

CHARACTERISTICS OF BACKDOOR MIGRANTS TO SABAH, MALAYSIA FROM THE PHILIPPINES: THE CASE OF THE TWO ISLAND COMMUNITIES OF TAWI-TAWI

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Like any developing country in Asia, the Philippines is plagued by the continuing influx of migration of people from the rural communities to the urban centers. Such movement has decidedly increased the population of these centers and magnified the already alarming problems of the city, such as the existence of slum areas, poor housing conditions, lack of educational and recreational facilities, inadequate water supply and sewerage, slow-moving transportation system, and other important services. The realities and paradoxes of city life cannot be fully described, but one thing seems apparent: these problems by and in themselves are obstacles in the development process. Viewed through the lense of another perspective, however, migrants from the rural areas to these centers have helped in the growth of industries by their cheap labor.

Studies in migration have shown interesting patterns of internal migration. To counteract the one-sided movement of people towards the centers, the government has encouraged people from the densely populated areas, hence urbanized communities, from Luzon and the Visayas, to settle on other islands of lesser concentration via the so-called land-for-the-landless scheme. The attraction of this scheme has provided people with reason to leave, but it has not succeeded in relieving the country's population centers. As a consequence of this scheme, on the other hand, significant changes have taken place in the socio-economic life of the people of Mindanao—popularly known as the "Land of Promise." In the rural areas of Mindanao, where the ethnic balance has been altered by the influx of migrants from Luzon and the Visayas, the immediate perils arising from internal migration have been serious (Filipinas Foundation, 1976; Magdalena, 1977).

A recent study (Filipinas Foundation, 1976) on internal migration has shown an in-depth analysis of the activating forces behind migration

and the thinking of the people who have moved away from their birth-places. Another work, prompted by the desire to understand the brain-drain phenomenon, has probed on the characteristics of migrants going to the USA and the factors associated with their movement. Josefina Cortez (1970) showed that the propensity to migrate is higher among persons who are weakly anchored in the Philippines, who perceive little opportunities for themselves, who are young and single, who have no job to return to, who are in fields such as the physical sciences and engineering, and who have succeeded in attaining a degree from a US institution. The Cortez study also intended to find out why persons of high-level skills prefer to migrate to other countries rather than practice their profession in the Philippines where their services and their training are most needed in industry, technology, research and education.

Many such studies as the above are found in migration literature, but there have been no information about migration in the southern Philippines vis-a-vis the adjacent frontiers like Malaysia and Indonesia. In fact, only one study has dealt with a portion on migration between Sabah, Malaysia and Tawi-Tawi, but the patterns of migration and the specific characteristics of migrants have not been adequately treated (Kurais, 1973).

The movement of people between the Sulu archipelago and Sabah, Malaysia is considered traditional and customary among the people who go there for economic and socio-cultural reasons. As early as 1902, Leonard Wood reported that economic activities involving various items had existed between the people of Sitangkai and Borneo (Sabah). Economic and, possibly, social ties between the southern Philippines and Sabah, Malaysia have roots which extend far beyond the birth of the Philippines as a nation. George Davis (1902) reported to Washington the imposition he made against the commercial intercourse in these unequipped ports (of Basilan, Paran-Paran, Bongao, Cagayan de Sulu and Puerto Princesa), and the prohibition has persisted up to this very day. The anti-smuggling campaign of the previous governmental administration and the ban on illegal travel by natives have caused tremendous repercussions which need to be seriously examined.

The existing laws have been futile in curtailing the trade and travel relations between these two countries. But the fact remains that the

people in the deep south have maintained socio-cultural relations with those in Sabah. Their social links, in addition to their proximity to each other, have reduced the psychic cost (Schwartz, 1973) involved in migration on the part of individuals moving from Tawi-Tawi to Sabah, rather than to other areas in the Philippines dominated by the Christian majority.

While studies have shown various findings on migration, both internal and international, this study provides data useful to the understanding of migration in the Philippines involving people situated along the coastal areas of the Sulu archipelago near the border between Sabah, Malaysia and the Philippines. The political implications of these movements may not be felt at the moment, but perhaps, with the increasing number of Filipinos moving to Sabah, expected changes may occur in the social, political and economic well-being affecting the diplomatic relations between the Philippines and Malaysia and the ASEAN in general. It would also help broaden our knowledge of the trade and travel relations existing in this southern part of the country, including the patterns of settlement established as results of the transfer of residence of Filipinos.

Research Problem

This study describes the characteristics of the "backdoor"¹ migrants to Sabah from the Philippines with respect to the following: age structure, income, educational attainment, kinship/social ties, and occupation. Their motives or reasons for moving to Sabah from these island communities will also be identified.

Methodology

a. *Description of the setting.* This study covers the municipalities of Sitangkai and Simunul, both of Tawi-Tawi Province. Tawi-Tawi was part of the province of Sulu until 1973, when a decree was passed to make it a separate province. Tawi-Tawi lies at the southwestern tip of the Sulu Basin in the Philippines. It has 307 islands and islets with a combined land area of 462 sq. miles.

In Tawi-Tawi province, there are three ethno-linguistic groups: the Tausog, Samal² and Badjao. The Tausog dominate the trade and business activities in Tawi-Tawi and Sulu. They are also found scattered in

areas predominantly occupied by either the Samal or the Badjao (Socio-Economic Profile of the Province of Tawi-Tawi, 1976).

The Samal and the Badjao are interrelated. As a consequence of modernization, the Samal shifted from a seafaring mode of life to semi-permanent residential settlements, leaving the Badjao a separate sub-cultural group who are now better known as sea-dwellers. However, a number of Badjaos have followed patterns of living quite similar to the present-day Samal.

Sitangkai municipality is the farthest political sub-division to the west of the Tawi-Tawi province. It is characterized by a number of islands and islets with wide reefs which are suitable for seaweed farming and fishing. The main occupation of the people is farming, although boatbuilding and trade are also emphasized in many of the villages in Sibutu and Sitangkai Proper. As a municipality, Sitangkai has twelve barangays, which include the following: Sitangkai Proper, Nunkan, Talisay, Tandubanak, Tongsibalo, Tongehat, Lingayan, Taungoh, Larap and Tonggusong. The prevailing dialect is Sama, which is widely used in varied tones and accents.

Simunul municipality is situated south of the province of Tawi-Tawi. As an island, it is an important landmark in Philippine history because of the establishment of the first mosque in the country there by Sheikh Makhdam, an Arab missionary. It is mainly occupied by Samal, although a small number of inhabitants come from other ethnic groups within the archipelago. Agriculture and fishing are the main occupation of the people, followed closely by seaweed farming and boatbuilding. This municipality is composed of the following barangays: Tubig-Indangan, Bakong, Obol, Tampakan, Baguid, Manok-Mangkaw and Mungkay.

b. *Scope and limitations.* This investigation does not intend to cover the whole area of Sulu and Tawi-Tawi archipelago for reasons which are briefly discussed elsewhere in this report. As a case study, it is limited to a few but representative population of the whole province of Tawi-Tawi. The approach in this study is an indirect one as the researcher interviewed not the actual migrants but their relatives who were left behind in the original homeplaces to act as respondents to report on the characteristics and motivations of migrants from Tawi-

Tawi to Sabah. The difficulty of securing clearances from the Malaysian government for research purposes undertaken there has led to the decision of considering this alternative approach. Such a "third-party" approach to securing data is not without validity, as some studies have pointed out. Gerry Hendershot (1968) has applied this approach to the phenomenon of rural migration using selected communities from Panay Island and Luzon, to Manila and other urban areas. The people who stayed behind in the original places of migration acted as his respondents to provide information on these migrants' characteristics.

c. *Research Plan*

1. Sampling procedure - The sample areas cover the municipalities of Sitangkai and Simunul. From each municipality, five randomly chosen villages composed the sample blocks. A list of households which have members who migrated to Sabah, Malaysia, was prepared for each of the sample blocks. From the list, twenty households were randomly chosen until a sample of 200 households has been finally formed. This process was done for all the sample blocks in the municipalities of Sitangkai and Simunul.

Respondents in this study are women between 25 and 59 years old residing in the community, who were asked to report on at least two migrants: one male and one female. Women are used to minimize the difficulty of locating respondents, because they could be easily contacted during the day, aside from being more articulate and knowledgeable about others' affairs (especially their kinsmen).

2. Interview schedule - The interview schedule covers the following aspects: (1) socio-economic background of the respondents, (2) characteristics of the migrants, and (3) motivating factors that caused migrants to move to Sabah, Malaysia.

The interview schedule consists of 58 precoded items, which was carefully pretested to assure clarity and weed out questions which could not be understood. To ensure a wider latitude of comprehension, one that is understandable even among illiterate respondents, the research instrument was translated into the Sama dialect.

The instrument took approximately 30 minutes to administer. Properly trained and instructed interviewers from the municipalities of Sitangkai and Simunul (they belong to the educated segment of the

social pyramid in their respective villages), were employed to collect the data through house visits and interviews.

Characteristics of Migrants

The population of both municipalities between 1960 and 1970 has increased by 33.72 percent. In 1960, the population of both municipalities was 19,348 and rose to 25,873 in 1970. The greater increase occurred in Simunul, 39.10 percent, and Sitangkai, 29.31 percent. An estimate of the volume of inter-provincial migration showed that for the whole province of Sulu, the out-migrants numbered 16,098 as of 1972 (Yun-Kin, 1972) based on the census report of 1970. There was no mention, however, as to the places of destination for the out-migrants.

It becomes clear, therefore, that the increase in the population of both municipalities had not been caused by in-migration but mainly due to natural increase; a pattern of growth observed for the whole country at 3.2 percent per year.

The characteristics of migrants from Simunul and Sitangkai to Sabah are reported below showing information not revealed in the previous censuses in the areas of this study.

Age and Sex

Table I shows that migrants to Sabah are highly selected in terms of age and sex. For both sexes, the percentage of migrants was highest at ages 26-30 years old. Migrants are highly concentrated in the 16-30 age brackets for both males and females. Although males were reputedly more migratory than females, here no attempt was made to capture this difference as both sexes were equally represented in the sample. But female migrants outnumbered the males at the adolescent years, that is, between 16-20 years age range. This trend is in accord with contemporary patterns of migration by age and sex in the Philippines. Within the same age range 16-35 years, females outnumbered the males by at least 2.0 percent and in the succeeding age ranges, males outnumbered the females. The median age for migrants of both sexes was 23, while it was 26 years for males and 20 for female migrants, suggesting the relative youth of the latter.

Table I — Percentage Distribution of Migrants by Age and Sex

Age prior to migration	Percent		
	Both Sexes	Male	Female
15 years and below	2.5	3.5	1.5
16 years-20 years	19.5	14.0	24.0
21 years-25 years	20.5	19.5	21.5
26 years-30 years	21.25	30.5	12.0
31 years-35 years	9.5	11.5	7.5
36 years-40 years	6.5	9.0	4.0
41 years and above	1.75	2.5	1.0
Not stated	19.0	9.5	29.5
T O T A L	100.0%	100.0%	100.0
Number of Cases	400	200	200
Median Age	23	26	20

Educational attainment

Higher education has been regarded as a facilitating condition for migration, as the better educated, those who have more to offer a community of destination in the way of skills, are the first ones to leave their places of origin (Hendershot, 1968 and Piampiti, 1976). The migrants from Simunul and Sitangkai to Sabah are no exception to this rule. As a group they are relatively well educated at the time of migration. Table II shows more than fifty percent of the migrants, both males and females, had finished high school or better. On the opposite side of the ledger, half had spent six or less years in school. This balance gives an average (median 6) of six years education for all the migrants.

The male migrants were slightly well educated than their female counterparts. There were about one-third (33.0 percent) of the males who completed high school education, as compared to seventeen percent for the females. College graduates seemed to be less interested in moving to Sabah (only 5.5 percent) and this is true for both males and

females. Perhaps, opportunities perceived to be good and promising by the less educated group of migrants are not so judged by the more highly educated segments of the communities under study.

Table II — Percentage Distribution of Migrants by Educational Attainment and Sex

Educational attainment	Percent		
	Both sexes	Male	Female
None (less than 4 years)	3.0	2.5	3.5
Primary (4 years)	8.75	8.5	9.0
Elementary (6 years)	37.75	39.0	36.5
High School (10 years)	25.25	33.0	17.5
College (14 years)	5.5	7.5	3.5
Beyond college (15 years or more)	.5	1.5	—
Not stated	19.0	8.5	29.5
T O T A L	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Number of Cases	400	200	200

Marital Status

A little less than fifty percent of the overall migrants were married before leaving for Sabah. About one-fifth of the male migrants were single and more than half were married. Among females, on the other hand, 47 percent were married and 22.5 percent were single. No migrant was reported to have been separated, while one percent constitute the widowed and divorced migrants. Married migrants, both males and females, have an average number of four children before departure. Traditionally, the male migrants earn for the members of the family.

This increasing responsibility with poor economic incentive in the home places has further motivated them to move to Sabah with a hope of social and economic advancement. The female married migrants generally follow their husbands to Sabah. Table III illustrates the migrants by marital status and sex.

Table III — Percentage Distribution of Migrants by Marital Status and Sex

Marital Status	Percent		
	Both sexes	Male	Female
Single	30.5	38.5	22.5
Married	49.5	52.0	47.0
Others	1.0	1.0	1.0
Not stated	19.0	8.5	29.5
T O T A L	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Number of Cases	400	200	200

Occupation

In both the Simunul and the Sitangkai communities, the majority of the migrants to Sabah were reported to have had no occupation or were jobless prior to departure. It is indicated in Table IV that more than fifty percent of both male and female migrants were jobless. Of the 222 migrants reported to have been jobless before migration, 36 percent landed in jobs ranging from proprietorship to farming in Sabah, Malaysia. In addition, there were eight migrants reported to have had jobs in their original home communities who turned out jobless in Sabah. Of the 32 percent of the male migrants who has no occupation prior to departure, more than one third remained jobless in their places

Table IV — Number of Migrants by Former and Current Occupation and Sex

Current Occupation	Former Occupation											Total
	Proprietor (Owner of business)	Manager/ Official (Corp./Gov't)	Professional (doctor, lawyer, teacher)	Clerical or (Salesman/bookkeeper)	Skilled or Foreman	Semi-skilled/ unskilled (laborer, factory worker)	Fisherman	Farmer	Homemaker/jobless			
Both Sexes, Total	25	5	1	3	1	1	40	102	222			400
Proprietor (owner of business)	8	—	—	—	—	—	—	8	10			26
Manager or Official (Corp./government)	4	5	1	—	—	—	16	20	15			61
Professional (doctor, lawyer, teacher)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	5			5
Clerical or Sales (Salesman, bookkeeper)	1	—	—	2	—	—	2	9	11			25
Skilled or Foreman	9	—	—	—	—	—	4	9	6			28
Semi-skilled or unskilled (laborer, factory worker)	2	—	—	1	1	—	12	19	10			45
Fisherman	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	1	1			4
Farmer	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	30	21			55
Homemaker or jobless	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	6	143			151
Male, Total	22	4	1	1	1	1	40	66	64			200

Table IV — Number of Migrants by Former and Current Occupation and Sex

Current Occupation	Former Occupation											Total
	Female	Proprietor (Owner of business)	Manager/ Official (Corp./Gov't)	Professional (doctor, lawyer, teacher)	Clerical or (Salesman/ bookkeeper)	Skilled or Foreman	Semi-skilled/ unskilled (laborer, factory worker)	Fisherman	Farmer	Homemaker/		
	3	1	—	—	2	—	—	—	36	158	200	
Proprietor (Owner of business)	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	2	6	10	
Manager or Official (Corp./Government)	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	9	2	12	12	
Professional (doctor, lawyer, teacher)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	3	
Clerical or Sales (Salesman, book-keeper)	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	7	6	15	15	
Skilled worker or Foreman	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	
Semi-skilled or unskilled (laborer, factory worker)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	2	4	4	
Fisherman	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Farmer	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	11	17	28	28	
Homemaker or jobless	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	5	121	127	127	

of destination. Among the females, 79 percent of them were jobless before departure and did not show much improvement in their occupational levels. Of the 158 jobless female migrants, only 37 were reported to have landed jobs in Sabah and the remainder (77 percent) continued to be jobless at the time data were gathered for this study. Table IV shows the sex and occupational distribution of migrants.

Income

The average income of the migrants between 1960 and 1970 was relatively low before migration. Their income, which came on a quarterly basis, were derived for the most part from varied sources, such as,

Table V — Percentage Distribution of Migrants by Income and Sex

Income prior to migration	Percent		
	Both sexes	Male	Female
P300 and below	44.25	51.5	37.0
P301-P400	24.75	28.0	21.5
P401-P500	9.0	8.5	9.5
P501-P600	1.75	2.5	1.0
P600 and above	1.25	1.0	1.5
Not stated	19.0	8.5	29.5
T O T A L	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Number of Cases	400	200	200
Median	P300	P290	P320

medium-sized coconut plantation farming and seaweeds farming. These occupations take the farmers a period of two to three months of waiting before harvest could be made. While more than 35 percent of the migrants engaged in either farming and fishing as their main sources of

income and livelihood, migrants who were engaged in other productive endeavors consider farming and fishing as supplementary sources. Before they move to Sabah, about 69 percent of them had incomes not exceeding 400 pesos per three months and only .25 percent earned more than 1,000 pesos. Male migrants have higher incomes than females. Before migration, more than half of the females had less than 400 pesos quarterly income.

Migration Patterns

a. *Origin of Migrants*

Most of the migrants came from the barrios or villages (barangay) of the municipalities of Simunul and Sitangkai. These villages are classified as rural, based on the Philippine Census and Statistics definition. The original homeplaces of migrants to Sabah are also typically rural in terms of population and related characteristics. More than 80 percent of the total migrants reported hailed from the barrios of the Tawi-Tawi province.

b. *Kinship and social ties*

Less than three-fourths of the migrants were influenced by their relatives, who served as principal channel of information about Sabah. This, in addition to other factors, had caused relatives of earlier migrants to follow suit. About 80 percent of the male migrants and 67.5 percent female migrants were influenced by their kin already in Sabah. Other sources of information included friends (5.75 percent), newspapers from Sabah (.75 percent), reports and publication (.25 percent) brought by visiting migrants and traders to their native Simunul and Sitangkai (see Table VI).

The data above are also supported by the initial contacts that migrants from Simunul and Sitangkai made upon arrival in Sabah. More than 74 percent of migrants were disclosed to have initial contacts with relatives rather than with non-relatives in Sabah. Although a few migrants (3.25 percent) lived by themselves upon arrival, some (2.25 percent) benefitted from the help of friends and acquaintances during their initial stay there.

Table VI — Percentage Distribution of Migrants by Sources of Information and Sex

Sources of information	Percent		
	Both sexes	Male	Female
Friends	5.75	8.5	3.0
Relatives	74.0	80.5	67.5
Newspapers	.75	1.0	.5
Other sources	.25	.5	—
Not stated	19.25	9.5	29.0
T O T A L	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Number of Cases	400	200	200

c. Destination of migrants

There are seven trading posts in Sabah and smaller agricultural communities where migrants from Tawi-Tawi and the Sulu archipelago frequently chose as probable destinations. Table VIII shows the distribution of migrants from Simunul and Sitangkai by destinations and sex. It is indicated that Tawau, Sandakan, Sempoerna and some agricultural communities were favorite destinations of migrants from these communities. For both sexes, Tawau received 15.5 percent of the migrants, Sandakan 18.0 percent, Sempoerna 18.0 percent, and other agricultural communities 13.0 percent. These other agricultural communities include the following: Tongbato, Tanagiyan, Kunnat, Luuk Buwani, Pasmusol, Tandu-Uwan and Tanjung Labuyan. Kudat had only .5 percent, Kota Kinabalu had 2.5 percent and Lahad Datu 11.5 percent. The male migrants were concentrated in Sandakan and Sempoerna with equal percentage of 21.5 percent and 17.0 percent for Tawau. On the other hand, the female migrants concentrated in Sandakan (18.5 percent), while Tawau and Sempoerna shared almost equal percentages of 14.0 and 14.5.

Table VII — Percentage Distribution of Migrants by Initial Contacts and Sex

Initial contacts	Percent		
	Both sexes	Male	Female
With relatives	74.75	81.5	68.0
With friends	2.25	3.5	1.0
Lived by himself/herself	3.25	4.5	2.0
Others	—	—	—
No information	19.75	10.5	29.0
T O T A L	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Number of Cases	400	200	200

d. Reasons for migration

When asked about the main reason for migration, more than fifty percent of them were said to be lured by the opportunity of getting a job in Sabah. However, more than 80 percent of the male migrants had getting a job as the chief reason for leaving, with only 6.0 percent claiming a desire for reunion with relatives and friends there. A small percentage (1%) was dissatisfied with their native places and 1.5 percent hoped to better their lives in another place. Among the female migrants 37.5 percent indicated getting a job as the fascination for migrating, while 26 percent wanted to be with close relatives and friends, and 4.5 percent perceived more opportunities in Sabah. No one reported education as a cause for migration, contrary to what has been found typical among migrants from rural areas in the Philippines (Pascual, 1965) and among Thai migrants who move to urban communities in Thailand (Piampiti, 1975).

Table VIII — Percentage Distribution of Migrants by Destination and Sex

Destination	Percent		
	Both sexes	Male	Female
Tawau	15.5	17.0	14.0
Sandakan	20.0	21.5	18.5
Sempoerna	18.0	21.5	14.5
Kudat	.5	1.0	—
Kota Kinabalu	2.5	3.5	1.5
Lahad Datu	11.5	12.0	11.0
Others	13.0	14.5	11.5
Not stated	19.0	9.0	29.0
T O T A L	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Number of Cases	400	200	200

Discussion

Based on the above results, some inferences can be made with respect to the migrants' characteristics and the patterns of movement that they take. Migrants are generally young. For both males and females, those in the age range 16-30 years were found to have the highest tendency to migrate to Sabah. This age selectivity is also found in the patterns existing in other migration streams within the Philippines. The result of this study regarding the age selectivity of migrants corroborates that of the study of migrant characteristics in two selected communities of Visayas and Luzon to Manila and other urban places (Hendershot, 1968).

With respect to the education of the migrants, one faces the difficulty of appraising their levels of education on the basis of the number of years spent in schools and/or the certificates or diplomas they re-

ceived. However, considering that English and Bahasa Malaysia are the backdoor media of communication, their educational attainment may reduce difficulties of communication between themselves and officials of Malaysian government and the managers or officials of the prospective companies where they would be working. In general, out of the total population of 10,154 Simunul residents, six years old and over, 72.4 percent are literate. In Sitangkai, out of the total population of 11,483 residents, six years old and over, 65.4 percent were literate (National Census and Statistics, 1970). These figures show higher literacy rates for both populations of Simunul and Sitangkai.

Information about Sabah has been relayed by relatives of prospective migrants who were motivated to move there. Living conditions, work-related opportunities, and peace and order are the common grounds for people to leave their homeplaces. Persons contacted by migrants upon arrival in Sabah were also their relatives who lend them helping hands during the painful stage of adjustment. However, caution has to be observed in considering the value of kinship as a motivation for moving. Its social impact is not altogether inconsistent with the economic thesis of migration because kin or ascriptive ties serve as information-giving rather than the main reason for moving. To cite an analogue on the resolution of the macro-level and micro-level analyses of migration, the influence of kin or ascriptive ties on migration may all the more increase people's propensity to move when the economic basis for migration (Hendrix, 1975) is present. In fact, when our respondents were asked to articulate the reasons why their relatives move to Sabah, more than 50 percent considered work-related opportunities. Similarly, they mentioned that about three-fourths of the reported migrants (N = 400), had relatives in that area.

It has not been possible to examine the community-based factors of the migration stream from Tawi-Tawi to Sabah, Malaysia. This study concentrated on the individuals involved in the process of migration through a "third party," their relatives who were left behind in their hometowns. The migrants settled in different communities in Sabah. Many of these communities are trading ports and others, agricultural communities (these were probably established by earlier migrants from Sulu archipelago). These communities include: Tawau, Sandakan,

Lahad Datu, Sempoerna, Kudat, Kota Kinabalu and the lesser known settlements of Tongbato, Tanagiyan, Kunnat, Luuk Buwani, Pasmusol, Tandu-Uwan and Tanjung Labuyan.

Implications of the Study

This study, descriptive in analysis and interpretative as it is, has uncovered certain patterns of population redistribution of Filipinos, especially the Muslims in the South. I have listed the following as features unique to the present study: First, migration is not confined to domestic movements within the Philippines and to international mobility from the Philippines to the United States. Equally significant is the study of migrants from the Philippines to neighboring countries in Southeast Asia, which has been overlooked perhaps due to preoccupation with the problems of population growth and the emphasis on modernization and urbanization (Pascual, 1965; Cortez, 1970; and Laquian, 1973).

Second, the National Census and Statistics records on migration have not taken into account factors associated with movement of people according to ethnic origin, much less presenting information about migration phenomena from the Philippines to Malaysia and other Southeast Asian countries.

Third, the perceived opportunities for socio-economic advancement in Sabah by migrants from Tawi-Tawi were further reinforced by the ecological push on its population resulting from the declining productivity of coconut plantations (a major industry in Tawi-Tawi), and the fluctuating price of seaweeds (an emerging and flourishing industry in the areas) in the Philippines and in international markets.

And finally, this study shows that economic reasons for migration as complemented by kinship are push-and-pull factors similar to findings revealed by inter-provincial migration literature in the country.

Summary and Conclusion

Data for this study were gathered through the combination of personal interviews and observation. Being a pioneering survey on migration and characteristics of migrants in this part of the country, it is not

exempted from limitations which arise from the difficulty of interviewing the actual migrants to Sabah.

The findings are summarized into two categories: First, characteristics of migrants have been reported by the relatives of migrants at the original homeplaces. And second, the motivating factors for movements from Tawi-Tawi to Sabah, Malaysia, as perceived by the relatives, are also discussed.

It has been found that before departure, migrants to Sabah from Simunul and Sitangkai of the Tawi-Tawi province were young, educated, married, belonged to the low-income group, were mostly jobless (although some were engaged in farming and fishing). Increase in income is attributable to the changes in occupational levels from mainly agricultural to blue-collar, and white-collar jobs in some cases, and from being jobless to getting jobs, in others.

The migrants strongly relied on kinship ties for information and assistance in the course of adjustment to the new place. No data could be marshalled on what characterize the places of destination in Sabah to bring to bear on the "pull" factors. Many of the migrants were reported to have changed residence from Tawi-Tawi to Sabah because perceived socio-economic opportunities coexisting with migrants' expectations of advancement and improvement in their life style.

To augment insights gathered from this study, certain research areas on migration from the Philippines to Sabah, Malaysia need further exploration: (1) Comparative analysis of Philippine urban centers and other SEA urban centers; (2) Migrants adjustment of Filipinos in Sabah, Malaysia; (3) Ethnic differentiation in the migration stream between the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia; (4) Degree of socio-economic and political participation of Filipinos in Sabah; and (5) Implications of the Filipino migration to Malaysia to diplomacy between the two countries.

This study was made possible through an award from the Southeast Asia Population Research Awards Program (SEAPRAP), a joint program of the International Development Research Centre and the Ford Foundation. I am particularly indebted to Dr. Pedro V. Flores, Project Coordinator, and Ms. Julie Hui, Program Assistant.

I also wish to acknowledge the help of several persons: Prof. Samuel M. Briones, Department of Anthropology, MSU, for providing me some materials on migration in the Philippines; Prof. Jimmy Y. Balacuit, Department of Sociology, MSU, for his advice and encouragement in the preliminary stage of my work; Dr. Federico V. Magdalena, also from the Department of Sociology, for his comments and advice on the final draft of this report; Mr. Roberto Magno, for the programming assistance; and Mr. Mario Alegado for his assistance during my field-work in Tawi-Tawi.

The assistance of Miss Carmelita P. Tejano for her typing services deserves mention, and also especially the continued support and encouragement of Miss Catherine R. Bahena during the preparation phase of the proposal up to the final report making. — A. J. HASSAN

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