

Filipino Migrant Workers in Brunei Darussalam

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The foreign trade relations between Brunei Darussalam and the Philippines is not the major reason for Filipinos to work in Brunei. In 1991, for instance, Brunei's imports from the Philippines amounted to B\$2.48 million (Brunei dollars), while exports amounted to B\$31.74 million. These figures were equivalent to 0.13 percent and 0.74 percent, respectively, of the total imports and exports of Brunei Darussalam. The imports from the Philippines included food, beverages, tobacco, crude inedible materials, chemicals, manufactured goods, machines and transport equipment, and miscellaneous manufactured articles. The exports to the Philippines were mainly mineral fuels (Brunei Economic Planning Unit 1993:80-81).

A Malay sultanate with Islam as its state religion, Brunei Darussalam became an independent country and a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1984, with the

removal of British supervision of its defence and foreign affairs. Since then, it has experienced increased economic activity and socioeconomic transformation. The five-year economic development plans launched in the 1950s have been continued, with each plan contributing to an increased level of economic activity. The economic development of Brunei, however, has always needed migrant labor to supply the manpower and skills needed for continued development.

The changing economic structure of Brunei and its small population size have been the major factors in the arrival of Filipinos. Thus, despite the less than 1 percent trade between the two countries, the structural changes in Brunei's economy have attracted Filipinos to arrive in significant numbers to work in Brunei Darussalam. By 1994, Brunei had become the ninth most important host country of Filipino overseas contract

workers (Gonzalez 1995). As a proportion of Brunei's total population, temporary residents in general have risen from 23.3 percent in 1981 to 27.1 percent in 1991. In absolute terms, the number of temporary residents in Brunei has grown from 44,971 to 70,526 between 1981 and 1991, representing an annual growth rate of 4.5 percent. Overall, Brunei's total population rose from 192,832 in 1981 to 260,482 in 1991 (Brunei Economic Planning Unit 1992: xxxiii).

However, the origins and the nature of the migrant labor upon which Brunei's economic development relies have been changing. Although Filipinos started to become significant in the labor force since the late 1980s, their increased participation in Brunei's economy is also due to the economic development in neighboring Malaysia. The rapid development of the Malaysian economy has steadily reduced the relative rates of arrival of unskilled labor from that country, thus allowing other ASEAN countries like the Philippines to fill the growing labor needs of Brunei (Mani 1992). The structural changes in the Bruneian economy have not only caused more migrants to arrive in Brunei, but they have also induced more migrant females to arrive. Between 1981 and 1991, the labor force participation rates of all persons aged 15 and over increased from 59.7 percent to 65.6 percent. The increase in participation rates has been more marked for females than for males. Male participation rates have, in fact, declined slightly from 83.2 percent in 1981 to 82.2 percent in 1991, whereas for females the corresponding rates have increased from 31.3 percent to 46.4 percent (Brunei

Economic Planning Unit 1991:xxxiii). It appears that females will form the bulwark of any future labor force in Brunei.

Given the changing composition of the Bruneian labor force and the expanding role played by migrant labor from the Philippines, this article attempts to examine the position of Filipino domestic workers in Brunei. While Filipinos are engaged in a range of services and skilled occupations, people from the Philippines tend to predominate in the sector of domestic work. The study of migrant workers from the Philippines will be done at two levels. In the first instance, an overview of the Filipino population in Brunei Darussalam will be discussed. At the second level, the results of a detailed survey carried out among a sample of 216 domestic workers from the Philippines will be analyzed. These two levels of analysis will be used to predict the future trends for Filipinos in Brunei Darussalam.

Filipinos In Brunei Darussalam

Demographic information from census data on foreign-born persons provide an indication of the rapid growth of Filipinos in Brunei. In government reports, the foreign-born are classified by residential status, such as "Brunei citizens," "Permanent residents," and "Temporary residents and others." As shown in Table 1, 82.6 percent of the foreign-born population fall into the group of "Temporary residents and others," a category of people generally associated with temporary migrant workers who have come to Brunei

Table 1. Foreign-born persons in Brunei Darussalam, by residential status and sex, 1991.

Residential Status	Males	Females	Total
Brunei Citizens	2,979 (6.9) ^c	5,415 (16.5)	8,394 (11.0)
Permanent Residents	2,503 (5.8)	2,313 (7.0)	4,816 (6.3)
Temporary Residents and Others	37,815 (87.3)	25,069 (76.4)	62,884 (82.6)
TOTAL	43,297 (100.0)	32,797 (100.0)	76,094 (100.0)

*Figures in parentheses indicate percentages.

Source: Brunei Economic Planning Unit (1992:48, Table 6.2).

owing to the economic opportunities it offers. The number of foreign persons in this category has more than doubled between 1981 and 1991.

The migration of Filipino labor to Brunei Darussalam may not be a recent phenomenon. However, the migration of large numbers of Filipinos to Brunei and their visibility in Bruneian society became significant only after 1981. The official figures in the 1970s do not mention Filipinos as a significant group in the migrant population of Brunei. But, as shown in Table 2, their absolute numbers have continued to rise since 1983, the year before Brunei acquired full sovereignty from Britain. The regular air links between Manila and Bandar Seri Begawan may have prompted more Filipinos to look for employment opportunities in Brunei.

The distribution of foreign-born persons by country of birth in 1981 and 1991 shows the increasing significance of the presence of Filipinos in

Brunei society and economy (Table 3). As a percentage of Brunei's foreign-born population, persons from the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, and several South Asian countries have increased markedly between the two census years. On the other hand, the proportions of the foreign-born coming from Malaysia, Singapore, China and Hong Kong, the United Kingdom, and other countries have declined. Although Malaysians still account for the largest number of foreign-born residents in Brunei, their relative significance has dropped from 70 percent in 1981 to 55 percent in 1991. On the other hand, as comparatively new sources of labor, the Philippines, Thailand, and Indonesia have registered large increases in both absolute and relative terms. The Philippine-born accounted for 2.4 percent of the total foreign-born population in 1981, but the proportion has risen to 10.7 percent in 1991, the Filipinos thus becoming the second largest group after the Malaysians.

Table 2. Arrival of Philippine nationals in Brunei Darussalam, 1983-1992.

Year	Philippine Arrivals	Total Arrivals	Philippine As % of Total Arrivals
1983	7,247	632,700	1.14%
1984	7,543	644,149	1.17
1985	11,086	713,078	1.55
1986	11,297	723,178	1.56
1987	11,809	904,826	1.31
1988	12,699	926,023	1.37
1989	12,735	946,377	1.35
1990	15,093	931,176	1.62
1991	20,349	931,234	2.19
1992	25,268	1,156,992	2.18

Source: Brunei Economic Planning Unit (1994:106, Table 7.14).

Table 3. Foreign-born persons in Brunei Darussalam, by country of birth, 1981 and 1991.

Country of Birth	Number		Distribution (%)	
	1981	1991	1981	1991
Malaysia	37,544	41,900	70.0	55.1
Philippines	1,298	8,147	2.4	10.7
Thailand	278	6,873	0.5	9.0
Indonesia	235	3,455	0.4	4.5
Singapore	1,792	1,558	3.3	2.0
South Asia*	2,341	4,479	4.4	5.9
Nepal	2,394	3,810	4.5	5.0
China and HongKong	3,589	1,966	6.7	2.6
United Kingdom	2,522	2,075	4.7	2.7
Other Countries	1,672	1,831	3.1	2.4

*India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh.

Source: Brunei Economic Planning Unit (1992:49, Table 6.4).

As illustrated in Table 4, the foreign-born residents in Brunei are characterized by a highly imbalanced sex-ratio, with decidedly more males compared to females. The Thais show the most extreme sex ratio, with 1,083 males for every 100 females. Less extreme as the Thai case is that of the Indians and Pakistanis, among whom there are 320 males for every 100 females. Although this imbalance clearly indicates the temporary nature of the migrant

labor population, the Philippine- and Indonesia-born residents show a reverse pattern. Indonesians have the lowest ratio of males to females, at 20 to 100, indicative of the predominantly female domestic workforce from Indonesia. At 67 to 100, the Philippine-born population is next to the Indonesia-born in terms of having more females than males. Clearly, the Filipinas outnumber their male counterparts in Brunei's labor force.

Table 4. Population of Foreign-born Persons in Brunei Darussalam, by Country of Birth, Sex, and Sex-Ratio, 1991.

Country of Birth	Total Persons	Males	Females	Sex-Ratio ^o
Malaysia	41,900	22,736	19,164	119
Singapore	1,558	857	701	122
Philippines	8,147	3,282	4,865	67
Thailand	6,873	6,292	581	183
Indonesia	3,455	588	2,870	20
India, Pakistan	8,289	6,314	1,975	320
China & HongKong	2,195	1,154	1,041	111
United Kingdom	2,075	1,184	891	133
Other Countries	1,832	1,063	769	138
TOTAL	76,323	43,467	32,857	132

^oNumber of Males per 100 Females.

Source: Brunei Economic Planning Unit (1992:75, Table 10a; 51, Table 6.5).

It may be noted that there is comparatively little interaction across the various foreign-born nationalities. The large majority of Thai males speak only Thai, the Filipinos speak Tagalog, English and some Malay, while the Indonesians speak only Bahasa Indonesia. But a common medium of communication may not be necessary because these foreign-born workers are located in different economic niches and hardly meet the members of the other nationalities.

Brunei Darussalam has five administrative districts. Bandar Seri Begawan, the capital, is located in the Brunei Muara District, but it is often treated by government agencies as a distinct administrative unit. As shown in Table 5, about 72 percent of the Filipinos in Brunei reside in the Bandar Seri Begawan and Brunei Muara districts. As these are the most populated areas of the country, most Filipinos have found

it easy to find employment there. Located in the westernmost part of Brunei, the Belait District is the major production area for Brunei's oil and natural gas. This district accounts for about 24 percent of all Filipinos in Brunei, and it is where the sex-distribution among Filipinos is almost equal. The Tutong and Temburong Districts are not economically productive areas, which is why comparatively few Filipinos are to be found there, and those few are overwhelmingly females. The geographical distribution of Filipinos in Brunei Darussalam is highly reflective of the employment opportunities available to them. Most Filipino males are employed in the services sector, ranging from sales, the hotel industry, skilled construction labor, and the travel industry. Many Filipinas, on the other hand, are employed as domestic workers in Bruneian and expatriate professional homes.

Table 5. Geographical distribution of temporary residents and others originating from the Philippines in Brunei Darussalam, 1991.

District	Temporary Filipino Residents			Total Temporary Residents & Others	All Filipino as % of Total
	All	Males	Females		
Bandar Seri Begawan	1,417	578	839	12,283	11.43
Brunei/Muara	4,383	1,628	2,761	37,035	11.83
Belait	1,899	950	949	16,721	11.36
Tutong	327	89	238	3,245	10.08
Temburong	36	8	28	1,242	2.90
TOTAL	8,062	3,257	4,805	70,526	11.43

Source: Brunei Economic Planning Unit (1992:81-86, Tables 11a-11f).

Not all the Filipinos in Brunei Darussalam are long-term residents. Of the total Filipino population in 1991, 64.2 percent reported that they have lived in Brunei for less than three years. Another 22.3 percent reported that they have been in Brunei from four to six years. About 7.7 percent have lived in Brunei for seven to nine years, while only 5.8 percent have been residents for more than ten years (Brunei Economic Planning Unit 1992:34). Thus, most Filipinos have arrived in Brunei only since the late 1980s. They also do not intend to make Brunei their permanent home. Moreover, Brunei's citizenship rules are too strict for any foreigner, let alone Filipinos, to acquire permanent residence and eventually acquire Brunei citizenship.

Despite the transitory nature of their stay, income-seeking Filipinos continue to use Brunei as an important nodal point in their search for better economic prospects. As shown in Table 6, visitor arrivals from the Philippines have been steadily increasing since the late 1980s.

As Filipinos have become familiar with Brunei's national airline, an increasing number of them pass through Bandar Seri Begawan on the way to other destinations. Thus, the number of Filipinos passing through Brunei has increased nearly four-fold, from about 7,000 in 1983 to about 25,000 in 1992. Not all the Filipinos stay in Brunei. But the fact that Brunei has become an important nodal point for the Filipino diaspora is evident from the increased numbers of them passing through Bandar Seri Begawan.

Compared with total visitor arrivals from all countries, visitor arrivals from the Philippines constituted less than 2 percent of the total in 1992. However, there has been a steady increase in the number of Filipino visitor arrivals. It is evident that not all Filipinos arrive in Brunei to obtain employment. While the number of Filipino visitors has nearly doubled from 1989 to 1992, the reasons for their arrival have also undergone a shift (see Table 6). Those coming as tourists or to visit their relations have

Table 6. Visitor Arrivals in Brunei Darussalam from the Philippines, 1989-1992.

	1989	1990	1991	1992
Total Arrivals from Phil. [A]	3,660	4,863	4,827	6,563
Purpose (as % of A):				
Tourism	6.8	5.0	13.7	12.6
Business	17.8	15.0	16.3	18.9
Visit Relations	11.8	12.3	21.5	22.6
On transit	5.3	10.5	32.7	21.8
Other reasons	58.3	57.2	15.8	24.1
Total Visitor Arrivals from All Countries* [B]	392,751	376,636	343,944	411,876
Phil. Arrivals + Total [A/B]	0.93	1.29	1.40	1.59
*Excludes Brunei residents.				

Source: Brunei Economic Planning Unit (1993:109, Table 7.17).

increased. Those landing in Brunei on transit have also grown, from about 5 percent of Filipino visitor arrivals in 1989 to about 33 percent in 1991, but in 1992 the figure was slightly down to about 22 percent. In 1992, a sizeable number of Filipinos went to Brunei to visit their relations. Evidently, more Filipinos are becoming familiar with Brunei, with more of them visiting the country as a result of the social networks Filipinos have been able to establish since the 1980s.

Filipino domestic workers in Brunei

The sample of 216 Filipino domestic workers used in this paper was drawn from a larger sample used in a study of foreign domestic workers (FDWs) in Brunei Darussalam (Mani 1993). The survey was carried out in March 1993. At the time of the study, the number of

foreign domestic workers in Brunei was estimated to be about 4,698 workers in 1992, according to unpublished data from Brunei's Labour Department. The country sending the most FDWs is the Philippines, followed closely by Indonesia; the Philippines accounts for 49 percent, while Indonesia 45 percent, of the total FDWs in 1992 (Table 7).

Comparing the official statistics for FDWs in Brunei to that of the 1991 Census figures cited in Tables 3, 4 and 5, it can be said that one out of every four Filipinos in Brunei is employed as a domestic worker. Even though females outnumber males in the Filipino migrant population, only half the Filipinas are actually employed as domestic workers. The rest, like the males, are employed in the expanding services sector. Thus, the survey aptly describes the life of only a quarter of all Filipino residents in Brunei.

Table 7. Foreign Domestic Workers in Brunei Darussalam, by Country of Origin, 1992.

Country of Origin	Number	Percent
Philippines	2,301	48.98
Indonesia	2,132	45.38
Malaysia	86	1.83
Thailand	79	1.68
India	59	1.26
Pakistan	1	0.02
Bangladesh	3	0.06
Sri Lanka	17	0.36
Nepal	19	0.40
Nigeria	1	0.02
TOTAL	4,698	100.0

Source: Unpublished data, Statistics Division, Brunei Labour Department.

The overwhelming majority of FDWs are females. Although males have also been employed under the category of FDWs, they normally work as gardeners or drivers. Among the 216 respondents, 94 percent are females and 6 percent males. The mean age of the sample is 30 years, although the actual ages range from 19 years to 52 years. As evident in Table 8, about 85 percent are between the ages of 20 and 39 years old. Thus, Filipino FDWs in Brunei are a youthful group. Most of the respondents (61 percent) are single, while 32 percent are married, the rest either widowed or separated from their spouses. Thus, most Filipinos working as FDWs in Brunei are single females.

In Brunei, domestic workers can only be employed in households whose incomes are above B\$1,700 per month. However, households with incomes between B\$1,000 to B\$1,699 are also allowed to hire FDWs under certain

conditions. Apart from the household income limits, the availability of a room for the stay of domestic workers is also a necessary precondition for a household to be entitled to hire a foreign domestic worker. Of the sample respondents in this study, 88 percent are employed in ethnic Malay households, while 7.4 percent are working in Chinese households. Other Asian and European households employ the rest. As much as 90 percent of the respondents are employed by Bruneian nationals, the rest work in households of other nationalities. These data indicate that Filipino FDWs are largely employed in the homes of Bruneian Malay households.

Table 8. Age distribution of FDWs from the Philippines, March 1993 Survey.

Age Category	Number	Percent
19 Years	2	1.0
20-24	36	16.7
25-29	65	29.5
30-34	50	23.3
35-39	33	15.4
40-44	19	8.9
45-49	9	4.1
50-52	2	1.0
Total	216	100.0

Source: Unpublished data, Statistics Division, Brunei Labour Department

As in many other countries, the social problems related to FDWs range from feeling homesick, culture shock, and different expectations, to more serious problems like unpaid or underpaid wages, physical abuse, and the employers' legal plight when charged in court (see, for example, Shah 1991). Serious and complicated problems are

taken up by the Philippine Embassy, and Bruneian health and legal authorities.

Proficiency in the language used at the place of work remains one of the salient features of whether an FDW adjusts to the work and life in Brunei. Regardless of varying levels of proficiency, 97 percent of the FDWs from the Philippines report that they know spoken English, and about 96 percent report that they can read and write in English. In addition, about 61 percent claim to have knowledge of spoken Malay, 70 percent claim to be able to read Malay, but only 27 percent claim to be able to write in Malay. As most middle class Malays are fluent in English, the English language remains an important medium in the communication with their employers. As will be shown later, spoken knowledge of one or both of these languages determine the economic and psychological welfare of FDWs in Brunei.

Educational achievement, though not a determinant for entry to FDW status in Brunei, is considered a favorable factor by employers. Of the sample, only two persons report not to have had any formal schooling. While only 3.2 percent said they had some primary schooling, the rest of the 97 percent had attained various levels of

education in the Philippines. About 20 percent of the Filipinas had attained educational credentials beyond secondary schooling. Lack of schooling does not appear to be a major reason for these Filipinas to seek employment in Brunei.

The background variables collected from the respondents show that 31 percent do not have any dependents that they need to support in the Philippines. This clearly indicates that a sizable number of Filipino FDWs may be new entrants to the labor market. The economic situation in the Philippines may be a reason for why they have chosen to become FDWs. Brunei may represent just one of the many countries in which the economic niche for becoming FDW exists. The need for gainful employment is the overriding reason for why most Filipino FDWs go to Brunei. Of the respondents, 83 percent cite better pay as the main reason for working in Brunei. About four percent plan to use Brunei as a first stage in their pursuit of work outside the Philippines. The rest say they are in Brunei because of their interest in travel, curiosity, need to look for a spouse and other personal reasons.

It is a commonly held belief that Filipinos leave the Philippines with the assistance of labor recruitment agencies. Of the respondents in the study, only

Table 9. Linguistic Abilities of FDWs from the Philippines, March 1993 Survey (N=216).

	English		Malay	
	N	%	N	%
Speaking Ability	210	97.2	131	60.6
Writing Ability	207	95.8	58	26.9
Reading Ability	208	96.3	151	69.9

one out of every four Filipinos had used such services in going to Brunei. Friends, relatives working in Brunei, and direct links with potential employers were mentioned as instrumental in the process of moving to Brunei. About 37 percent of the respondents report that relatives already working in Brunei had helped them obtain a job, while 27 percent report that their friends had extended help. About seven percent say they were directly recruited by their employers. Evidently, domestic workers from the Philippines go to Brunei by relying upon their own social network rather than depending upon labor recruitment agencies. This shift in dependence upon social networks is itself important for the Filipinos to make their lives better in Brunei. It will be argued later that this extended social network among Filipinos in Brunei may soon shift Filipinas away from being an important component of FDWs and make them significant in the services sector of Brunei's economy.

Although Filipinos are dominant among FDWs, as individuals they do not remain permanent in Brunei. All Filipino migrant workers, whether skilled or unskilled, are given two-year contracts that are renewable any number of times. Those who come as professionals enjoy renewable three-year contracts. At the end of a contract, a foreign domestic worker must first return to her home country before going back to Brunei to resume the next contract. During their contract of employment, they are not allowed to get married or become pregnant in Brunei. Such violations lead to immediate deportation.

For most respondents, working beyond one or two contracts is rare, an observation deducible from their reported dates of arrival in Brunei. Among the respondents 24 percent arrived within the previous twelve months, while another 37 percent have been in Brunei for a period of between one to two years only. A total of 61 percent have lived in Brunei for less than two years, that is, less than the length of one contract. Only 13 percent say they have been a domestic worker for more than six years in Brunei. Filipinos working as FDWs in Brunei do not stay in that status for very long. The impermanent nature of FDWs is further supported by the variable measuring the number of contracts completed by the respondents.

Of the sample, 54 percent are in their first contract, while 25 percent have completed one contract term. Only 12 of the 216 respondents (about five percent) report that they have worked for four or more contract terms. The finding that FDWs from the Philippines do not stay the length of many contracts in Brunei is a result of numerous factors. While many Filipinas, because of their educational credentials, move to the services sector, they generally view Brunei as a poor alternative to Singapore, Taiwan, or Hong Kong, which places pay higher salaries for similar work and offer a more congenial social environment compared with the constrained behavior expected of women in an Islamic state.

It may be postulated that Filipinos in general experience downward occupational mobility for increased monetary

returns when they move to work in Brunei. The Philippines may be seen as losing its skilled labor when its citizens become FDWs in Brunei. The survey findings, however, do not lend support to such expected outcomes. Table 10 shows the occupational statuses the respondents held in the Philippines as well as in any other country they might have worked in before going to Brunei. About 83 percent had never worked outside the Philippines and, of those coming directly from the Philippines, 43 percent also had never worked before going to Brunei. A considerable minority of FDWs is thus composed of new entrants to the labor market. It appears that very few of the respondents may have contributed to the draining of talent from the Philippines. In general, it may be concluded that the increased employment opportunities in Brunei have drawn individuals who are first-time formal wage earners. As most of the Filipinas are single, their move to work in Brunei reduces unemployment in the Philippines and contributes remittances

to their families and the country. The emigration of young single Filipinas may also be contributing to a lowering of the Philippines' fertility rates.

The minimum payment, exclusive of housing, insurance and health expenses, for FDWs in Brunei is B\$250 per month. Wage agreements are usually specified in the contract between FDWs and their employers. In Brunei, the law specifies that domestic workers are to receive the wage agreed upon in the contract they signed with their employers. In practice, however, there are variations. The contractually signed salary package may be different from the actual salaries received. Among the 216 respondents, 54 percent have signed a minimum monthly wage of B\$250. Most of the rest are signatories to a salary package of anywhere between the legal minimum and B\$800 (see Table 11). In terms of actual salary received, only 33 percent of the respondents earned B\$250 and less. In fact, 65 percent received a salary in the range of B\$251 to B\$500. It

Table 10. Occupations of FDWs from the Philippines before arrival in Brunei Darussalam, March 1993 Survey.

Occupation	In the Philippines		Outside the Philippines	
	N	%	N	%
Never worked	92	45.6	180	83.3
Farm worker	1	0.5	1	0.5
Unskilled laborer	28	13.0	2	0.9
Skilled laborer	17	7.9	3	1.4
Small business	9	4.2	0	-
Paid domestic worker	22	10.2	29	13.4
Semi-professional	21	9.7	1	0.5
Professional	14	6.5	0	-
Others	12	5.6	0	-
Total	216	100.0	316	100.0

appears that Filipina FDWs in Brunei are generally able to achieve higher incomes in a shorter period than the amounts stated in their salary contracts. This may be a result of the skills Filipinas bring with them to Brunei, and these skills often contribute to increased incomes of their employers. When an FDW, for instance, has sewing skills, she may spend part of her time sewing clothes for her employer, who then sells it and thereby augments their income. In fact, some employers recruit more FDWs in order to employ those with sewing skills, who then spend all their time sewing fashionable clothes. The FDW works from her room in her employer's house in order to avoid problems with immigration officials. In all such cases, the FDWs receive higher pay, with one Filipina respondent receiving up to B\$1,200 per month. A similar pattern of increased incomes is noticeable among Filipinas with cooking and office skills. Others earn more by working in additional households during their "rest days."

Table 11. Contractually signed and actual salaries received by FDWs from the Philippines in Brunei Darussalam, March 1993 Survey (N=216).

Amount	Salary in Contract		Salary Received	
	N	%	N	%
B\$250 or less	116	53.7	71	32.9
B\$251 to B\$500	95	44.1	140	64.9
More than B\$500	5	2.2	5	2.2

Apart from wages, it is mandatory in Brunei for employers to provide benefits such as insurance, medical and dental allowances, clothing, accommodation, and food to their FDWs. Of the 216 Filipino respondents, 78 percent say they do receive some or all of the benefits, depending on the employer's economic position.

All the respondents report full accommodation and medical care benefits from their employers. Food at no cost is provided to 98 percent of them. Insurance for FDWs is not compulsory in Brunei, though it is strongly recommended. About 22 percent of the sample report that their employers have taken out insurance for them. Dental (13 percent) and clothing (16 percent) needs are also supported when necessary. Some FDWs have travelled overseas with their employers, while some admit to receiving from their employers used items of value, including gold jewellery.

Filipina FDWs in Brunei generally work long hours each day. Of the sample, 64 percent say they work from 13 to 16 hours per day. About 13 percent report that they work less than 12 hours per day. As domestic work is located within the households of employers, about 5 percent report that there is no fixed time for work. The type of domestic work is often undefined and is broadly generalized as household work. About 61 percent say they carry out all kinds of tasks in their work environment (Table 12). "All kinds of work" is described as entailing: (1) doing

household maintenance such as sweeping the floor, dusting the furniture, cleaning windows, scrubbing toilets and bathrooms; (2) preparing and serving meals, including washing dishes and kitchen utensils; (3) washing and pressing clothes; and (4) taking care of children, including infants. Although FDWs are recruited to do "all kinds of work" in the households, the status and income levels of the employer, the number of FDWs in a household, and the dietary restrictions of the employers owing to religious orientations influence the extent and intensity of work done by them. As shown in Table 12, 29 percent of the FDWs in the sample are not involved in cooking for the households in which they are employed. There is the possibility that Muslim households may discourage cooking by non-Muslim FDWs.

Table 12. Types of work performed by FDWs from the Philippines in Brunei Darussalam, March 1993 Survey.

Types of work	Multiple Responses (N=216)
All Kinds of Work	60.6%
All Kinds of Work, except Cooking	28.7
Cooking Only	4.2
Child Care	29.6
Care of Invalid	0.5
Car Washing	18.1
Tailoring	5.6
Work in Employer's Relatives' House	2.8
Simple Gardening	22.2
Car Driver	4.6
Other Types of Work	4.6

Nearly 90 percent of the respondents report that they have their own room to

live and sleep in. As most Bruneian homes are built with an "amab room" (servants' room), this finding is consistent with the requirement of Brunei's Labour Department. The remaining 10 percent say they sleep in the employer's eldest daughter's room or in the children's room.

Most of the FDWs (75 percent) in the survey say they were allowed to receive their friends as visitors, and about 72 percent report that they are allowed use of the house telephone to speak to their friends. The survey findings reveal that 99 percent of the respondents feel they are never abused physically by their employers, while 78 percent say they have never been threatened, even with words, by their employers.

The household technology of most Bruneian homes has a range of electrical goods. Most households possess beds, tables, chairs, fans, air-conditioners, washing machines, carpets, and so forth. The majority of the respondents (75 percent) report that they learnt the use as well as maintenance of those technologies from their Bruneian employers. Technological knowledge transfer, although household- and consumer-based, is taking place in Bruneian households where the beneficiaries are Filipinas.

Brunei's labor laws entitle FDWs to one rest day every week and require them to work eight hours a day. Extra work is to be paid with extra pay. The FDW's nature of work does not allow the enforcement of these laws. The contracts between FDWs and their employers are rather silent about rest days and work hours. This allows

employers to interpret rest days in a variety of ways. Some FDWs get a regular day in a week as rest day. Others get irregular rest days which may fall once or twice a month. Nineteen percent of the Filipinos report that they do not have any rest days. Almost 29 percent report that they have Fridays off, while only 2 percent have their Sundays off. Fridays, due to its significance as prayer days for all Muslims, is a public holiday for all public sector employees. About 37 percent receive irregular off days, while 10 percent receive only one day in a month as a holiday.

The Filipino FDWs in Brunei possess a greater social network as compared with other foreign workers. About 78 percent of the respondents have friends in Brunei, and of them 69 percent say these friends are also from the Philippines. These friendships were first made at the local Catholic Church, as one out every five Filipinas said they go to church regularly on their off-days. Almost 30 percent of them met their friends through other friends, while a sizeable number have known them from the Philippines.

Conclusion

The economic development of Brunei has come to depend largely on migrant labor and its women to continue supplying the manpower needed in the public as well as private sectors (Mani 1992). The modernization of Brunei society has had direct effects on family size. Bruneian families no longer have large and extended families. The limit of indigenous male labor force participation, moreover, appears to have reached a ceiling, with

a need to draw upon female labor. This has drawn a large number of Bruneian women to pursue an education and a career beyond their homes. The economic benefits for Bruneian women of working outside their homes far outweigh the costs of employing a Filipina to do household chores.

This article has reported on the population and distribution of Filipinos in Brunei Darussalam. It has further examined a particular sector of the economy where Filipinos are the dominant labor force. Most of the Filipinas are young single women who spend their most productive (in terms of fertility) years outside their country. Most are in Brunei due to the economic conditions in the Philippines. Moreover, most Filipinos are recent arrivals and, in the case of those who are FDWs, a significant proportion of them are first-time entrants to the labor market. Another noticeable trend is that labor recruitment agencies are not the major sources of Filipino labor in Brunei. Most Filipinos arrive through their own effort or with the help of friends, relatives, and employers.

Though only one out of every four Filipinos is employed as a domestic worker, and only half the Filipinas are employed as FDWs, they still dominate the domestic workers scene in contemporary Brunei. As compared with other migrant workers from Indonesia and Thailand, workers from the Philippines have an expanded social network in Brunei. Almost three-quarters of the Filipinos are not working as domestic workers. As the latter's network is further strengthened in the skilled-labor sectors, such as the construction industry as well

as the services sector, more of those employed as household maids can be expected to move to other sectors. Moreover, Bruneian preference for Muslim *amabs* as well as the fact that Indonesian maids have closer affinity to Malay language and culture may increase the proportion of Indonesian FDWs in Brunei. Just as women from Sarawak and Sabah were once replaced by Filipinas as the former moved on to the non-domestic sector, Indonesian females appear to be increasing in proportion as FDWs and displacing Filipinas. Eventually, Indonesian females may become dominant among FDWs as Filipinas move in larger numbers to the formal services sector.

Given its rapid pace of development, Brunei Darussalam provides an important economic niche to many job aspirants in the Philippines. The size of labor migrants from the Philippines may continue to swell, if the development in Malaysia and Singapore reduces the participation of their citizens in Brunei's economy. If Thailand continues to develop, even Thai workers may decline in number in the construction industry, and they too may be replaced by Filipinos. It appears that, over the next few years, workers from the Philippines will come to play an important role in Brunei's economy.

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