just want to say the glamorous aspects of it.”

Participant# 26: Male, migrated to Canada in 1996.
“I could just imagine how they would be overwhelmed with the idea that you can easily get money (in Canada). But we always connect it to the reality that even if we buy these things...you will have to work for it. These are all loans and these are to be paid in the future.” Participant#31: Male, migrated to Canada in 2003.

The avant-garde was frustrated when others deliberately misled people in order to socially reproduce the status of being abroad. They felt that it created unrealistic expectations for all members within the transnational social networks. For instance, if family members in the Philippines believed that immigrants in Canada were rich and prosperous, they would ask for financial support. Immigrants who had embellished their success then had two choices. First was to refuse the request. This would cause tension since those in the Philippines would not understand why immigrants did not want to share their wealth. The second choice was to borrow money. This was also problematic since family members in the Philippines would likely ask for more money in the future and immigrants in Canada would go in debt to maintain this facade.

It is unlikely that the avant-garde will succeed in overthrowing the group who are actively reproduce the traditional culture of migration. They recognize that in many cases their social networks in the Philippines will continue to believe that Canada is the land of milk and honey, regardless of what they tell them.

“It seems that they won’t be convinced when we tell them that this is the situation in Canada. I don’t know, maybe they heard from someone who had been here years ago and
“is doing good...” Participant#41: Male, migrated to Canada in 2002.

“They are still aiming to come, no matter what...no matter how hard life we have here...Even though with all these things that we are showing to them...they still come here.” Participant#3: Male, migrated to Canada in 2001.

“In the Philippines, you’re lucky if you’re able to come. People don’t care as long as they hear the word Canada.” Participant#18: Female, migrated to Canada in 2000.

The uneven levels of economic development between migrant source and destination areas are at the core of this process of social reproduction. Even the avant-garde readily admit that despite all of the hardships in Canada, life is better for them in there than in the Philippines. There are more opportunities to work, the political situation is more stable, and there is a brighter future for their children than in their source areas. These are the socio-economic reasons why immigrants left the Philippines in the first place. Nevertheless, the avant-garde hopes that by telling the truth about their immigration experiences those in the Philippines have a more balanced view of life in Canada and will realize that although immigrants are abroad and earn dollars, they also have to spend dollars on rent, food expenses, and credit card bills. Life in the destination country is difficult, stressful and many times immigrants wished that they had never left the Philippines. The avant-garde strives to present a more nuanced impression of life in the destination country but one that does not fundamentally challenge the traditional view.
Thus, as Bourdieu (1980) has claimed, although the avant-garde wants change and discontinuity in the field, their revolutions will only be partial ones.

The relationship between digital and symbolic capital is significant. It helps to explain misinformation in immigrant’s transnational social networks. Immigrants use ICTs to send back detailed flows of information about life in Canada to the Philippines. These flows include digital pictures and movies showing immigrant’s homes, cars and consumer goods. Pictures of elaborate social functions are regularly added Facebook pages. Yet the social fields of Filipino immigrants in Canada are situated in broader Philippine culture where being part of overseas migrations is an important form of social distinction. The immigrants in this study had therefore accumulated the symbolic capital of living in a prestigious migration destination. But this symbolic capital rests on certain assumptions, namely once you are abroad you are rich and prosperous. In order to maintain their privileged positions among transnational social networks many immigrants would send back false information flows about their lives in Canada, giving the impression that they too were successful overseas. Furthermore, this conversion illustrates how processes of social reproduction embedded in transnational social networks work to re-create a “core - periphery” relationship between migrant source and destination countries. When immigrants misrepresent their experiences overseas they reinforce the popular perception of the destination country as a place of modernity and prosperity, and not as a place where immigrants experience social and economic hardships.
Conclusion

This article has examined how a group of Filipino immigrants in Canada utilize ICTs to maintain their transnational social networks. The participants in this study used technologies including e-mail, social networking sites, web cameras, instant messenger services, cell-phone texting and digital pictures and movies to send information about life in the destination country to their overseas social networks. Bourdieu’s field theory has been instructive in illustrating how different forms of capital circulate within this network. Field theory has also helped to identify the different players who are competing in this social space. There is a group who maintain the traditional myth that the migration destination is the land of milk and honey, and the immigrants who have settled there are rich and prosperous. In contrast the avant-garde are struggling to establish their more balanced view of life in the destination country as the legitimate one.

The social network under study can be conceptualized as a field where various forms of capital circulate and are converted. It is a digital social field that relies upon ICTs to connect Canada and the Philippines, along with other secondary nodes distributed throughout the world. A novel form of capital in this field is what I have termed “digital capital”. Participants were able to convert their digital capital into enhanced social capital resources in the shape of larger, more diverse networks consisting of extended family members, old school or work colleagues, and on-line friends. Social capital could then be converted into informational capital about Canadian labour markets. Immigrants were a source of information about the economic returns to working overseas, the social relations in the Canadian work environment, and the most attractive
sectors of the labour market for newcomers. Participants also spread information about the barriers in Canadian labour markets, as well as the strategies and supports available to overcome them. In this sense, the findings of this study suggest that immigrant networks can be a very good source of information. Members of this transnational network would be able gain a very accurate idea of what it is like to work in Canada from a variety of source including immigrant’s personal experiences, institutional websites and government programs. Contrary to some of the examples cited in the literature, for this network the amount, breadth and accuracy of information about working in the destination country is not an issue.

The conversion of informational capital to symbolic capital, however, is more problematic. Immigrants were also a source of information about life in the destination country. On this topic issues of accuracy and misinformation emerged. Flows of information were distorted and exaggerated stories of success were being sent back to source areas to create the perception that immigrants were living the dream of being abroad. What is notable about these processes is the potential reach of distorted flows of information about life in Canada due to modern ICTs. Only a few years ago the main forms of transnational communications would have been letters and long-distance phone calls. As a result, any misinformation would be primarily limited to a smaller social network of individuals directly receiving these communication flows. Today, ICTs such as e-mail allow immigrants to maintain extensive social networks and connect with a greater number of individuals at less cost than ever before. By extension, any distorted flows of information about living in Canada can reach more people than in the days of
letters and long-distance phone calls due to the relative ease of sending and forwarding
digital messages through on-line social networks. Take for example the relative ease with
which digital pictures and movies can be circulated through digital networks. In the past
if an immigrant sent back a picture of their life in Canada the image would have to have been circulated physically among individuals in source communities. Today, digital pictures and movies can be added as attachments to e-mails and circulated electronically,
thereby increasing their reach considerably in comparison to a physical picture being passed around. Furthermore, SNW add an additional layer of complexity to the misinformation processes. In addition to increasing the size of immigrant’s social networks personal profiles can function as a continuous, on-line advertisement about the “good life” in Canada. Many participants in this study posted pictures of their life “abroad” as part of their public Facebook profiles. These images are now on the Internet and could potentially be viewed by anyone surfing the web, thereby increasing the size and scope of misinformation exponentially.

By socially reproducing the uncritical view of the destination country as a place where “money grows on trees”, immigrants reinforced a core-periphery relationship between migrant sending and receiving countries. Furthermore, mechanisms of social reproduction continued despite immigrant’s attempts contest this perception. Consider the avant-garde in this study. This group of participants was actively trying to combat the misinformation circulating about the migration destination. Although they were striving to present a more balanced view of life in Canada, they did not attempt to fully overthrow the existing framework of symbolic capital since they too benefited from the social status
of being abroad. Bourdieu’s field theory has therefore helped to reveal how various processes of social reproduction shape transnational information flows. It also illustrates how global migrations remain characterized by a hierarchy based on geography, as different countries hold special status within immigrant’s social fields. In the context of global migrations in the Philippines, the status afforded to migration destinations varies depending on historic ties and immigration regulations. The United States, for example, holds special status due to America’s colonial relationship with the Philippines. Canada has been migration destination since the late 1960s. It is held in high regard because immigrants have the opportunity to settle in the country permanently and it is considered a safe, politically stable country with a high standard of living. In contrast, countries such as Saudi Arabia or Singapore hold less status than Canada. Migrants in these countries have no opportunity to settle permanently and are subject to a much more restricted and regulated life. The downside to the status afforded to Canada has been mentioned above, namely immigrants send back distorted information flows about life in the destination country in order to meet the popular expectations of life abroad circulating within this social field.

In closing, this article demonstrates how despite the assertion that new forms of communications technologies have overcome geography, transnationalism in the information age remains heavily influenced by geographic factors. These include a historic “culture of migration” in source areas and the uneven power relations that exist between migrant source and destination countries. It makes an important contribution to the geographic literature since ICT and on-line environments have been an understudied
topic of research in the discipline. My hope is that this will change in the future. According to Robert Kechane and Joseph Nye (1998: 82) the “…prophets of a new cyberworld…often overlook how much the new world overlaps and rests on the traditional world in which power depends on geographically based institutions…” It stands to reason then that geographers are particularly well suited to investigate whether a world where ICT link distant places in new and unexpected ways will fundamentally differ from the past.
Conclusion

Introduction

This conclusion has four main components. Section 1 highlights the conclusions and principal findings of the PhD research, and outlines the topical and theoretical contributions this work will make to the literature. Section 2 provides a brief overview of the limitations of this study. Section 3 consists of some reflections on research ethics primarily in the context of on-line environments. Section 4 outlines directions for future research.

Section 1: Conclusions and Principal Findings

This research makes important empirical and theoretical contributions to the geographic, transnationalism and immigration studies literature. Perhaps the most important empirical finding is that immigrants are using increasingly sophisticated combinations of ICT to expand their transnational social networks, send detailed information about Canadian labour markets, and to paint a picture of life in the migration destination. The implications of these forms of ICT use, however, are quite contradictory. Immigrants are providing very accurate information about working overseas. This would suggest that individuals receiving these flows – in Canada or the Philippines - will have a clear understanding of the barriers and opportunities in Canadian labour markets, and are therefore in a better position than newcomers or potential immigrants who lack similar access to a social network of “tech-savvy” contacts. At the same time many immigrants are using ICTs to paint a distorted picture of life in Canada. These processes of misinformation are rooted in the Philippines historical culture of migration, and in effect,
socially reproduce a core-periphery relationship between immigrant source and destination countries.

The participants in this study used a variety of ICTs most notably digital/Internet technologies such as e-mails and social networking websites. In particular, social networking websites such as Friendster and Facebook provided an electronic infrastructure for immigrants to drastically increase the size of their transnational social networks. For example, social networking sites made it easier for participants to reconnect with old friends or family members with whom they had lost touch before they migrated from the Philippines. Websites also allowed immigrants to add on-line “friends” to their social networks. In these instances an on-line “friend” had been surfing people’s profiles on a social networking site and noticed that an individual was located in Canada. The “friend” would then make an electronic introduction, typically followed by some questions about living and working in Canada.

In some cases immigrant’s on-line social networks consisted of hundreds of contacts located in Canada, the Philippines, the United States, the Middle East and the United Kingdom. The increased size of social networks also translated to a more diverse social network. For example, participants’ social networks were no-longer primarily based upon family or close friendship connections. Networks now consist of multiple layers of close friends and family, old friends, school acquaintances, work colleagues as well as on-line “friends”. A more diverse social network was considered an advantage for immigrant’s economic integration because participants were able to gather labour market
information from a variety of sources. From this perspective, participant’s digital social networks were similar in function to Mark Granovetter’s (1970, 1983) idea of “weak ties”, in that diverse contacts provide a wider variety of novel labour market information in comparison to other social networks with higher levels of replication that effectively tend towards network closure.

Furthermore, the wide-spread use of social networking technologies among the participants in this study suggests that an important means of trans-border communications has thus far been overlooked by academics in transnational and immigration studies. To date, immigration researchers have been focusing primarily on the role digital technologies have played in on-line cultural community groups or political movements. Researchers in transnational studies have largely overlooked the importance of social networking websites in general. One of the principal findings of this research, therefore, is that immigrants are adopting ICTs and social networking websites in particular, in their transnational activities in innovative ways, but with contradictory results.

A second important finding is that transnationalism can influence the economic integration of immigrants in destination country labour markets. This study clearly illustrates how the labour market integration of Filipino immigrants in Canada is in part influenced by transnational factors. For instance, the participants in this study often received questions about working in Canada through their Friendster or Facebook accounts from individuals in the Philippines who have yet to start the immigration
process. In a similar vein, participants often sent very detailed information flows which included; comparisons of wage rates and standards of living, the various barriers immigrants experienced in the labour market and strategies to overcome them, employment support services in Canada for newcomers, important governmental or organizational websites, and promising sectors in the job market where newcomers should consider looking for work. These exchanges of labour market information are a further example of how the economic integration of immigrants is not a process confined to the destination country but instead has considerable transnational dimensions. When combined with the transnational dynamics highlighted in the second manuscript (e.g. the role of transnational social networks in the segmentation process), the findings from this research demonstrate the importance of combining a transnational perspective with traditional labour market theories which concern the economic integration of immigrants.

This study has documented some inconsistencies regarding immigrants’ use of ICTs to disseminate information about working and living in Canada. On the one hand, ICT such as the Internet was used by immigrants to send very accurate information about Canadian labour markets to their transnational social networks. As was previously noted, the participants in this study sent detailed information about working in Canada and provided their social networks with very comprehensive picture about working “abroad”. On the other hand, ICTs such as Friendster and Facebook have also increased the potential for miss-information about life in the destination country to be spread more rapidly and to more contacts in immigrant’s transnational networks. For instance, participants in this study used social networking sites to post pictures and videos from
social functions in Canada. Many of these birthdays and holiday celebrations were very elaborate affairs. The postings which accompanied pictures described the events, who was in attendance, what type of food was served, and how long the social function lasted. However, what was omitted was more critical information which would have potentially painted a more unfavourable view of immigrant life in Canada. Information such as whether or not the participants could actually afford the expenses related to the parties or did the festivities put them deep in debt was missing. From this perspective, the images and messages posted on social networking sites socially reproduce the notion in the Philippines that “abroad” is a space of material prosperity, and that Canada is the “land of milk and honey”. Furthermore, presenting an uncritical or exaggerated view of life in Canada appears to be a common practice among many members of the social network under study. Many participants claimed that most of the Filipino immigrants they knew sent back distorted reports of their success in Canada. These practices were linked to the “culture of migration” in the Philippines, in that the immigrants sending these types of social remittances were trying to maintain their status of being someone who is “abroad”. It should be noted that there was a smaller group of participants, who I have termed the “avant-garde”, that were actively combating these uncritical reports and who felt that it was their responsibility to present a more balanced picture of life overseas. They thought it was important to let their transnational social networks know both the positive and negative aspects of being an immigrant in Canada. However, this group recognized that despite their best efforts, most people in the Philippines would continue to believe that Canada was a place of economic and material prosperity, and that all of the immigrants who settled there were wealthy. What is notable about these examples is the potential
scope of this type of misinformation. As a result of ICTs, immigrants now have very large transnational social networks who receive these reports from abroad. The reach of this misinformation is therefore larger than in the past when the main means of transnational communication and information flows were letters or long-distance telephone calls.

This research contributes to Bourdieu’s theoretical concepts of social fields and capital in two primary ways. First, it enhances Bourdieu’s ideas of field theory by applying them at a broader scale of analysis than previous studies. Traditionally Bourdieu’s concepts have been rooted at the national level and mainly grounded in the French context. His work on the educational and cultural fields (Bourdieu 1995), for example, investigated the cultural hierarchies and processes of social reproduction within elite educational institutions and artistic theaters in and around the Paris area. Bourdieu’s application of field theory can therefore be characterized by a distinct focus on the national, if not urban scale. In contrast by drawing upon field theory to understand the transnational activities of Filipino immigrants in Canada, my research applies Bourdieu’s ideas to the global scale, thus expanding the spatial dimensions of this theoretical framework when compared to his previous works. This work also contributes to Bourdieu’s ideas of capital by developing a new variation of this concept. In this research I develop the idea of digital capital, an important resource for immigrants who rely upon technology such as SNW to maintain their social networks via a digital transnational field. In the past, immigration scholars have typically relied upon Bourdieu’s established forms of capital, such as social and cultural capital, for their research (notable exceptions
include Bauder 2008). From this perspective, this research advances Bourdieu’s concepts of capital with the introduction of the idea of digital capital.

This study also demonstrates how Bourdieu’s field theory is a useful conceptual tool for geographers interested in the social and economic experiences of immigrants. Field theory was employed to provide a conceptual structure to the digital transnational social network under study. It has been used to identify different groups within the social network who compete to establish their views of immigrant life in Canada as the legitimate ones. Field theory has also been used to highlight how the uneven power relations between migrant source and destination countries are socially reproduced through transnational activities. For example, the symbolic capital of immigrants in Canada is rooted in the Philippines’ culture of migration which places great significance on the act of overseas migrations and positions destination countries as places of economic and material prosperity. In order to maintain their privileged position within the digital transnational social network, immigrants use social networking websites to depict the “good life” in Canada and send back distorted reports of their lives overseas. Such activities therefore socially reproduce the “core-periphery” relationship which exists between the Philippines as an immigrant sending country and Canada, as a desirable migration destination. Lastly, field theory illustrates the importance of geography. Even though participant’s digital social network is transnational in nature it remains a social field which has an internal hierarchy based upon place. The uneven power relationship between Canada and the Philippines sets the basic “rules” of this field, and draws attention to the importance of geographic factors. Social status within this
immigrant network is based upon being geographically located in a certain country. From this perspective geography is at the core of the power relations which define Filipino-Canadian transnationalism.

Section 2: Limitations of the Study

One of the limitations of this study is that I was unable to provide a quantitative analysis of the economic impacts, and by extension significance, digital capital has on the labour market integration of the participants in this study. The empirical data from the interviews suggested that many participants considered the ability to access labour market information via the Internet as a useful skill to support the economic integration of immigrants. For example, participants with digital capital used the Internet to research employment opportunities in Canada while still in the Philippines, find out about employment programs for newcomers in Toronto, and to search for work by using on-line services such as Workopolis. One participant stressed the importance of digital capital with her comment that the reason so many Filipinos were working in factories was that they had probably relied on the newspaper for their employment searches and did not take advantage of all of the resources available on the Internet.

However, the case for digital capital would have been much stronger if this research had been able to make a direct comparison between participants who had used digital capital to aid their economic integration in Canada and those who had not. From this perspective, the study sample could have been divided along two different characteristics related to ICT use in the context of labour market integration (e.g. one
groups used the Internet to find their employment while the other group used more traditional means such as the newspaper). The two groups could then be contrasted in terms of the types of work each participants had secured along with any differences in their wage rates, benefits etc. This type of study design would have allowed me to collect quantifiable data to support the empirical findings which suggested importance of digital capital. Unfortunately these comparisons were not considered in the early stages of this project and were therefore not incorporated into the study design or data collection process.

Section 3: Reflections on the Research

Research ethics in the context of on-line research is a relatively new area of consideration for geographers. On-line environments pose various challenges which can differ from traditional research projects. For example, Clare Madge and Henrietta O’Conner (2002, 2004) argue that some of the anxieties which frame on-line research include how to construct reliable samples, how and whether to verify identities, and the nature of interactions in cyberspace and how they differ from face-to-face encounters. To date geographers examining research ethics have focused primarily on research methods, with the main topics of interest related to informed consent, confidentiality, privacy, debriefing and netiquette, web-based questionnaire surveys, individual interviews and synchronous web group interviews (Madge 2007; Dwyer and Davis 2010). Despite this growing body of work many issues related to on-line research have yet to be addressed.
One area that has yet to be explored in depth from a geographic perspective relates to issues of researcher positionality. In the introductory sections of this thesis I outlined some of the more common issues related to my positionality as a PhD Candidate conducting this research. As this study progressed I encountered what I considered an important dimension of positionality not covered by the existing work about on-line research ethics. More specifically, I began to consider how one’s experiences with ICT technology shape the research process including the interpretation of empirical data. This question became relevant because initially I had not anticipated the high rate of social networking website use by study participants. As the research process unfolded, and it became increasingly apparent that an analysis of how the study participants used Friendster and Facebook would play a prominent role in the study findings, I began to grapple with my own position on this type of ICTs. The notion that ICT are simply a tool with no broader social or cultural implications has been challenged. For example, in her book “Alone Together” MIT researcher Sherry Turkle (2011) recounts a discussion with her colleagues about whether the escalating use of computers was fundamentally changing human behaviour. Her colleagues often objected and held a neutral view of technology, instead insisting that computers were just tools. According to Turkle (2011:x) “... I was certain that the ‘just’ in that sentence was deceiving. We are shaped by our tools. And now, the computer, a machine on the border of becoming a mind, was changing and shaping us.” Turkle argues that technology such as cellular phone texting, on-line game environments and social networking websites are changing contemporary social relations. Behaviour that would have once been considered rude (e.g. reading a report during a meeting or sharing important information in an impersonal manner) has
now become almost socially acceptable (e.g. responding to a text message during a meeting or conveying important news via e-mail rather than a face-to-face meeting). The author’s views on social networking sites are significant for this study as she contends “...on social networking sites such as Facebook, we think we are presenting ourselves, but our profile ends up as someone else – often the fantasy of who we want to be. Distinctions blur.” (Turkle 2011:153). When reflecting on my own attitudes towards ICT use I recognized that I share many of Turkle’s critical views. I do not believe that ICTs are just “tools” and think that they shape human social relations, often in negative ways. I am not on Facebook, do not send cellular phone text messages, and am increasingly skeptical of the benefits of ICTs which cause increasing numbers of people to spend any free moments head-down texting on I-phones or Blackberries, checking Facebook accounts to see if their “friend” count has increased, or continually relaying often questionable information via their Twitter feeds. Thus, my attitudes towards certain forms of ICT use frames a distance between myself and study participants who are active users of these technologies.

Yet this distance based on technology use, or lack there-of, is not entirely clear-cut. ICT have become so persuasive in contemporary society that one can encounter unexpected commonalities between the researcher and study participants. One of the findings from my fieldwork was that some of the study participants used technology to maintain digital connections with their transnational families. In these cases parents had migrated to Canada and left young children with family members in the Philippines. Their plan was for their children to join them once they had an opportunity to establish
themselves and gain a foothold in the Canadian labour market. For this group ICTs were directly facilitating the separation of families for extended periods of time as part of an economic migration strategy. During the interviews this group spoke about how interacting with their children in real-time via the Internet compensated for their physical separation. They claimed that without these types of ICTs they would have never left their children in the Philippines. Ironically, some also said that if they had known how ICTs would ease the pain and guilt of separation they would have extended the time their children remained in the Philippines in order to become better settled in Canada. Although these findings were not included in the manuscripts, primarily because only a small percentage of the study sample engaged in these activities and for ethical reasons explored later, this type of cyber-transnationalism remained at the back of my mind throughout the research process. My critical reflexivity in this area was also heavily influenced by a book chapter by Margaret Walton-Roberts (2010). In her work titled “Reflections on the family and field work” Walton-Roberts considers how technology allowed her to maintain digital connections with her family while separated by the demands of an academic career. In particular, this text made me reflect on my own experience as a graduate student when I was separated from my family for significant amounts of time during the early stages of my PhD research. My wife and young daughter remained in Toronto while I would commute to Guelph on Sunday evening, returning home on Friday evenings. While separated e-mails and digital pictures and movies became our main connection. My wife would send me e-mails describing how she and our daughter spent their time, and digital movies and many pictures to fill me in on what I had missed during the course of the week. I began to relate to study participants
who had used technology to make a difficult process easier as over time the guilt of leaving my family began to subside because I was able to virtually “see” them every day. However, after approximately three years of maintaining a “digital family” during the work-week, my wife and I decided it was best to be together full-time and relocated to Guelph shortly afterwards.

This example of unexpected commonalities illustrates how complex ethical quandaries related to on-line research can become. Although I maintain a critical stance on some forms of ICT use, I still rely upon other types in my professional and personal life and thereby found unanticipated common ground with a sub-group of my study participants. This experience created an ethical dilemma when I began to question whether to include a section on “digital families” in my manuscripts, and more broadly when deciding whether ICTs have had a positive or negative impact on family relations in context of international migrations. On the one hand, it was clear from the empirical data that technology allows migrants to overcome geographic distances and communicate with loved ones who are far away on a regular basis. I could see how this was true even in my mini-migration to Guelph during the work-week. I was able to keep up to date with all of the major development in my wife and daughter’s lives during the week via e-mail and still felt connected with my family despite being spatially separated. Thus there was a benefit to ICT use for disbanded family members. On the other hand some empirical data suggests that ICTs can prolong the separation of family members precisely because they help to overcome feelings of separation and guilt. In this case I also experienced how time spent away from loved ones can easily increase when technology allows virtual
encounters to replace physical ones. Technology clearly had a downside. In the end if
pressed my views on this matter would echo Walton-Robert’s (2010:181) claim that
“technology becomes an enabler of labour mobility for millions to work away from their
families. Rather than just a convenience, such technology permits and supports the
development of migration regimes that rest upon severing the migrant from their social
embeddness.” But in the context of my research would this stance be undermined by my
own use of technology in a similar manner, albeit on a smaller scale? Would it be
intellectually hypocritical to be critical of one form of technology use while embracing it
in a slightly different context? This ethical impasse remained unsolved and was one
reason why I did not include a section on digital families in the final project.

On-line environments hold many ethical quandaries for qualitative researchers. In
addition to the areas cited in the current literature I believe that there are issues related to
a researcher’s positionality which need consideration. Following a similar logic to the
geographic debates in the early 1990s about the impact GIS has had on geographic
research, there are critics who contend that ICT are simply not just a neutral tool and
rather have a broader impact on society. If one accepts the legitimacy of these arguments
it stands to reason that there are ethical considerations related to an individual’s own use
of ICT which will influence a research study, in particular how empirical findings are
interpreted. Furthermore, the depth to which these technologies have permeated everyday
life will also influence the positionality of the researcher who may experience unexpected
commonalities with their study sample related to technology use. In these instances a one
may be faced with ethical contradictions which influence how and what research is
presented. In the future work can be devoted to exploring the relationship between researcher positionality and ethics from a geographic perspective to shed more light on the complexity of on-line research environments.

**Section 4: Directions for Future Research**

There is great potential for research which examines ICT use from a geographical perspective. Future studies could maintain a focus on the relationship between immigrant transnationalism and ICTs, but with two characteristics that make them distinct from most of the current work in this field. The first difference would be that future studies could draw upon new theoretical frameworks. Instead of being based upon the work of scholars such as Pierre Bourdieu, new research could engage with feminist theories of globalization. The second characteristic would be that this work could explore some of the ethical issues related to research about on-line environments yet to be addressed by geographers.

Ideas of the “Global Intimate” (Pratt and Rosner 2006) provide a promising and innovative theoretical framework for future studies. It challenges theories of globalization that overlook scales of analysis such as gender or the household (e.g. David Harvey and Immaneul Wallerstein) and according to Geraldine Pratt and Victoria Rosner (2006:15) tries “… to disrupt grand narratives of global relations by focusing on the specific, the quotidian, and the eccentric.” Concepts of scale are fluid and not fixed while categories – such as the local, global, nation and state – blend into one another rather than being rigidly distinct. It is also a framework which can be used to “flesh out” globalization
processes (Mountz and Hyndman 2006). Proponents of this approach argue that the intimate includes a variety of sense experiences. These include sound, smell, taste, and zones of contact and the formations they generate act as a corrective, supplement or the undoing of the “god’s eye view” of the global (Pratt and Rosner 2006:17). This framework is divergent from many established versions of globalization theory. As such, any studies which adopt this position bring an innovative approach to the work on international migration.

Topically speaking, any new research which employs a Global-Intimate framework in the context of ICTs would represent an important contribution to a somewhat small body of literature. For example, with the exception of Margaret Walton-Robert’s (2010) recent chapter (cited previously in this conclusion) and Gil Valentines (2006) work on how lesbian and gay men are using on-line environments to create sexual relationships and communities, to date relatively few studies have explicitly focused on ICT use from this viewpoint. Future research could therefore break new intellectual ground by probing how globalization is “fleshed out” on social networking websites or other forms of ICT use. In the past researchers have drawn on sites such as the border, home and the body to explore the Global Intimate and researchers have documented how global inequalities are inscribed on the bodies of domestic workers (e.g. Pratt 1998, 2005; Parrenas 2001) and maquilador workers (e.g. Salzinger 2004; Wright 2004). Yet how do similar processes unfold in the context of cyber-transnationalism? I believe that Facebook pages are another site where globalization processes/discourses are inscribed on the body. For instance, would the Facebook pictures confirm the idea of the neo-liberal, global
worker who struck it rich? A second topic for future projects could be related to the “digital families” I encountered in my fieldwork. There is some research in the migration studies literature which examines how ITCs, such as cellular phones, are used by migrants to maintain a sense of family with children and relatives who have remained in source areas (e.g. Fresnoza-Flot 2009) but less attention has been paid to unpacking how digital technologies actually shape these transnational family dynamics. Since this theoretical framework has already been used to investigate how globalization processes influence sites such as the home, I believe it is well suited for a comprehensive study focusing on transnational digital families.

A well as drawing upon a novel theoretical framework, future research could also examine some of the current gaps in the literature related to research ethics in on-line environments. As was previously mentioned most of the current work by geographers in this area has focused on research methods. Issues of research positionality have yet to be addressed. Hence future research could therefore consider how ICT use is another dimension of a researcher’s identity which will have some bearing on the perspective they bring to a research project. As ICTs such as Facebook and Twitter become a progressively more widespread and accessible form of communication what are the implications for a researcher who uses these technologies on a daily basis but also studies them as part of a research project? I believe this line of inquiry would complement the proposed Global-Intimate theoretical framework while making a significant contribution to the geographic literature that deals with research ethics in the context of on-line environments.
In summary, ICT use and on-line environments are a promising area of research for geographers. To date this field has been relatively understudied and as a result, there are many interesting research topics for academics to delve into. Future studies in this area would not only make contributions to the geographic literature but would also shed light on how rapid advances in technology are influencing social processes. Digital technologies are becoming increasingly sophisticated at an extremely rapid rate. Yet as Turkle (2011) demonstrates in her book ICT’s are also tools that are changing human behaviour. It stands to reason then that the recent advances in ICT’s will also have immense impacts on the social, cultural and economic dynamics of international migrations. Future research should be geared towards critically assessing what are impacts of these technology driven trends.
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