Migration in Myanmar:
Perspectives from current research

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Social Policy and Poverty Research Group
Yangon
Republic of the Union of Myanmar

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CESD   Centre for Economic and Social Development
DfID   Department for International Development
DRD   Department of Rural Development
FAO   Food and Agriculture Organization
GMS   Greater Mekong Sub region
ILO   International Labour Organization
IOM   International Organization for Migration
ITD   Italian-Thai Development Co.
LIFT   Livelihoods and Food Security Trust Fund
MDRI   Myanmar Development Resource Institute
MMK   Myanmar Kyat
MOIP   Ministry of Immigration and Population
MOLES   Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security
MoU   Memorandum of Understanding
NGO   Non-governmental organization
QSEM   Qualitative Social and Economic Monitoring
SEZ   Special Economic Zone
SPPRG   Social Policy and Poverty Research Group
THB   Thai Baht
UNDESA   United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
USD   United States Dollar
WBG   World Bank Group

Introduction

Migration is considered to be one of the defining issues in Myanmar in the next decade. The level of both internal and international migration is expected to increase in all states and regions of Myanmar, with likely scenarios of changing patterns and implications: 1) notable increase in rural to urban, non-seasonal migration; 2) lack of manpower in rural areas during the agricultural high-seasons resulting in high labour costs, mechanization or discontinuation of farming; 3) greater number of family migration as opposed to migration of individuals in case of internal migration, and the opposite in case of international migration; 4) increasing number of households which rely on remittances as one of main income sources; 5) increasing income gaps between migrant-sending households and non-migrant households (especially in the case of international migration), and between the households which manage to use remittances for financial and social investments and those which use remittances mainly for consumption; 6) migration will be increasingly relied upon by rural population as viable livelihood choice over conventional livelihood options in their areas; 7) skewed age distributions in the migration source areas resulting in changing social dynamics (more communities populated by only older people and children) and in destination areas (with young productive populations); 8) inter-ethnic issues related to escalated levels of migration in ethnic states (such as Shan, Kachin and Rakhine States); 9) escalated pace of urbanization, requiring migrant-sensitive urban planning; 10) greater opportunity for financial inclusion of migrants and their families such as migration-related savings and loan products, and mobile banking. With increasing flow of migration comes increasing risk of exploitative migration, precarious living and working conditions, and changes to both rural and urban economies. Migration is an inevitable component of most public policy, and Myanmar's long-term development is inextricably intertwined with migration, demanding that public policy fully integrate the issues surrounding migration.

However, despite having a general sense of the significant scale of migration from and within Myanmar, and the critical role played by remittances in the local and national economy, less is known of the specifics of the situation, such as patterns and impacts of migration, the conditions and processes leading to a decision to migrate, the contribution of remittance income to building more sustainable local economies, and the potential for increasing formal sector employment opportunities to results in both an increase in rural-urban migration within Myanmar, as well as potentially act as a draw for overseas migrants to return to Myanmar.

Whilst a number of research studies have been conducted to study different aspects of migration in Myanmar, there remain significant gaps in both knowledge and analysis of the issue of migration in Myanmar. This volume is designed to draw together several recent studies which either present fresh data, or present fresh analysis of previously published reports. By bring them together into one volume, it is hoped that a more nuanced understanding of the issue of migration may be presented, as well as highlighting areas for potential future research.

The papers included here have been selected using three criteria: firstly, research which can provide fresh insights into the issue of migration in Myanmar; secondly, papers which are primarily research of data driven, thus representing a more grounded, empirical approach; and thirdly, papers which have either not previously been published, or which have been substantially modified to present new perspectives.

Firstly, Chapter 1 provides an introduction to some of the key themes and concerns relating to migration in Myanmar, and in Chapter 2, Shagun Gupta, in her capacity as Programme Analyst for the Livelihoods and Food Security Trust (LIFT) Fund, presents an overview of current migration data and research in Myanmar, drawing on a range of sources including the recent census, and studies conducted by IOM, ILO and SPPRG.

In chapter 3, Corey Pattison, John Voss, Andrea Woodhouse and Matt Zurstrassen present a revised version of a the LIFT/World Bank paper on migration published in 2015 (LIFT/QSEM 2016), providing an objective assessment of how and to what extent migration within and from two regions of Myanmar—Ayeyarwaddy and Magway regions—affects the livelihoods of rural households and the social and economic environment of villages. This chapter analyzes data from field research to consider four key questions: who migrates, why people choose to migrate, what are migration strategies, and what are the effects of migration on families and communities left behind. These questions explore how migration decisions take place, the key obstacles and risks faced by migrants, and the individual and household strategies that evolve to manage them.

In chapter 4, Mike Griffiths, Research Consultant for the Social Policy and Poverty Group, presents a revised version of research conducted in 2014 in conjunction with the Social Security Board of the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security (MOLES), looking at patterns of migration within Myanmar in the formal employment sector. This paper briefly looks at the possible impact on migration of increasing industrialization, and the likely patterns of migration should economic policy place more emphasis on urban, industrial growth.

In chapter 5, Michiko Ito of the International Organization for Migration draws on her long experience of understanding migration in Myanmar to provide a fresh analysis of an earlier paper on Myanmar migrants in Thailand (IOM and ARCM 2013). Drawing on data from over 5,000 Myanmar migrants in Thailand, this study demystifies some of the common perceptions about Myanmar migrant workers, presents evidence-based understanding on their migration patterns, trends, experiences and prospects for return.

Chapters 6 and 7 presents new analysis of data drawn from large-scale rural household studies conducted by the Social Policy and Poverty Research Group in conjunction with the Department of Rural Development. Chapter 6 considers the role of remittances in the rural economy, considering to what extent, and under what conditions remittance income contributes to both economic and social development in the households and communities from which the migrants have come. Chapter 7 uses a more experimental approach to look at the economic conditions which appear to be present in households where a decision to migrate has recently been taken, and to consider whether the conditions of precarity which led up to the decision to migrate are different if the potential migrant is male or female.

These studies do not represent a comprehensive view of migration in Myanmar, and there are a number of other studies which could also complement this volume. These studies also do not represent the views of the organizations to which the authors have affiliation, and any errors found are attributable to the authors. However, it is hoped that this volume will stimulate further thinking,

policy reflection and more comprehensive, coordinated and focused research to better understand the growing phenomena of migration as it relates to Myanmar, with the hope to better enable policymakers, planners and indeed households themselves to make the best decisions for their country, their communities and their households.

Chapter 1: Migration in Myanmar – an introduction

Migration is considered one of the defining global issues of the early twenty-first century, as more and more people are on the move today than at any other point in human history. There are now about 244 million people living outside their place of birth, which is about three percent of the world's population (UNDESA, 2015). Furthermore, there are 763 million internal migrants in 2015. Together, 1 in 7 persons in the world is a migrant (ibid). While the world population increased by 22% in the past 15 years, the international migration stock increased by 41% during the same period.

Migration is the world's oldest poverty reduction strategy; an indispensable engine for human development; a driver of economic growth; and a source of dynamic and innovative cultures. There is growing recognition that migration is an essential and an inevitable component of the economic and social life of every country.

Myanmar is no exception to the above. Migration is both an ancient and contemporary phenomenon in Myanmar. Migration as a survival strategy is not a new phenomenon in Myanmar: Scott, in his review of peasant economics in Southeast Asia described typical 'self-help' strategies in times of scarcity: "petty trade, small crafts, casual wage labour, or even migration" (Scott 1977). Economic pressures are believed to have led to the successive migration from the traditional population centres of central Myanmar into Delta areas. Furnival hints at complex pre-war land tenure arrangements in Lower Myanmar, where migration was mainly by Burmans from central Myanmar to become daily wage labourers on rice paddy owned by land-owners (Andrus 1948). By 1947, it was estimated that over half of all land in lower Myanmar was owned by non-agriculturalists (who would then lease the land, or hire labourers) as opposed to less than one-seventh in Upper Myanmar (Andrus 1948).

With recent census data suggesting official migration figures of over 2 million and further 9 million persons were registered as having migrated from a different part of the country (Department of Population, 2015), Myanmar is a country affected by high mobility of its nationals.

Migration in Myanmar comprises both seasonal internal migration and more long-term migration to cities, and cross-border migration to nearby countries such as Thailand, as well as further afield. Remittance income forms a significant part of both the rural and urban economy, with 2% of rural households describing remittances as their main source of income.

The challenges involved on the way to achieving migrants' objectives are complex and numerous from the decision making process through to managing remittances, making sensible investment choices and migrants eventually returning home. The lens through which migration should be viewed by policy makers and migrants alike is migration as a livelihood strategy which is not a quick-fix solution to financial challenges, but is a thought through livelihood approach which takes migrants' and their families' medium and long term goals and realities into consideration, as well as those of family members. Accurate information about jobs, labour laws, workers' rights, vocational and on-the-job training opportunities, financial management, risk of human trafficking, exploitation and abuse, as well as integration into new communities and reintegration into a migrant's home community are among these challenges.

This introductory chapter begins by outlining current migration trends and common challenges which form a relevant backdrop to discussions included later in this book. The following section provides a glance into the context and challenges of labour migration, migration and development, migration and gender and irregular migration in Myanmar.

Labour Migration

The International Labour Organization estimates in 2013 that migrant workers accounted for 150 million or 65% of the world's 232 million international migrants. Labour migration is generally defined as a cross-border movement for purposes of employment in a foreign country. However, there is no universally accepted definition of labour migration. Labour migration may have enormous potential for countries at both ends of the migration spectrum. For countries of origin, in addition to the possibility of providing some relief from unemployment and absorbing an increase in the labour force, it can provide a form of developmental support, especially through remittances, transfer of know-how, and creation of business and trade networks. For receiving countries facing labour shortages, immigration can alleviate labour scarcity, facilitate occupational mobility, and add to the human capital stock of the receiving countries. In the context of demographic changes, labour migration can help receiving countries to maintain workforce levels.

Today, a large portion of international labour movement of Myanmar workers continue to be intra-regional, irregular, and low-skilled. Thailand is the major destination country 70% of Myanmar international migrants are reported to reside, followed by Malaysia (15%), China (5%) and Singapore (4%). Myanmar migrant workers represent the largest migrant population in Thailand where 76 per cent of the total migrant workforce is from Myanmar (Huguet and Chamratrithirong 2011).

As the chapter 5 elaborates, the contribution the Myanmar migrant workers make in the countries of destination and to their own country, and the gains for the migrants through the migration process whether they are economic or social should be further understood and recognized. Yet, it is as important to acknowledge the continued challenges Myanmar migrant workers face during the entire migration process as the current environments leave sufficient space in which migrant

workers get deceived, exploited, extorted and harassed. Migrant workers who enter destination countries through irregular channels or lose their legal status when they arrive at their destination are most vulnerable to abuse and exploitation.

Internal labour migration has also become a growing phenomenon in Myanmar. With Myanmar's economy moving away from agriculture toward industry and services, pace of out-migration of agricultural labourers, especially among the landless and small scale farmers, is expected to be on the increase and they will constitute a large part of growing urbanization landscape. For the level of urbanization in Myanmar to reach the ASEAN average, this will involve nearly 1/3 of its rural population moving to urban areas. Growing urban and peri-urban problems – those of spontaneous settlement, access to water and sanitation, security, transportation and exclusion to name a few – need to be forecasted and dealt with in conjunction with the increasing rural-urban migration flow, as the problems will only get larger and more complex as the migration flow increases.

Migration and Development

Migration and development are inseparable and interdependent processes in a globalizing world. Migration cannot be a substitute for development, and development is not necessarily dependent on migration, but each of these two processes can profoundly influence the other. Migration has emerged as an increasingly common livelihood strategy. Migration has always played a vital role in providing people with a means to maintain and sustain life. People have gathered resources and accumulated wealth through migration that has helped them to address poverty.

In 2015, developing countries were estimated to receive about $441 billion out of the total worldwide remittance flows estimated to exceed $601 billion, nearly three times the amount of official development assistance (World bank 2016). The true size of remittances, including unrecorded flows through formal and informal channels, is believed to be significantly larger. Remittances are a primary and most direct example of the positive impact of migration on development, affecting countries of origin at both the household and national levels. For example, remittances increase the purchasing power of households, enabling them both to spend more on daily consumption, health, education, debt servicing and on savings. At the same time, remittances raise the living standards in recipient households and contribute to poverty reduction. Remittances do not only contribute to improving standards of living of recipient households, they also have a positive knock-on effect on the local and national economy, if a suitable economic environment for the use of remittances, institutional arrangements for financial transfers, and availability of investment and business opportunities exist in the country of origin.

It is also important to note the some of the possible negative impacts of large remittance flows on countries of origin. At the macro level, these include currency appreciation, which affects exports, and aggravated regional inequalities between receiving and non-receiving areas. At the meso level, remittances can exacerbate social tension in communities as the gap between those receiving and not receiving remittances widens. Concentrated investment in real estate can inflate local prices for land, property and construction materials. Remittances can also generate a demand for imported, rather than locally produced goods. At the micro level, remittances can

foster dependency between recipients and senders, putting pressure on senders and worsening their living conditions in the sending countries. Similarly, the amounts that a sender can remit can be affected by currency devaluations and economic downturns in the sending country.

Migration and national development in Myanmar are interconnected. Migration can be both a cause and a result of development, while underdevelopment can be either alleviated or exacerbated by migration. Migration affects development and growth in Myanmar in at least three ways: changes in labour supply, changes in productivity due to gains or losses of human resources and skills, and the extent of migrants' remittances spent in the local economy and/or on community development efforts. For a labour-sending country such as Myanmar, the positive impacts on national development of safe migration into decent work include increased remittances, skills acquisition, lower unemployment, contributions to national foreign currency reserves, and poverty reduction. At the same time, migration may limit local development and perpetuate conditions of underdevelopment. For example, the availability of better wages abroad may drain migrant sending areas of labour and capital, creating poor conditions for the local production of goods and products. Other negative consequences may include brain drain and neglect of local activities such as agricultural production.

Remittances contribute significantly to Myanmar's development although it is difficult to measure and track as many choose to send money through unofficial channels. The World Bank reported that the official remittances to Myanmar in 2015 was 3.5 billion USD (World Bank 2015); however, it recognizes that the true size of the remittances, including unrecorded flows through formal and informal channels, is believe to be larger. The Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security was reported to have estimated the annual official and unofficial inflow of 8 billion USD to Myanmar.(Myanmar Times 2015) IOM estimated that 2.2 billion USD were sent back from Thailand to Myanmar in 2012 - 13, of which 83% were sent through unofficial channels and 78% were sent back to bordering states and region of Mon, Shan, Kayin and Thanintharyi. Remittances are significant sources of income to the migrant-sending households and regions with high international out-migration, but lacks in data.

Remittances sent home by Myanmar migrants working in Thailand are large and, circumstances permitting, could provide the means to contribute to Myanmar's economic development. These remittances are largely used for purposes of basic survival, with little in the way of funds left over for investment and other 'productive' purposes that would maximize their development impact. Equally, remittances sent home by Myanmar workers abroad are overwhelmingly made via various informal channels, negating the possibility that they could be 'leveraged up' via formal financial institutions, and minimising the dynamic economic effects they might otherwise trigger. Some measures have been introduced recently to make official transfers more attractive but more research is needed to better understand the barriers to using official channels and the reforms that are required.

Conclusion

Policy makers and practitioners need to develop a comprehensive understanding of the multidimensional phenomenon of migration and the multifarious challenges which come with it for individuals, families, communities and country as a whole, in order to manage it effectively. A

comprehensive and cooperative approach to international and internal migration management is required to deal with the migration phenomenon of this century. Such an approach will include policies and programmes encompassing diverse elements of migration management, including migration and development, facilitating migration, regulating migration, and forced migration. Given the cross-cutting nature of migration, an effective migration policy should be communicating to and integrated into national development agenda.

Chapter 2: Leveraging Migration for Development: A Review of Literature on Patterns and Movements in Myanmar

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Abstract

Since 2011, Myanmar has witnessed a slow, but steady political and economic transformation in a bid to begin its re-integration into the international community after decades of isolation. Over a period of five decades, between 1962 and 2011, the country grappled with issues of ethnic conflict, widespread poverty, minimal trade, and a massive reduction in the scope of economic opportunity available to its citizens. With the gradual opening up of Myanmar's borders to foreign trade and investment, along with a promising transition of political power following the November 2015 elections, the country's economy is now expected to grow 8.4% in 2016 and early (ADB 2016). In this dynamic environment, migration is considered to be one of the most important issues for Myanmar, with the levels of both internal and international migration expected to increase across all states and regions in the next decade. However, the phenomenon of internal movement as well as movement across its extensive borderline is not new to Myanmar. Nonetheless, the country stands at a critical moment wherein it is now possible to understand migration, particularly labour migration, and consequently leverage it for development.

Introduction and methodological note

This paper combines quantitative data from a variety of different sources, as well as qualitative information which serves to provide context to the former, to attempt to provide specific insight into available data and knowledge on labour migration in Myanmar, and provide an overview of current trends and issues around migration in Myanmar. This paper relies on a broad-based literature review of relevant publications from different sources, which include government reports, publications produced by think tanks, research institutes, international organizations and local

NGOs, and international and local news media. The choice of sources was guided by the reliability of the source (organizational as well as individual in the case of news media), and the time frame within which a particular publication was made available to the public. Where possible, this paper has tried to use the most recently available statistical data, while at the same time ensuring that the reliability and validity of the source is not compromised. However, it should be noted that the data set for migration in Myanmar is patchy, and although comparative data has been provided where possible, data is drawn from studies which relied on different methodologies, and, the reader should also note that much of the data is unable to account for irregular cross-border migration from Myanmar. We also recognize that there still exists a wealth of information on the subject that has not been incorporated into this paper, and it is hoped that readers might find the section on *Further Reading* useful in this regard.

1. Migration in Myanmar: brief overview

Population: 51, 486,253 (Department of Population 2015)

- **Male**: 24, 824,586 (48.22%)
- **Female**: 26, 661,667 (51.78%)

Percentage of urban population: 30%

Net Migration Rate (2015-2020): -0.2 migrants/1,000 population (UNDESA 2016)

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

Number of Myanmar nationals living abroad: 2, 021,910[1](Department of Population 2015)

Major Corridors:

- **Major source regions**: **to Thailand** (Mon, 27.2%; Kayin, 21.5%; Tanintharyi, 13.2%; Shan, 12.6%; Bago, 9%); **to Malaysia** (Yangon, 15%; Mon, 11%); Mandalay, 10%; Magway, 10%; Bago, 9%; Rakhine, 9%; Sagaing, 9%; Chin, 9%); **to China** (Shan, 46%; Magway, 12%) (Department of Population 2015)
- **Major destinations**: Thailand (70.2%); Malaysia (15%); China (4.6%); Singapore (4%); USA (1.8%) (Department of Population 2015)

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[1]*The Ministry of Immigration and Population (MOIP) considers Census data as being underreported and has provided a new estimate of 4.25 million Myanmar nationals living abroad. The new estimate was presented by MOIP during Census Data Users Consultation Workshop in February 2016. The figure was reported by IOM in internal communication with the author.*

Assistance/Support to migrate to Thailand (% of migrants by source of assistance/support): Family/friends (43.3%); brokers (37.7%); on their own (18.5%); formal recruitment process established in MoU b/w Myanmar and Thailand (0.5%) (IOM and ARCM 2013)

Major Occupational Sectors (by gender): **Female** (domestic work, garment production and sales, fishery related, construction, other manufacturing); **Male** (construction, other manufacturing, agriculture and husbandry, garment production and sales, fishery related). *Data only available for Thailand* (IOM and ARCM 2013)*.*

Migrant levels of income (mean monthly income by gender): 219 USD (female migrants); 235 USD (male migrants). *Data only available for Thailand.*[2]

INTERNAL MIGRATION

Number of Migrants: 9, 391,126 (Department of Population 2015)
- Male: 4, 453,017
- Female: 4, 938,109
- Population with state/region of usual residence different from state/region of birth: 4, 834,345 (10.1% of total Myanmar population)

Main Reasons for Movement (from place of previous usual residence): Followed family (40.8%); Employment/searching employment (34.3%); Marriage (15.7%); Education (2.2%); Conflict (0.7%) (Department of Population 2015)

Geographical patterns (by migration across/within a state/region): Migration for work across state/region (62%); migration for work within state/region (38%)[3] (ILO 2015)

Major Occupational Sectors: Construction (28%), manufacturing (25%), agriculture (11%), mining (10.5%), domestic services (5.7%), wholesale/retail trade (4.5%), fishing (4%), transportation (3.3%), food/beverage services (2.5%), forestry (2.2%), building/land services (0.7%), amenity services (0.6%), hotels (0.4%), and sex services (0.08%) (ILO 2015)

Assistance/Support in Recruitment and Migration (% of migrants by source of assistance/support): 72% of all migrants surveyed received some type of assistance from another person. Among these (5,233 out of 7,295 respondents) 86% received assistance from friends/family/other acquaintances, 9% used a labour broker, and 5% used other sources.(ILO 2015)

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[2] Ibid. Note: The minimum wage in Thailand is THB 300 per day. Mean income data is based on the exchange rate of 1 USD = 35 THB.

[3] Note: The ILO study is based on a sample size of 7,295 internal labour migrants. The ILO study uses a non-probability sampling method, and statistical findings related to this study cannot be said to represent the entire population.

Migrant levels of income (average income per month): MMK 108,180 or $85 (overall); MMK 121,775 or $96 (males); MMK 82,319 or $65 (females) (ILO 2015)

Forced Labour and Trafficking: 26% (1,908 respondents) in situation of forced labour; 14% (1,007 respondents) in situation of trafficking for forced labour.(ILO 2015)[4]

REMITTANCES

Inflows: USD 3.468 billion (World Bank 2015); USD 8 billion (MOLES, 2015)[5] (Myanmar Times 2015) (*Note: The discrepancy between these two figures arises due to differences in estimation methods, with the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security (MOLES) accounting for official as well as estimated unofficial flows.*

Outflows: USD 773 million (2014) (World bank 2016)

Bilateral remittance inflows (2015): Thailand (USD 1.8 billion); Saudi Arabia (USD 954 million); United States (USD 189 million); Bangladesh (USD 143 million): Malaysia (USD 92 million) (World Bank 2015)

Remittance receiving households: 3.75%[6] (Griffiths 2016)

Remittances as % of income in receiving households: 49.1% (Griffiths 2016)

Remittance dependent households: 2.03%[7] (Griffiths 2016)

Main remittance receiving regions (% of households receiving remittances): Kayin (9.6%, highest); Mon (6.15%); Chin (4.99%); Yangon, Mandalay, Ayeyarwaddy, Shan, Kayah (<1%, lowest)[8] (Griffiths 2016)

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[4] Note: The ILO study used purposive snowball sampling method to reach out to respondents in order to find workers who have experienced exploitations, which means that the findings are not representative of general internal migrants, and are biased towards those who were more likely to be in the exploitative situations.

[5] Figure reported as according to the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security. Note: The discrepancy between these two figures arises due to differences in estimation methods, with the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security (MOLES) accounting for official as well as estimated unofficial flows

[6] Note: The source defines remittance receiving households as those who reported remittances as being at least 10% of their income, but not necessarily their main income source.

[7] Note: The source defines remittance dependent households as those who reported remittances as their major source of income.

[8] Note: The figures have been estimated by dividing the remittance receiving households in each region by the total remittance receiving households in Myanmar. All figures are based on sample data.

2. Legal and Operational Definitions

Internal Migrant Worker

There is no internationally recognized standard legal and/or operational definition of an internal migrant worker. Similarly, no legal definition of internal migrant worker has been formally adopted by the Government of Myanmar. Therefore it is important to understand data on internal migration in relation to how it is operationally defined by the data source.

The 2014 Myanmar Population and Housing Census defined internal migration as inter-township movement of more than six months. The definition of internal migration used in the Census is designed to capture permanent or semi-permanent changes of residence. The criterion of six months used to establish the time spent in their usual residence results in those who move on a temporary basis of less than six months not being included in the definition of migration. Furthermore, internal migration is defined in the Census as movement between townships.

The ILO developed an operational definition of internal migrant worker in the context of Myanmar for the purpose of its migration study. It defines an internal labour migrant as "a person who migrates or who has migrated from one place to another inside the country with a view to being employed", beyond his/her village or ward of origin for duration of more than 1 month.[9] (ILO 2015)

International Migrant Worker

A migrant worker (*de facto* international) is defined in the Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143) as "a person who migrates or who has migrated from one country to another with a view to being employed otherwise than on his own account and includes any person regularly admitted as a migrant worker."[10] (ILO 1975)

Myanmar has not ratified the Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975.

The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, adopted by General Assembly resolution 45/158 of 18 December 1990 defines the term migrant worker refers to "a person who is to be engaged, is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a State of which he or she is not a national."

The 1975 ILO Convention is not as comprehensive since it limits migrant workers to a person who has been regularly admitted. Furthermore, the 1975 Convention also has fewer signatories among member countries of the United Nations.

Forced Labour

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[9] Note: ILO defines internal migration as including movement of more than 1 month.
[10] Convention No. 143 is a supplementary provision to the Convention concerning Migrations in Abusive Conditions and the Promotion of Equality of Opportunity and Treatment of Migrant Workers.

At the international level, forced labour is defined in the ILO Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) as "all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily."[11]

The Myanmar national legal framework on forced labour is largely consistent with the international standard. According to the 2012 amendment to the Ward or Village Tract Administration Law, forced labour is "…to exact or forcibly take another person's labour or service, which was not offered by their own will, under threat of punishment or by affecting their interests…"[12] (ILO 2015)

Human Trafficking

At the international level, human trafficking is defined within the UN Trafficking Protocol, 2000. The standard is equally applicable to trafficking in persons in the context of labour migration.

According to both Myanmar national and international law, a case of trafficking may be established when three elements are present: these are referred to as the "act", the "means" and the "purpose (exploitation)".

These are defined in Myanmar's Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law, as follows:

The act

"…the recruitment, transportation, transfer, sale, purchase, lending, hiring, harbouring or receipt of persons after committing any of the following acts for the purpose of exploitation…"[13]

The means

"*…threat, use of force or other form of coercion; abduction; fraud; deception; abuse of power or of position taking advantage of the vulnerability of a person; or giving or receiving of money or benefit to obtain the consent of the person having control over another person…*"[14]

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[11] Exceptions are provided for work required by compulsory military service, normal civic obligations, as a consequence of a conviction in a court of law (provided that the work or service in question is carried out under the supervision and control of a public authority and that the person carrying it out is not hired to or placed at the disposal of private individuals, companies or associations), in cases of emergency, and for minor communal services performed by the members of a community in the direct interest of the community. For the full text of ILO Convention No. 29 (1930), see www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C029 .

[12] Note: The original law was adopted on 24 February 2012 and the amendment on 28 March 2012 as provision 27.A, to be inserted in section 27 of the original law.

[13] Ibid, p. 16. Note: See the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law (2005), Article 3(a). Note: The UN Trafficking Protocol "acts" are slightly narrower, including only "recruitment, transport, transfer, harbouring and receipt of persons".

[14] Ibid. Note: See the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law (2005), Article 3(a) 1–6. Note: The "means" are the same in meaning to those in the UN Trafficking Protocol. However, the UN Trafficking Protocol states that the "means" are not necessary to establish a case of trafficking for children, while the Myanmar law does not include this application of the law.

The purpose (exploitation)
"…receipt or agreement for receipt of money or benefit for the prostitution of one person by another, other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour, forced service, slavery, servitude, debt bondage or the removal and sale of organs from the body."[15]

3. Migration profile of Myanmar

Overall trends

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) identifies Myanmar as the largest migration source country in the Greater Mekong Sub region (GMS), with up to 10% of the Myanmar population migration internationally (IOM 2015). The 2014 Census data shows that almost 20% of the population now comprises of internal migrants (Department of Population 2015). Another study that included migration as a thematic component and was conducted in 6 state/regions across Myanmar also revealed that 17 - 38% of all households have a family member migrating, and overall village population migration levels range from less than 2.5% in Shan State to over 15% in Mandalay Region (LIFT/World Bank).

The main drivers of both internal and international migration in Myanmar are: (IOM/Internal presentation 2016)

1. Seasonal fluctuations of employment and income opportunities in rural areas;
2. Oversupply of labour in rural areas;
3. Increased levels of education among populations living in rural areas, and the unavailability of jobs that match their skills;
4. Crop failures and income related shocks;
5. Natural disasters and environmental changes;
6. Loss of livelihoods due to conflict;
7. Better job security and stability as well as better incomes in destination areas;
8. Greater professional opportunities in destination areas, especially outside Myanmar.

Broadly speaking, a variety of push and pull factors affect the patterns of movement in the context of Myanmar. These factors and the emerging patterns also have crucial implications for the country.

Some of the key implications are: (IOM/Internal presentation 2016)

1. A notable increase in rural to urban, non-seasonal internal migration;

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[15] Ibid. Note: See the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law (2005), Article 3(a), Explanation (1). Note: The UN Trafficking Protocol forms of exploitation are explained using different terms: "prostitution of others, sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery or similar practices, removal of organs, other types of exploitation". At the international level, servitude and debt bondage are considered forms of forced labour, while the Myanmar Government includes them as distinct forms of exploitation.

2. Lack of adequate manpower in rural areas during the agricultural peak seasons, resulting in higher labour costs, and mechanization or discontinuation of farming;
3. Greater incidence of family migration as opposed to individual migration in the case of internal migration, and vice-versa in the case of international migration;
4. The emergence of remittances as a main income source among households;
5. Increasing income gap between migrant-sending households and non-migrant households (especially in the case of international migration);
6. The emergence of migration as a viable livelihood choice, increasingly relied upon by rural households;
7. Skewed age distributions in migrant source areas within the country (more elderly and children) and in destination areas (presence of a more young, productive population);
8. Possibility of increased inter-ethnic issues and/or tensions related to escalated levels of migration, especially in Mon, Kayin, Shan and Rakhine;
9. A shift towards migrant sensitive urban planning in key urban centres within the country;
10. Greater opportunity to ensure the financial inclusion of migrants and their families through savings and credit products.

Although formal channels of migration, especially labour migration, are increasingly being made available to Myanmar migrants, majority of the migrant outflows from the country are still considered to be irregular, passing through unofficial channels that often unsafe for the migrants as well as their families. Smuggling and trafficking across international borders is a lucrative industry in the GMS. Similarly, the risk of exploitation also exists in internal migration, with a study by the ILO identifying that 26% of the surveyed internal labour migrants are in a situation of forced labour, and 14% are in a situation of trafficking for forced labour. (ILO 2015)

Safe migration, therefore, is an important concern in the context of Myanmar. The impediments to safe migration for Myanmar migrants include: (IOM/Internal presentation 2016)

1. Insufficiently regulated migration brokerage;
2. Lack of safe recruitment mechanisms for low skilled migrants from rural areas;
3. Lack of information and knowledge sharing on safe migration practices;
4. Lack of written employment contracts; unsafe and unhealthy working conditions in destination areas;
5. Irregular documentation and protection in the case of destinations outside Myanmar;
6. Weak legal enforcement or official corruption.

It is evident that the phenomenon of migration in Myanmar is complex, dynamic, and increasingly relevant in order to understand the opportunities and challenges that confront the long-term goal of inclusive development that benefits all citizens equally.

4. International migration from Myanmar

The 2014 Myanmar Population and Housing Census counted 2, 021,910 former conventional household members living abroad (Department of Population 2015). Out of these, 1, 233,168 (61%) are male and 788,742 (39%) are female. Furthermore, the Census also reports that 1, 684,414 (83.3%) are between the ages of 15 and 39, with a significantly large number (over 1 million) in this age group are male (Department of Population 2015).

It should be noted that Census data does not account for the movement of entire households/families, and although actual numbers are likely to be higher, no official estimate has been provided by the Myanmar government. However, the Ministry of Immigration and Population (MOIP) considers the Census numbers as underreported, and has provided an unofficial estimate of 4.25 million Myanmar nationals living abroad (IOM/Internal presentation 2016)

Apart from the government data, information on the number of Myanmar nationals living abroad is also available through the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA). The UNDESA data estimates that approximately 2, 881,797 or 5.08% of the total Myanmar population lived outside their country of origin in 2015 (UNDESA 2016).

Main Destination Countries[16]

The 2014 Census reported migration data according to country of residence outside of Myanmar. Out of the 2 million Myanmar people living abroad:

- 1,418,472 (70.2%) are in **Thailand**;
- 303,996 (15%) in **Malaysia**;
- 92,263 (4.6%) in **China**;
- 79,659 (4%) in **Singapore**;
- 37,577 (1.8%) in the **United States**;
- 17,975 (0.9%) in India;
- 14,592 (0.7%) in Korea;
- 7,597 (0.4%) in Japan, and
- the remaining 49,779 (2.5%) in 'other' countries (Department of Population 2015)

The UNDESA database on international migrant stock in 2015 reports migration data by country of destination and origin. Out of the 2.8 million Myanmar people living abroad:

- 1,978,348 (68.6%) are in **Thailand**;

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[16] Note: As highlighted previously, the above data relies on data from two different sources (2014 Myanmar Census and UNDESA) and important discrepancies must be noted. The Census identifies China, Singapore, and Japan as some of the major destination countries, but these countries were not presented in the UNDESA data. The UNDESA reports Saudi Arabia and Bangladesh as destination countries while these were not reported as major destinations in the Census findings.

- 252,292 (8.7%) in **Malaysia**;
- 202,720 (7%) in **Saudi Arabia**;
- 201,346 (6.9%) in **Bangladesh**;
- 103,291 (3.5%) in the **United States**;
- 50,587 (1.7%) in India, and
- 11,514 (0.4%) in Korea.(UNDESA 2016)

Data for China, Japan, and Singapore is not presented on the UNDESA database.

Major Corridors

According to the Census (which counts 2 million international migrants from Myanmar), the major corridors of international migration from Myanmar are focused on three destination countries, namely Thailand, Malaysia, and China, which account for almost 90% of the international migrant stock from the country (Department of Population 2015).

The major source regions within Myanmar from where people are migrating to these three destinations are spread out across the country. Mon state is reported as the state/region of origin for 27.2% of the migrating population to Thailand, followed by Kayin (21.5%), Tanintharyi (13.2%), Shan (12.6%), and Bago (9%). Migration to Malaysia happens primarily from Yangon (15%), followed by Mon (11%), Mandalay (10%), Magway (10%), Bago (9%), Rakhine (9%), Sagaing (9%), and Chin (9%). Similarly, majority of the migrant population in China originates from Shan (46%), followed by Magway (12%). Overall, the Census reports that the major source regions of both the male and female migrating populations are Mon state and Kayin state (Department of Population 2015).

The Census data can also be used to highlight key differences in the migrant stock according to major destination and gender:

Male (total males reported to be living abroad – 1, 233, 168)

- Thailand   66% of males reported to be living abroad
- Malaysia   20%
- China   4%

Female (total females reported to be living abroad - 788,742)

- Thailand   77% of females reported to be living abroad
- Malaysia   7%
- China   5%

The male-female ratio of international migrants from Myanmar is 69:31, except for Singapore where female migrants outnumber male migrants (51% of migrants in Singapore are female). Migrants to Malaysia and Korea are predominantly male (81% and 97% respectively), which

reflects the gendered nature of employment opportunities available to Myanmar nationals in these countries.

It is believed that majority of migration flows to Thailand, India, and China are through irregular channels. This is of particular importance in the case of international migrant stock flowing from Myanmar into China, wherein the most reliable and up-to-date information on the number of Myanmar nationals residing in China is only available through the 2014 Census report. However, Census numbers are considered underreported, and largely unrepresentative of irregular flows between Myanmar and major destination countries.

Migration from Myanmar to Thailand

The Myanmar-Thailand migration corridor is perhaps one the most extensively researched subjects pertaining to cross-border migration in the GMS. This paper relies on a combination of official reports by the IOM, studies conducted by NGOs, and publications written by independent research institutes and individuals, to inform readers on key aspects of this complex phenomenon, with a special focus on labour migration. It is widely acknowledged that cross-border migration between Myanmar and Thailand is a phenomenon that has occurred for decades, beginning with irregular flows that were gradually regularized through official government interventions, mostly on part of the Thai government. In 2003, Thailand signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Myanmar on cooperation in the employment of migrant workers, which opened up space for long-term dialogue and policy making on the issue.[17]

Thailand is a destination for both regular skilled workers from Myanmar, as well as irregular low-skilled workers employed in labour intensive industries such as agriculture, construction and manufacturing, as well as trading and service (Chantavanich and Vungsiriphisal 2012). Certain sectors of the Thai economy are highly dependent on Myanmar migrant labour, where 76 per cent of the total migrant workforce is from Myanmar (Huguet and Chamratrithirong 2011). Myanmar migrant workers in Thailand also send back billions of baht worth of remittances to their families in Myanmar. With the promise of political change and rapid economic development looming large over Myanmar, many of these migrants are now keen on returning back to Myanmar. The question of return migration however, is heavily circumstantial, with issues such as available savings, economic opportunities on return, competitive wages, political stability, and adequate infrastructure dominating the migration landscape for these workers (Huguet and Chamratrithirong 2011).

 Demographics

The IOM conducted a comprehensive assessment of Myanmar migrants in Thailand, based on a population size of over 100,000 and a sample size of 5,027 across seven target provinces in Thailand, namely Chiang Mai, Tak, Kanchanaburi, Ranong, Bangkok, Samut Sakhon, and Surat

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[17] See full text of the MoU here
http://www.themimu.info/sites/themimu.info/files/documents/MOU_Between_Thailand_and_Myanmar_Cooperation_in_Employment_of_Workers_ENG.pdf

Thani. These provinces accounted for 56% of all registered Myanmar migrants in Thailand (IOM and ARCM 2013). Among the surveyed migrants, 51.6% were male and 48.2% were female (0.2% no answer. Around 98% of the migrants belonged to the age group of 18-60 years, with there being more females in the 15-24 year old age group than males.

A majority (76.4%) of surveyed migrants had come to Thailand from the states and regions bordering Thailand, namely Mon state, Shan state, Tanintharyi region, Kayin state, and Kayah state. Around 20.2% came from other regions, and 2.5% from other states that do not share a border with Thailand (0.9% no answer).

Table 2.1 Origins of Migrants in Thailand (State/Region)   (IOM and ARCM 2013)

State/Region within Myanmar	% of surveyed migrants originating from state/region
Kachin	0.7%
Sagaing	0.4%
Chin	0.2%
Mandalay	2.2%
Magway	0.9%
Bago	9.3%
Rakhine	1.6%
Ayeyarwaddy	2.3%
Yangon	5%
Shan	19%
Kayah	0.1%
Kayin	14.5%
Mon	26.7%
Tanintharyi	16.2%

In terms of ethnicity, the Bamar comprised the largest ethnic group among the surveyed migrants (43.5%), followed by Shan (18.3%), Mon (15.1%), Kayin (12.5%), and other groups (10.6%) which included the Kayah, Rakhine, Kachin, Chin among others (IOM and ARCM 2013).

One third or 35.7% of the migrants came from urban areas within Myanmar, while 64.3% came from rural areas. Although a majority of respondents (59.8%) reported having adequate living conditions in Myanmar prior to migration, those belonging to the Kayah, Kachin and Chin ethnic

groups and Muslims reported more difficult living conditions as compared to other groups in the sample (IOM and ARCM 2013).

In terms of employment status prior to migration, 21% of the surveyed migrants were unemployed, 38.8% were wage labourers in sectors such as agriculture (10.9%), services (6.7%), educational and social work (3.5%), and other (6.2%). The remaining 40.2% were self-employed, including those with their own farms (32.4%) and merchants (7.8%) (IOM and ARCM 2013).

Finally, in terms of levels of educational among surveyed migrants, more female migrants reported lower levels of education (no education and primary education), as well as higher levels (university and vocational education. Male migrants were three times more likely to have received informal education from institutions such as monasteries (IOM and ARCM 2013).

Reasons for migrating

Majority of migrants moved to Thailand for economic reasons, with around 74.9% of surveyed migrants citing factors such as higher income or better employment opportunities as their primary reasons for migration. Personal reasons such as following friends and family or desire for personal experience and exposure were cited by 13.4% of the migrants. Around 7% cited security/safety reasons, and 4.6% cited better living conditions and services in Thailand as their primary reason for migration (IOM and ARCM 2013).

A disaggregation of data according to ethnic group revealed that economic reasons were the primary reason for migration among all ethnic groups, especially the Bamar. On the other hand, the Shan had the highest percentage (22.6%) of those citing security/safety issues, followed by Kayin (7.2%) (IOM and ARCM 2013).

Assistance/support in migration

Among the surveyed migrants, 43.3% came to Thailand through arrangements made by family and friends, 37.7% through brokers, and 18.5% on their own. Only 0.5% of the migrants came through the formal recruitment process stipulated in the MoU signed between Myanmar and Thailand on cooperation in the employment of migrant workers (IOM and ARCM 2013).

Shan state had the highest number of migrants assisted by friends and family, while the highest number of migrants who migrated with the assistance of brokers came from Mon state. The use of brokers was higher among migrants from the five states and region bordering Thailand, than among migrants from non-border states and regions (IOM and ARCM 2013).

Employment Sectors

The IOM-ARCM assessment identifies the top three employment sectors among surveyed migrants in each target province in Thailand. In Bangkok (which accounts for 33% of the total sample), the major employment sectors are garment production and sales (23%), other

manufacturing (20.6%), and domestic work (17%). In Samut Sakhon (which accounts for 24% of the total sample), the major employment sectors are fishery related (29.3%), other manufacturing (15.5%), and fishery (15.2%). In Chiang Mai (which accounts for 14% of the total sample), the major employment sectors are construction (52.2%), other services (11.1%), and food and beverage sales (10%). In Tak (which accounts for 12% of the total sample), the major employment sectors are agriculture and animal husbandry (30.5%), construction (22.2%), and other services (10.3%). In Ranong (which accounts for 7% of the total sample), the major employment sectors are fishery related (28.5%), construction (18.8%), and fishery (16.7%). In Surat Thani (which accounts for 7% of the total sample), the major employment sectors are agriculture and animal husbandry (32.3%), agriculture and animal husbandry related (26.6%), and food and beverage sales (6.3%). In Kanchanaburi (which accounts for 4% of the total sample), the major employment sectors are other labour work (43.9%), agriculture and animal husbandry (32.2%), and construction (6.7%).

The major employment sectors by gender can be identified as:

Male

- Construction
- Other manufacturing
- Agriculture and husbandry
- Garment production and sales
- Fishing related

Female

- Domestic work
- Garment production and sales
- Fishery related
- Construction
- Other manufacturing

Employment Conditions

Female migrants reported lower levels of income than male migrants. Among the lowest income group, there were nearly twice as many females as males. Females were found to be earning a mean monthly income of 219 USD, while males were earning a mean monthly income of 235 USD. On average, monthly wage earners were more likely to be earning at least the minimum wage or more as compared to daily wage earners - whereas 38.2% of the daily wage earners earned less than the minimum wage, only 25.2% of monthly wage earners earned less than the minimum wage (IOM and ARCM 2013).[18]

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[18] The minimum wage in Thailand is THB 300 per day. Mean income data is based on the exchange rate of 1 USD = 35 THB.

Migrants with full or temporary documentation were found to be earning higher incomes on average, as compared to those without documentation. Around 65% of migrants who earned less than half the minimum wage were found to be without documentation. At the same time however, higher percentages migrants with coloured cards[19] were also found to be receiving salaries between 150 - 300 THB and below 150 THB per day (IOM and ARCM 2013).

In terms of working conditions, majority of the migrants reported their conditions as adequate (59.8%) or good (32.8%), while those reporting working conditions as very good (3%), bad (4.1%) or very bad (0.2%) comprised only a small minority of surveyed migrants (IOM and ARCM 2013).

Return migration

Around 79.9% of surveyed migrants expressed a willingness to return to Myanmar in the future, while 20.1% of migrants wished to stay in Thailand or had no intention of returning at the time of survey. The difference according to gender was negligible. Among those who expressed willingness to return, 82% indicated that recent economic and political changes in Myanmar have influenced their decisions (IOM and ARCM 2013).

A migrant's length of stay in Thailand was found to be one of the strongest determinants of his/her willingness to return. Among migrants who had lived in Thailand for more than 30 years, only 44.1% expressed a willingness to return, indicating that the longer a migrant has stayed in in Thailand, the less willing they are to return. Similarly, the migrants with colour cards, who thus have an option for permanent residency in Thailand, the less willing they are to return (IOM and ARCM 2013).

In terms of reasons for migrating to Thailand, those who cited economic reasons for migration comprised a higher proportion (81%) among those willing to return, while those cited safety and security reasons comprised a slightly lower proportion (74.9%). Similarly, those who cited personal reasons, and better living conditions in Thailand also comprised a lower proportion. It is worth noting that the willingness to return among respondents who claimed to have fled Myanmar due to security/safety concerns is much higher than the willingness to return expressed by displaced persons living in the refugee camps along the Thai-Myanmar border (IOM and ARCM 2013).

Despite the fact that a lower (though still significant) proportion of people who migrated to Thailand for personal reasons are willing to return, the most common primary reasons for wanting to return to Myanmar were found to be personal (77.9% of surveyed migrants). The most cited secondary reason was changes happening in Myanmar (43.3% of surveyed migrants). Upon return, majority of migrants (77.6%) wish to go back to their hometowns or villages. Majority of migrants expressed willingness to engage in four job types upon return: farming their own land (32.7%), opening a business (20.9%), selling food and beverages (19.3%), and engaging in trade and retail (14.3%).

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[19] Colored cards are issued by the Royal Thai Government to "stateless" ethnic minorities in Thailand in an attempt to provide them with a form of identification and eventual permanent residency and citizenship.

A significant concern among those willing to return was the unavailability of jobs in Myanmar that adequately match the skills they learned in Thailand (ibid).

A policy review conducted in 2012 found evidence to support the concern migrants have regarding job availability on return. Migrants were found to be more willing to move back to Myanmar in the presence of an "enabling working environment" even if the wage received in Myanmar was lower than in Thailand. For example, in the case of less-skilled workers, the difference between wages offered by local subcontractors were reported to be much lower than those offered by international contractors such as the Italian-Thai Development Co. (ITD) which offered a daily wage of MMK 7,000 or USD 10 to workers in the Dawei Deep Seaport Project, which forms a part of the SEZ and infrastructure project in Tanintharyi Region (Chantavanich and Vungsiriphisal 2012).

5. Internal Migration

Demographics

The 2014 Myanmar Housing and Population Census counted 9, 391,126 internal migrants (19.6% of the total population of Myanmar), out of which 4, 453,017 were male and 4, 938,109 were female (Department of Population 2015). Additionally, the population with state/region of usual residence was different from the state/region of birth totaled 4, 834,345 people or roughly 10% of the total population. However, Census data does not include seasonal migration of less than 6 months, and intra-township migration, both of which are believed to be large numbers.[20] Due to the seasonality of agricultural employment in Myanmar, rural to rural, rural to urban, or intra and inter-regional seasonal migration in both source and destination areas is believed to be widespread.

In the context of internal migration, Census data is believed to be more reliable than other surveys despite its limitations.[21] However, a few thematic studies based on sample data have been carried out to map internal migration patterns in Myanmar, and yielded insightful results. A survey on internal labour migration was conducted by the Internal Labour Organization (ILO) in 2015. A total of 7,295 internal labour migrants were interviewed. The key demographic results from the survey are as follows: (ILO 2015)

- 94% of the respondents were found to be 18 years or older;
- 66% were male, and 34% were female;
- Around 72% identified themselves as ethnic Bamar, while 27% were of other recognized ethnicities in Myanmar;
- 90% of the respondents were Buddhist, 9% were Christian, and the remaining 1% were Muslim, Hindu or Animist;

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[20] The 2014 Myanmar Population and Housing Census defines internal migration as inter-township movement of more than 6 months.

[21] The key limitations of Census data are the exclusion of seasonal migration of less than 6 months and intra-township movement, and non-enumerated populations.

- The average household size of respondents was five members, with an average of two members engaged in economic activities;
- 63% had completed education up until grade nine, 24% had started high school, however only 6% were found to have graduated.

Census data as well as information from smaller studies suggests that gender is a determinant of migration patterns. However, while the Census recorded more female internal migrants than male, the ILO survey counted more male migrants than female migrants in its sample.

This could be due to a combination of different factors, including that 1) the Census counts all movement whereas the ILO survey only reaches out to workers (i.e. accompanying family members, who are also migrants, are not the target of the study), 2) the ILO survey is not a representative survey and the gender ratio is biased, 3) the Census covers the entire nation but the ILO has smaller coverage, 4) the Census does not count the movement of less than 6 months but other studies do 5) the Census counts inter-township movement within Yangon (which also includes residential migration).

The Qualitative Social and Economic Monitoring (QSEM) survey, conducted in 2015 across 6 states/regions of Myanmar, also concluded that women were less inclined to migrate than men (LIFT/World Bank). In QSEM's survey regions, the vast majority of women who did migrate were found to prefer long term domestic migration to the urban areas of Yangon and Mandalay, with the notable exception of Chin and Shan states from where women were more likely to migrate internationally(Department of Population 2015).

Main reason for movement

The Census recorded data on the main reasons for movement from the place of previous usual residence. Around 41% of the migrant population (9 million) followed family, 34.3% moved for employment or in search of employment, 15.7% due to marriage, 2.2% for education, 0.7% due to conflict, and 5.9% for other reasons.

The QSEM survey results from 2015 suggested a landscape of economic hardship/shock which drives internal migration among the interviewed migrants, while the ILO survey also found the lack of employment opportunities in source areas and a stated need for money among respondents as primary reasons for internal labour migration. Another survey on internal migration in Ayeyarwaddy and Magway regions revealed that 20% of migrants from both regions also moved in response to economic shocks faced by their households (LIFT/QSEM 2016). Broadly speaking therefore, it can be observed that majority of people move to look for work and income, with a smaller percentage of people moving to respond to economic shocks.

Migration is identified as a livelihood strategy by majority of the households in Myanmar whose members choose migration. For example, for households with medium landholding, it could mean diversifying the livelihood options for family members to protect against extreme events such as

crop failures, while for households with large landholding, it could mean opportunities for further skill development and better career prospects in urban areas like Yangon (Helvetas 2015).

Geographical Patterns

Census data shows that approximately 51% (4, 834,345) of the internal migrant population (9 million) moved across states/regions, and the remaining population moved within a given state/region. As highlighted in the previous sub-section reasons for movement, out of the 9 million, 34.3% had moved from their place of previous residence for the purpose of employment or searching for employment.

The ILO survey revealed that 62% of the surveyed labour migrants had migrated for work across states/regions, while 38% had migrated for work within a state/region (ILO 2015).[22]

The top-four destination areas of internal labour migrants surveyed by the ILO, according to state/region of origin, are as follows[23]:

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[22] Note: The ILO data is based on a purposive sampling method that suffers from an inherent sampling bias. Therefore, this data must not be used for comparison with Census figures.
[23] Ibid. Note: The table has been adapted from data published by the ILO. For a more detailed breakdown of origin-destination patterns, see report. Of the total 7,295 respondents in the survey, 7,236 gave sufficient information to determine migration trends at the state/region level.

Table 2.2 Destination areas of internal labour migrants

State/Region of Origin	State/Region of destination			
	Most common destination	**Second most common destination**	**Third most common destination**	**Fourth most common destination**
Ayeyarwaddy	Yangon (49%)	Ayeyarwaddy (20%)	Mon (16%)	Tanintharyi (7%)
Bago	Bago (25%)	Yangon (21%)	Tanintharyi (18%)	Mon (14%)
Chin	Chin (80%)	Kachin (9%)	Sagaing (5%)	Magway (2%)
Kachin	Kachin (90%)	Shan (2%)	Yangon (1%)	Mandalay (1%)
Kayah	Kayah (55%)	Shan (24%)	Yangon (6%)	Bago (2%)
Kayin	Kayin (63%)	Yangon (16%)	Mon (12%)	Bago (4%)
Magway	Yangon (18%)	Chin (17%)	Shan (17%)	Magway (15%)
Mandalay	Mandalay (35%)	Shan (25%)	Sagaing (7%)	Kachin (7%)
Mon	Mon (55%)	Kayin (31%)	Tanintharyi (7%)	Yangon (6%)
Nay Pyi Taw	Shan (30%)	Tanintharyi (19%)	Kayah (16%)	Yangon (9%)
Rakhine	Rakhine (53%)	Yangon (34%)	Kachin (6%)	Tanintharyi (2%)
Sagaing	Sagaing (52%)	Kachin (18%)	Chin (5%)	Shan (5%)
Shan	Shan (58%)	Mandalay (18%)	Kayah (13%)	Kachin (5%)
Tanintharyi	Tanintharyi (79%)	Yangon (10%)	Ayeyarwaddy (3%)	Bago (2%)
Yangon	Yangon (50%)	Mon (8%)	Tanintharyi (8%)	Chin (6%)

A similar study conducted across the Dry Zone, Shan state, and Southeast (Mon state) of Myanmar found that majority of the migration happening in Mon was intra-state, with migration from outside the state is mostly year-round and temporary in nature. Migration to Mon from the Dry Zone is low, as compared to Bago and Ayeyarwaddy. Certain townships in Mon state, namely Mawlamyine, Mudon, and Kyaikmaraw do attract migration from other states/regions, but majority of migrants in these townships live in temporary settlements (Helvetas 2015).[24]

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[24] The aforementioned study however, does not rely on primary data collection. It must be noted that there are other townships in Mon State which attract many migrant workers from other states/regions which are not covered by the study

The labour force in Shan state on the other hand preferred international migration to China, Thailand, and Malaysia. However, the state was found to attract migrants from the Dry Zone to work in mine, tea plantations, sugarcane farms, etc. Migrants from the Dry Zone also use Shan as a transit point for onward migration to China and Thailand. Intra-state migration in Shan is also high, including seasonal movement across villages or to peri-urban and urban centres such as Mongla township (Helvetas 2015)

In the Dry Zone (Magway and Mandalay regions), internal migration was found to be seasonal, temporary, and permanent. According the type of work available, the preferred destinations for internal labour migrants from the Dry Zone are (Helvetas 2015).

- Yangon, Nay Pyi Taw, and Mandalay for work in industrial zones, tea shops, restaurants, construction, and petty trading;
- Shan state and Southeast to work in tea, sugarcane, rubber plantations, and mines;
- North Kachin for work in gold and jade mines;
- Central Dry Zone for work in crude oil extraction.

Seasonal migration was found to be in the Dry Zone in the case of intra-region migration, whereas inter-region migration was found to be more temporary in nature (Helvetas 2015).

Among the key findings of a study conducted on formal sector internal migration in Myanmar, was that nearly three quarters (71%) of all migrants to the formal sector are from four regions: Ayeyarwaddy, Yangon, Mandalay, and Bago. Additionally, over half of all formal sector workers in Yangon were migrants. Over one third (38.9%) of formal sector workers in the sample of 15,000 had migrated for work from one state/region to another (Griffiths 2014).

A smaller study also found Yangon to be the most popular destination for migrants from Ayeyarwaddy and Magway for approximately 58% and 24% of the migrants respectively (LIFT/QSEM 2016).

The ILO survey also reveals some rural-urban migration patterns. Overall, 42.1% of the surveyed migrants had migrated a rural area to an urban area. Urban and rural migration across states/regions were found to be 52.5% 47.5% respectively. Migration across townships within a state/region was largely rural (64.7%)(ILO 2015).

Major Occupational Sectors

The ILO conducted its survey on internal labour migration across 14 occupational sectors, and the percentage of surveyed migrants working in each sector are as follows (ILO 2015)[25]:

- Construction (28%)
- Manufacturing (25%)

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[25] The ILO study used a purposeful sampling method and this data must be not be taken as representative of the entire internal labour migrant population in the country.

- Agriculture (11%)
- Mining (10.5%)
- Domestic services (5.7%)
- Wholesale/retail trade (4.5%)
- Fishing (4%)
- Transportation (3.3%)
- Food/beverage services (2.5%)
- Forestry (2.2%)
- Building/land services (0.7%)
- Amenity services (0.6%)
- Hotels (0.4%)
- Sex services (0.08%)

Research conducted on the Dry Zone, Shan state, and Southeast (Mon state) of Myanmar identified occupational sectors preferred by migrants. For instance, in Mon state, migrants from the Delta region (particularly Ayeyarwaddy) were mostly engaged in fisheries and rubber plantations, while migrants from the Dry Zone were involved in construction work, brick factory, and to a lesser extent rubber plantations. Although work in brick factories is seasonal in nature, it was found that workers often decide to stay on and find work in other, more permanent sectors such as construction (Helvetas 2015).

In Shan state, migrant workers from the Dry Zone predominantly work in mines, tea plantations, and sugarcane farms. Intra-state migration across townships is also observed, with work in casinos and construction sites often being preferred due to higher wages. Migration to Yangon is also observed (Helvetas 2015).

Migrants from the Dry Zone (Magway and Mandalay regions) migrate for work in a variety of sectors, including construction, industrial zones, tea, sugarcane and rubber plantations, and mining. Work in urban centres/cities and mines tends to be temporary or permanent in nature. On the other hand, work in agriculture or crude oil extraction is seasonal (Helvetas 2015).

Surveys conducted in Magway and Ayeyarwaddy regions revealed that among migrants who moved to Yangon from these regions, garment factory-work is perceived as highly sought after due to higher wages and regular, long term employment as compared to casual labour (LIFT/QSEM 2016).

Migrant Levels of Income

The ILO survey recorded an overall average migrant monthly income of MMK 108,180 ($85), with an average of MMK 121,775 ($96) for males and MMK 82,319 ($65) for females.[26] The survey also recorded average monthly incomes of migrants by occupational sector (except Sex services) and gender, and the data is as follows (ILO 2015):

Table 2.3 Average monthly income of migrants per sector

Occupational Sector	Average (mean) monthly income		
	Male migrants	**Female migrants**	**All migrants**
Agriculture	MMK 89,777 ($71)	MMK 82,088 ($65)	MMK 86,793 ($68)
Forestry	MMK 144,632 ($114)	MMK 120,464 ($95)	MMK 140,321 ($110)
Fishing	MMK 89,450 ($70)	MMK 84,541 ($67)	MMK 87,986 ($69)
Mining	MMK 145,033 ($114)	MMK 99,888 ($79)	MMK 139,774 ($110)
Manufacturing	MMK 103,032 ($81)	MMK 83,209 ($65)	MMK 92,872 ($73)
Amenity services	MMK 123,400 ($97)	MMK 66,429 ($52)	MMK 114,915 ($90)
Construction	MMK 139,670 ($110)	MMK 95,518 ($75)	MMK 130,577 ($103)
Wholesale/retail trade	MMK 88,685 ($70)	MMK 68,344 ($54)	MMK 79,434 ($62)
Transport of goods	MMK 143,880 ($113)	MMK 71,000 ($56)	MMK 138,760 ($109)
Hotels	MMK 99,000 ($78)	MMK 156,111 ($123)	MMK 116,724 ($92)
Food/beverage services	MMK 71,797 ($56)	MMK 65,210 ($51)	MMK 71,798 ($56)
Buildings/land service	MMK 106,071 ($83)	MMK 68,708 ($54)	MMK 95,952 ($75)
Domestic services	MMK 100,022 ($79)	MMK 60,520 ($48)	MMK 71,361 ($56)

A study (based on secondary research data) conducted by HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation in the Dry Zone, Shan state, and the Southeast (Mon state) of Myanmar found information on wages by main occupational sectors in the geographic areas where the study was focused.

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[26] This uses an exchange rate of 1,273 kyat per dollar, the rate at the time of writing (June 2016)

In Mon state, income information was collected from migrants working in the rubber plantation, agriculture, fisheries, construction, and brick factory sectors (Helvetas 2015):

Table 2.4 Average daily and monthly wages of migrants in Mon State by sector

Sector	Daily wages (MMK)	Monthly wages (MMK)
Rubber		
Tapping	--	50,000 - 60,000
Weeding/other	2,000	20,000
Agriculture	2,000	60,000
Fisheries		
Labourer	--	70,000
Captain	--	80,000 - 85,000 (10% of the catch)
Construction		
Unskilled	4,000	120,000
Semi-skilled	6,000	180,000
Brick Factory	4,000	120,000

In Shan state for example, migrant workers from Dry Zone working in tea plantations in Nahmsam township reported earning 100,000-150,000 MMK for 3 months with free accommodation provided by the plantation owner. In some townships, daily wages are paid. For example, in Pin Laung township, daily wages range from 2,000 MMK in the low season to 3,000-3,500 MMK in the peak season (Helvetas 2015).

In the Dry Zone, income information was collected from migrants working in the agriculture, oil processing, construction, sales, and restaurant sectors (Helvetas 2015):

Table 2.5 Average daily and monthly wages of migrants in the Dry Zone by sector

Sector	Daily wages (MMK)	Monthly wages (MMK)
Agriculture	2,000-3,000	60,000-90,000
Oil processing	4,000-4,500	120,000-135,000
Construction	4,500-6,000	135,000-180,000
Sales person	--	50,000-100,000
Restaurant	--	50,000-100,000

Assistance/support in migration

Multiple studies identify social networks as an important source of assistance and/or support to Myanmar migrants seeking to move internally as well as internationally. The existence of social networks is also crucial for migrants who wish to progress from internal to international migration (Helvetas 2015). The importance of social networks in facilitating migration opportunities has also been observed through variations in migration patterns at village level. For instance, in one township surveyed in Mandalay region in 2014, migration rates between villages were as low as 1.2% in one village, to as high as 15.6% in another (LIFT/World Bank 2014).

In the survey conducted by ILO, 72% of all surveyed migrants reported to have received some type of assistance from another person. Among these (5,233 out of 7,295 respondents), 86% received assistance from friends/family/other acquaintances, 9% used a labour broker, and 5% used other sources (ILO 2015).

Only 5% of the surveyed migrants stated that the person who had assisted them (family member, broker, or other) had a recruitment license. Men were slightly more likely (5%) to receive assistance from a licensed recruiter than women (3%)(ILO 2015).

Forced Labour and Trafficking

The ILO survey on internal labour migration identified that 26% of all respondents were in a situation of forced labour, while 14% were in a situation of trafficking for forced labour (ILO 2015). There were no differences between the rates of forced labour and trafficking among males and females. The survey also identified characteristics of respondents as well as situations, behaviours, and conditions associated with high rates of exploitation. These include being a child (especially female), having little or no education, household size, migration across state/region as compared to within, using a broker for job placement and travel, working as a domestic worker,

in mining, in fishing, in wholesale/retail trade, and in food/beverage service. Additionally, migrating to Ayeyarwaddy, Kayin, and Sagaing states/regions placed a higher risk of exploitation on migrants due to the level of exploitation in particular industries in these areas.

6. Remittances

Inflows

International remittances to Myanmar are predominantly sent through unofficial channels, and it is difficult to estimate the total volume of remittances. The Myanmar Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security (MOLES) was reported to have estimated the annual official and unofficial inflow of remittances at USD 8 billion in 2015 (Myanmar Times 2015). According to the World Bank, remittances worth a total of USD 3.468 billion flowed into Myanmar in 2015, increasing by over USD 300 million from 2014 when total inflows were recorded to be USD 3.103 billion, accounting for 4.8% of GDP share (World bank 2016). This is a significant increase from data published in 2010, when the total volume of remittances to Myanmar was worth USD 200 million(World Bank 2011). The IOM (internal communication, 2016) estimated that USD 2.17 billion were sent back from Thailand to Myanmar in 2012-2013, of which 83% were sent through unofficial channels, and 78.2% were sent back to states and regions bordering Thailand, including Mon, Kayin, Tanintharyi, Shan, and (IOM and ARCM 2013). A forthcoming study on impact of migration on the rural economy in Myanmar suggests that 65.7% households received cross-border remittances, with 35.8% of the household income coming from remittances (Griffiths 2016).

Outflows/Bilateral remittance flows

The World Bank estimated remittance outflows with USD 773 million from Myanmar in 2014, although this number might be larger if unofficial flows are taken into account (World bank 2016). According to the World Bank, the top five bilateral remittance inflows to Myanmar in 2015 came from Thailand (USD 1.8 billion), Saudi Arabia (USD 954 million), United States (USD 189 million), Bangladesh (USD 143 million), and Malaysia (USD 92 million) (World bank 2016)[27]

Remittances and household income

According to a study conducted by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) with the Myanmar Department of Rural Development (DRD), at the Union level 3.75% of all surveyed households were remittance receiving households (classified as those who reported remittances as being at least 10% of their income, but not necessarily their main income source). Among remittance receiving households, remittance accounted for 49.1% of total household income at

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[27] Note: It is important to keep in mind that remittance flows do not always correspond with migrant stock, and this is evident in the case of remittance flows from Saudi Arabia and Bangladesh to Myanmar. Although both countries have just over 200,000 Myanmar migrants, there is a significant difference in the amount of annual remittances sent. Furthermore, the official 2014 Myanmar Census does not enumerate Myanmar nationals living in Saudi Arabia and Bangladesh, giving rise to questions over whether this limitation has been overcome by the MOLES in its estimate of USD 8 billion worth of remittances. There is little clarity over the type of channels used by Myanmar migrants in Saudi Arabia and Bangladesh for sending money, as well as a comprehensive classification of recipients.

the Union level (Griffiths 2016) In terms of variation across states/regions, the study found that the lowest proportion of remittance receiving households were in Shan state (0.26%), and the highest proportion were in Kayin state (19.49%). Differences were observed in terms of the percentage of household income generated through remittances across the states/regions. For instance, remittances accounted for only 26.7% of household income in Shan state, but accounted for 87.3% of household income in Yangon even though only 0.78% of households in Yangon were receiving remittances (Griffiths 2016).

The FAO/DRD study also found that at the Union level 2.03% of surveyed households were remittance dependent households (classified as those who reported remittances as their major source of income). The lowest level of remittance dependence was observed in Shan state and highest Kayin state .In Yangon, remittance dependence was found to be 0.78%(Griffiths 2016).

The main remittance receiving states/regions according to the FAO/DRD study in terms of percentages of households receiving remittances are Kayin (9.6%), Mon (6.15%), and Chin (4.99%). On the other hand, in Yangon, Mandalay, Ayeyarwaddy, Shan, and Kayah, the proportion was almost negligible (<1%)(Griffiths 2016).

7. Safe migration

There are numerous risks involved in international and internal migration for Myanmar nationals, including trafficking and forced labour, use of informal brokers, exploitation in destination areas, and lack of legal redressal mechanisms. Often, irregular migration mechanisms, particularly in the case of international migration, may be viewed more favourably by migrants due to greater flexibility and a lesser debt burden as compared to regular means (such as government schemes or licensed brokers) (LIFT/World Bank).

The dangers of smuggling and extortion of migrants have been observed in the case of maritime migration across borders in the Bay of Bengal, as well as land transportation from Myanmar to other countries such as Thailand, Bangladesh, and Malaysia (Newland 2015). The barriers to safe migration are often interconnected with the economic compulsions that influence migrants' decisions to move, suggesting a need for better economic opportunities at the local level within Myanmar, as well as better access to knowledge that can help migrants make informed choices (Helvetas 2015).

A survey on safe migration knowledge, attitudes and practices among 625 potential migrant workers, conducted by the ILO and MDRI-CESD in Mandalay region, Tanintharyi region, and Shan state revealed that lack of local livelihood options and low wages are the primary reasons for migration among young people (18-24 years). Inadequate access to information on safe migration consequently creates further risks, especially for the poorest and most vulnerable potential migrants (ILO 2015). The survey found that agriculture was the largest employment sector (45%) within Myanmar for potential migrant workers, followed by the informal sector (27%) which included jobs such as vending, sewing, and unpaid work as homemakers. The need for a

gendered approach to safe migration outreach was identified based on the fact that male potential migrants predominantly worked in agriculture (54%), while women were more engaged in the informal sector (46%)(ILO 2015).

Approximately 66% of surveyed potential migrants expected to migrate irregularly (highest in Shan state at 89%), with the help of friends/family (50%), or on their own (16%). Around 22% expected to use the services of a recruitment agency, or a broker (9%). The cost of migration via regular channels, and difficulties in obtaining official documents such as a passport were key factors influencing the decision to migrate irregularly in Shan state and Tanintharyi region. Furthermore, in terms of intended destination outside of Myanmar, 94% of migrants planning to work in China and 86% of migrants planning to work in Thailand anticipated migration through irregular channels (ILO 2015).

In order to cover the cost of migration, 50% of potential migrants (both internal and international) indicated they will be using their own savings, while 32% expected to take out a loan, and 15% anticipated that they will be paying through wage deductions (a practice that has the potential introduce the possibility of debt bondage upon arrival)(ILO 2015). Although a majority of migrants (70%) were aware that both a passport and visa are necessary to migrate regularly across borders, however only 27% were aware that a job offer is also needed, and 19% understood the requirement of a work permit (ILO 2015).

In the context of labour migration (both international and internal), 73% of potential migrants believed that friends and family were the most reliable source of information about migration, indicating the strong role played by social networks. Recruitment agencies and brokers were considered reliable by only 10% of the sample population. Notably, only 1% considered local labour authorities a dependable source of migration information (ILO 2015).

A low level of awareness was observed among potential migrants of the risks involved in migration, with 37% being aware of the risk of financial burden caused by high expenditure, 23% of the risk of deception, 23% of exploitation, and 16% of complex procedures.

Concerning the crucial interlinkages between internal and international migration, the survey found that many internal migrants from the Dry Zone and Delta regions moving to Shan state and Tanintharyi region respectively, decide to migrate internationally to China and Thailand. However, these migrants become vulnerable to exploitation due to lack of social networks in the region to facilitate cross-border movement. They often resort to relying on the services of local brokers which increases the risk of exploitation and forced labour (ILO 2015).

Overall, it is evident that access to information on how to migrate safely, awareness of migrant workers' rights and entitlements, and knowledge of working conditions is very poor among potential migrants in Myanmar (ILO 2015).

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Chapter 3: A Country on the Move: Migration Networks and Risk Management in Two Regions of Myanmar

Corey Pattison, John Voss, Andrea Woodhouse, Matt Zurstrassen

Abstract

Myanmar's economy in the last four years has seen a slight shift away from agriculture towards industry and services. This may mark the beginning of a structural transformation away from a rural, agriculture-based economy towards a more urban, industry and service-based economy. Urbanization and job creation in urban areas have the potential to have a significant impact in labor and mobility patterns, especially for the landless and land-poor workers that account for a large part of the rural agriculture workforce. Within this evolving context, understanding the motivations, patterns, and dynamics of existing migration practices is critical for supporting balanced and inclusive development in Myanmar through supporting safe and informed migration. The primary objective of this study is to collect detailed evidence and provide an objective assessment of how and to what extent migration within and from particular regions of Myanmar— Ayeyarwaddy and Magway regions—affects the livelihoods of rural households and the social and economic environment of villages. It seeks to understand how migration decisions take place, the key obstacles and risks faced by migrants, and the individual and household strategies that evolve to manage them. It also seeks to capture broader changes over time in sending communities, and how the departure and return of migrants affects social and economic dynamics at home and within the village. The analytical framework is organized around four key questions: who migrates, why people choose to migrate, what are migration strategies, and what are the effects of migration on families and communities left behind.

Introduction and methodological note

Since the initiation of wide-ranging political and economic reforms in 2011, Myanmar has entered a period of intensive transition. Recent economic growth, driven by a construction-related boom, an increase in manufacturing output, and the resulting expansion in services, is creating significant employment opportunities in urban areas (World Bank 2015). These opportunities have the potential to introduce significant changes in labor and mobility patterns, especially for the landless and land-poor workers who compose a large part of the rural agricultural workforce. Increased productivity resulting from the movement of labor from rural to urban sectors can help catalyze economic transformation and contribute to economic growth. Domestic migration can also play a powerful role in efforts to reduce poverty: it has been a critical component of poverty reduction in many other countries in the wider region, including South Korea, China, and Vietnam, as well as globally, with significant increases in consumption for migrant households.[28] In order to reduce poverty effectively, Myanmar will need not only to improve agricultural productivity but also to support diversified livelihoods and rural-urban migration.

However, migration opportunities carry risks. These risks include the immediate effects of failed migration attempts, as well as the long-term socioeconomic consequences in rural areas as members of the labor force, especially young people, leave their villages. In this rapidly evolving context, improving the capacity of prospective migrants to confront risk is critical to improving both short- and long-term outcomes. This report focuses on understanding the reasons why people migrate, and examines how they do so, in order to develop operational insights into how to enable prospective migrants to make better, more informed choices.

The study focuses on the Ayeyarwaddy and Magway regions of Myanmar, which are home to large numbers of Myanmar's rural poor and are also close to two of the major centers of growth and job creation in Myanmar, Yangon and Mandalay, respectively. In these areas, the study applies a mixed-methods approach to the four key questions outlined above. Quantitative research was chiefly used to identify profiles and patterns of migrants and migration; whereas qualitative research focused in more depth on better understanding: (i) migration strategies, (ii) the role of social networks; (iii) the impacts of migration on the social fabric of sending areas; and (iv) the impacts of migration on those left behind at the household level. The approach used for the quantitative analysis was based on a Living Standards Measurement Survey (LSMS) household questionnaire, including an expanded migration module that would allow a representative picture of overall migration patterns in the regions of the Dry Zone and Delta agro-ecological zones covered by the study (Magway and Ayeyarwaddy, respectively). To ensure representative estimates for relevant indicators in both regions, 800 households per region were targeted for a total of 1600 households in the sample. 40 villages were selected in each region, and 20 households in each village. The selection of both villages and households was randomized. Village selection in each region was stratified across districts. In addition to the descriptive statistics from the survey results, which illustrate general patterns of migration in the Ayeyarwaddy and Magway regions, results from regression analysis also provide some insight into the key factors that are

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[28] See, for example, Beegle et al. "Migration and economic mobility in Tanzania." It was found that the average consumption change for domestic Tanzanian migrants was more than four times greater than for people within the same villages who did not migrate. Similarly, over 13 years, the poverty rate decreased by 23 percentage points for those who moved, versus 4 percentage points.

associated with the decision to migrate for different categories of the population in sending areas, defined in this study in terms of livelihood options.

The qualitative research employed a purposive sampling strategy to examine potential differences in migration patterns, strategies, and outcomes. Within each region, two townships were selected for analysis as sending areas with an aim to capture geographic variation within the region. Within each township, two villages (each from a different village tract) were purposively selected to take into account variations across: 1) access to transportation; and 2) agricultural potential (measured by irrigation in Magway and by freshwater or brackish water in Ayeyarwaddy). The analysis therefore covered four villages where LIFT operated in each region. In each village, focus-group discussions (FGDs) were held with village authorities, households from different socioeconomic groups, and people who fit the profile of potential migrants (identified from QSEM—young, single, and from poorer households). *Key informant* interviews were also carried out with households identified as vulnerable that, at the time of the research, had either one member migrating or returned from migration.

Qualitative research was also undertaken in a small number of urban centers to understand the perspectives of current migrants. Research in urban centers progressed from the initial village-level phase, when contact information was gathered to facilitate interviews with migrants in urban centers. Common destinations identified in the first phase included Yangon and Mandalay. In villages sampled in Magway Region, the city of Magway was also a popular destination for seasonal migration. The city of Bogale was selected as a fourth research site for the second phase in order to understand the long-term impacts of Cyclone Nargis on migration patterns. In these areas, current migrants identified in the first phase were contacted for key informant interviews. Current migrants were also asked to identify co-workers from the same area of origin in order to expand the pool interviewed.

1. Migration Profiles

Figure 3.1 Households with Family Members Currently Living Away from Home by Region

Domestic migration is common across Ayeyarwady and Magway.

■ Ayeyarwady   ■ Magway

Ayeyarwady

Domestic Migration:
18% of all households

International
Migration:
2% of all
households

Magway

Domestic Migration:
19% of all households

International
Migration:
5% of all
households
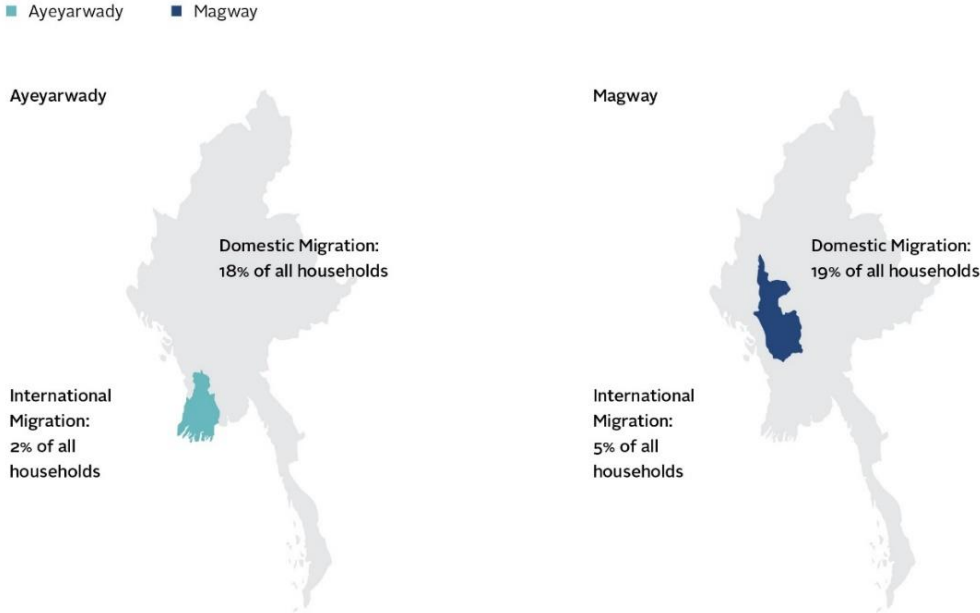
Findings from the research, which was conducted in 2014-2015, identifies high levels of migration in both Ayeyarwaddy and Magway, with domestic migration being more pervasive than international migration.[29] One in five households in Ayeyarwaddy, and one in four in Magway, report having at least one household member currently migrating. Only 9 percent of Ayeyarwaddy migrants and 22 percent of Magway migrants cross international borders.

Migrants overwhelmingly migrate for economic reasons rather than for family purposes or education. Only 2 percent of households in Ayeyarwaddy reported that their members moved for family reasons (for example to join a family member or due to marriage or divorce) or to seek education. The proportion is only slightly larger for Magway, where 11 percent of households cite family issues or education as the reason for migration. The vast majority of migrants in both regions (74 percent in Ayeyarwaddy and 71 percent in Magway) migrated either for a job or to look for work, with an additional 20 percent in both regions moving in response to economic shocks faced by their households.

Men migrate at a higher rate than women, but the migration rate of women is significant. The proportion of migrants who are male is 66 percent in Magway and 60 percent in Ayeyarwaddy. In both regions, current and returned migrants were mostly in their mid-teens to twenties when they left their home villages for the first time. About 80 percent of migrants in each region are aged between 11 and 30, with the vast majority of these in their late teens or early twenties. Only 13 cases of migrants under the age of 15 were recorded. Female migrants tend to be slightly younger than male migrants when they first leave their home village in Ayeyarwaddy, and slightly older in

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[29]Data presented refers to out-migration in Ayeyarwady and Magway. The research did not examine levels of people moving into these communities and as such does not present figures on net migration.

Magway. Migrants also tend to be better educated than non-migrants. As most migrants were between the ages of 11 and 50, the analysis compared the education of migrants against non-migrants in this age bracket. In Magway 60 percent of migrants have higher than primary-level education, compared with only 40 percent of the region's non-migrants. This was similar but less pronounced in Ayeyarwaddy, where the figures are 56 percent and 49 percent for migrants and non-migrants, respectively.

There are significant regional differences in the welfare profile of migrant households. In Ayeyarwaddy, landless households are more likely to have a migrating member than landholding and non-poor households. More than 25 percent of poor landless households in the region report at least one member migrating, compared with less than 18 percent for households that own farmland or are categorized as better off households. In contrast, there are no significant differences in household migration rates across livelihood categories in Magway, although households with family members who are educated to either an upper, secondary or tertiary level are more likely to have a migrant, at 30 percent, compared with households with only lower-secondary or primary education, at 22 percent.

Another distinguishing feature of migration from Ayeyarwaddy is its duration: 69 percent of survey responses from migrant-sending households described the employment type as permanent compared to 44.9 percent in Magway.

Figure 3.2 Composition of Migrant and Non-Migrant Groups by Age, Gender, and Schooling Completed.

Migrants are generally young and better educated than non-migrant counterparts
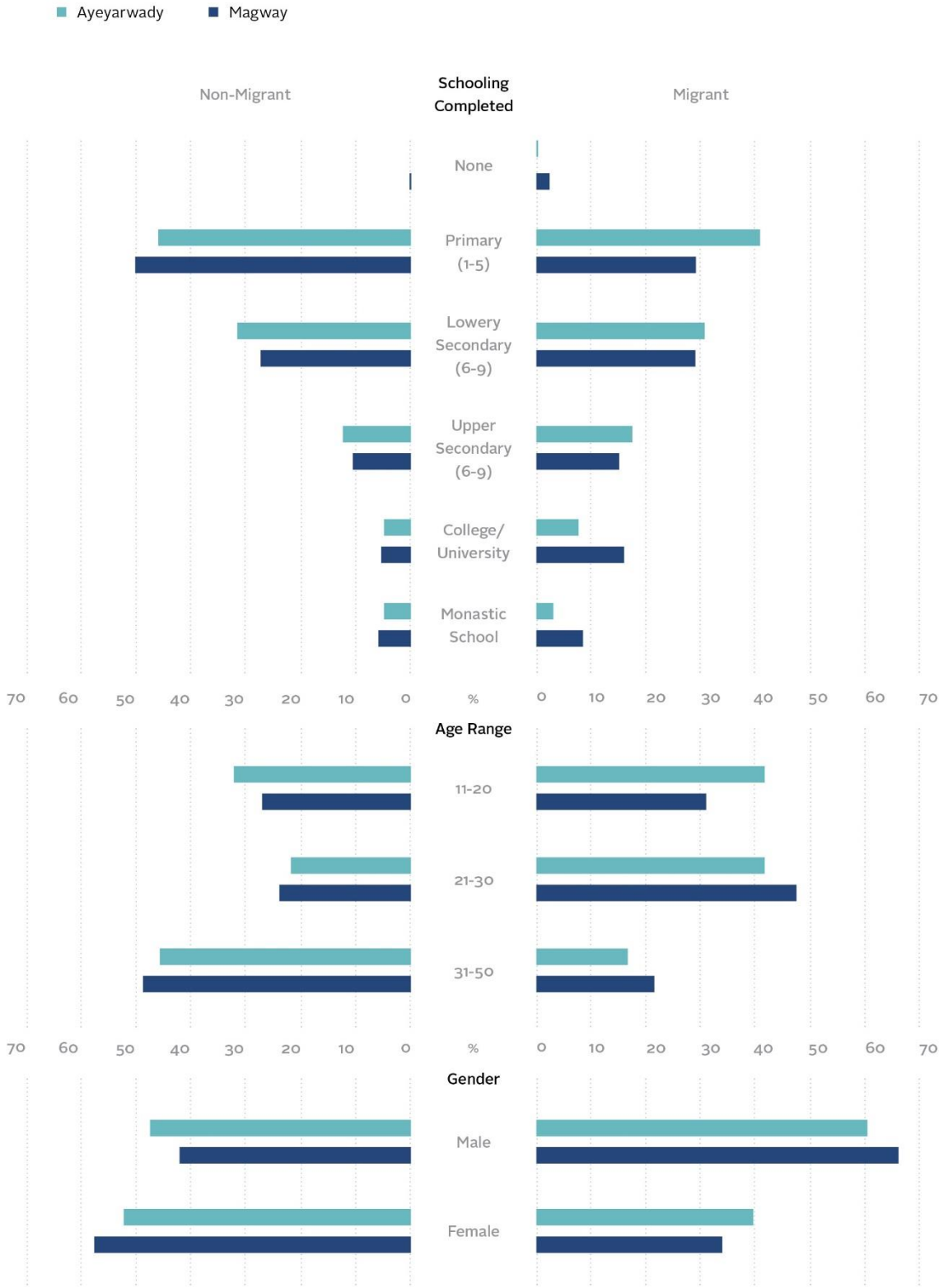
2. Migration patterns

Migration has increased relatively significantly in recent years, especially since the beginning of Myanmar's economic transition in 2011. Migration from villages in Ayeyarwaddy and Magway has increased rapidly in recent years. Examining the year of departure of both current and returned migrants in both regions, there is a marginal annual increase of people leaving villages for each year after 2010, with a significant increase in 2014: about one-third of migrants from both regions left their villages that year.

Figure 3.3 Popular Jobs for Ayeyarwaddy and Magway Migrants in Key Destinations

People in these regions tend to migrate for jobs in urban areas, especially Yangon and Mandalay, where they mostly do a variety of non-agricultural jobs in the informal labor market. These include construction, restaurant and tea shop jobs, but also more formal employment in garment factories. Migrants gain access to these jobs primarily through social networks in their villages, rather than through paid brokers.

Migration patterns across both regions have some important similarities. First, in both regions, landless households are more likely to have family members migrating than the rest of the population. On the one hand this reflects a lack of year-round income generating opportunities in villages of origin for landless households. It also indicates a dependence of small and medium holding households on labor provided by family members. Second, men are significantly more likely to migrate than women across both regions, with double the number of men migrating in Magway than women and 60 percent of migrants from Ayeyarwaddy being men. Despite these numbers, women still comprise at least a third of all migrants in both regions.

Figure 3.4. Main Migration Destinations from Magway and Ayeyarwaddy

Yangon is the primary destination for migrants, but destinations from Magway are diverse.
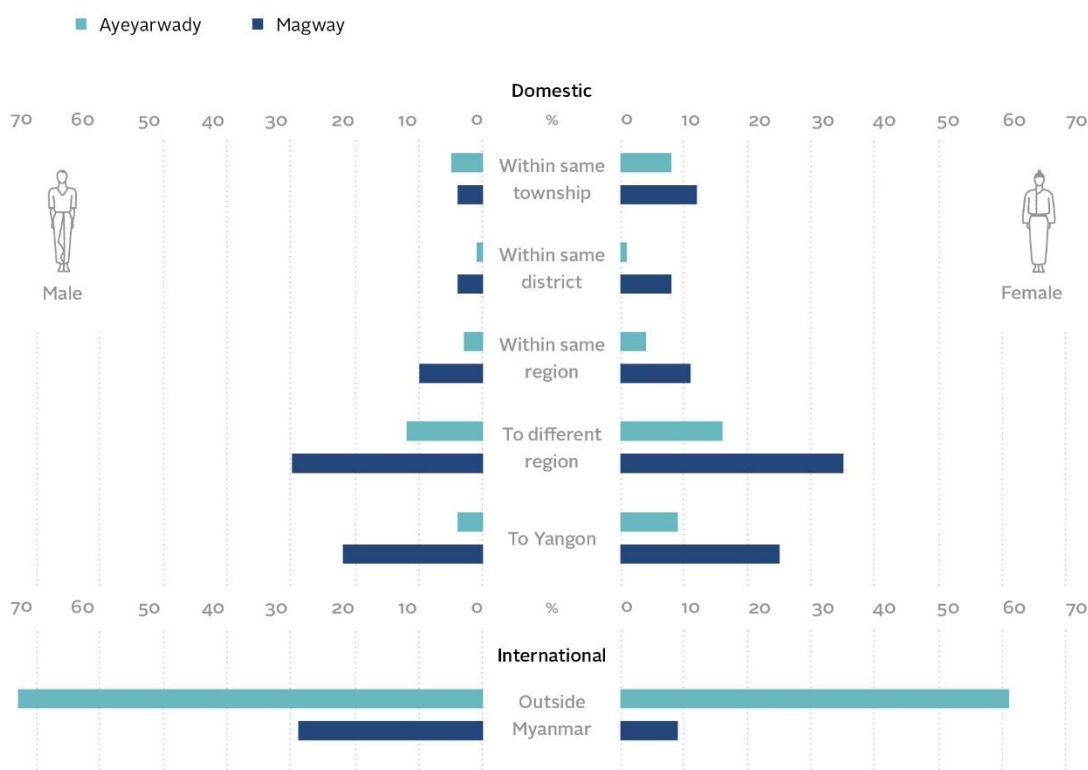
There are also significant differences between the two regions. Migration in Ayeyarwaddy follows a more uniform geographic pattern: with 58 percent of migrants moving to Yangon, it is, by far, the primary location of choice for migrants from that area. Migrants from Ayeyarwaddy are also generally younger when they leave their households and are more likely to have only primary or

lower secondary level education compared to migrants from Magway. People are also less likely to migrate from Ayeyarwaddy unless they have confirmed guarantees of employment prior to making the decision. These guarantees usually occur through either a family member working in the city or relatives, as these networks are seen as more reliable source of information for prospective migrants.

2. Motivations for migration

The study identifies a wide range of motivations for migration across different livelihood groups. The dominant motivating factors tend to cluster in three primary groups: risk management, upwardly mobile, and shock response.[30]

Figure 3.5 Migration Types

RISK MANAGEMENT	UPWARDLY MOBILE	SHOCK RESPONSE
Co-insurance between migrant and household against income volatility. Will still migrate even if earning differential is small.	Main drivers is higher earnings, preferred working conditions and lifestyle. More likely to be migrate internationally.	Relocate due to conflict, natural disasters, or other shocks. More likely to be migrate seasonally.

Risk management: Many households in the study sample face subsistence constraints; that is, they find it difficult to secure basic daily needs and cope with shock. This is compounded by the risk and volatility inherent in rural agricultural livelihoods in Myanmar. Such households migrate to manage this risk by allocating household labor into urban jobs, where income is more predictable. A large, if not majority, proportion of migrants from the Ayeyarwaddy and Magway regions fit this category. Indeed, qualitative evidence from these regions suggests that migration rates were increasingly high even though rural and urban wages did not differ significantly, indicating that such households are migrating primarily to manage risk. Such migrants have little capacity to cope with the risks of a failed migration attempt. Because of this, they migrate almost exclusively through existing social networks, through which they are able to secure jobs in advance. This helps *avoid* risk in doing so, however, they tend to remain in low-wage jobs and avoid making investments or taking risks that might make them better off in the long run.

Shock Response: Other households in our sample fit the subsistence constraint profile outlined above, but have already experienced significant adverse shock, which prevents them from being able to overcome these constraints. Shocks include those at the household-level, such as health or injury shocks or crop damage, and at the community-level, including weather shock and, in our study, the residual effects of Cyclone Nargis in the Delta region. These households are, in a

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[30] As illustrative archetypes, it is unlikely that these factors are as clear-cut and mutually exclusive "in the real world"; motivations to undertake a life event of such significance seldom are. Overlaps between types are to be expected. However, by identifying primary motivations, these types can help to illuminate why people in the Ayeyarwady and Magway regions migrate, and how different factors inform their strategies.

sense, being 'pushed' out of origin areas, citing an inability to meet subsistence needs because of the effects of shock.

Upwardly mobile: On the other end of the spectrum of livelihood groups, the study also captures households that, through ownership of land or other assets, are not poor and seek to use migration for upward mobility. These households see migration as a chance to participate in Myanmar's market economy and the emerging, mostly urban, opportunities that it is creating. Since they are seeking to use migration as a means for upward social and economic mobility, this study has categorized migration from these households as upwardly mobile migration. Upwardly mobile households are responding to such opportunities through better formal education, which qualifies them to compete for more skilled employment, and international migration, which comes with higher upfront costs but higher financial returns in the form of better wages in China, Thailand, Malaysia, and South Korea. Both formal education and upfront costs of international migration constitute investments for upwardly mobile households. The ability to afford such investments are directly correlated with the assets owned by households.

Each type of migration represents the most influential drivers and constraints that motivate migrants' decision-making processes and migration patterns. Across these groups, people decide to migrate when the motivating factors overcome the constraints. This is driven by an interaction of drivers, constraints, and enabling factors:

- **Drivers**: Migration is motivated by a series of drivers, such as job availability, insufficient or unreliable labor opportunities in rural areas, and the expected earning differential in other sectors. It is also, in some cases, because people prefer urban amenities and society, and less physically demanding labor.

- **Constraints**: At the same time, potential migrants are faced with a series of constraints, including financial and social costs, as well as lack of job information and security.

- **Enabling Factors**: Improved access to a range of enabling factors including transportation, communication technology and information can potentially influence the decisions of people to migrate. As discussed below, the key enabling factor identified by research is the scope and strength of social networks, which provide information about jobs, housing, and security in hoped-for destinations.

Drivers for migration are the factors that create the pressure for migration. There are three major drivers for migration in Magway and Ayeyarwaddy: earning differentials, job availability, and gaps in living and working conditions. Overwhelmingly, motivating factors are related to employment opportunities.

Figure 3.6 Reasons for Decision to Migrate by Region as Reported by Sending Household

Reasons for decision to migrate by region as reported by sending household.

■ Ayeyarwady   ■ Magway

2%
Family Issues

24%
Other Income
Shocks

74%
To Work/ Look for Work

7%
Education

4%
Family Issues

12%
Other Income
Shocks

7%
Weather or
Farming Related
Shocks

70%
To Work/ Look for Work
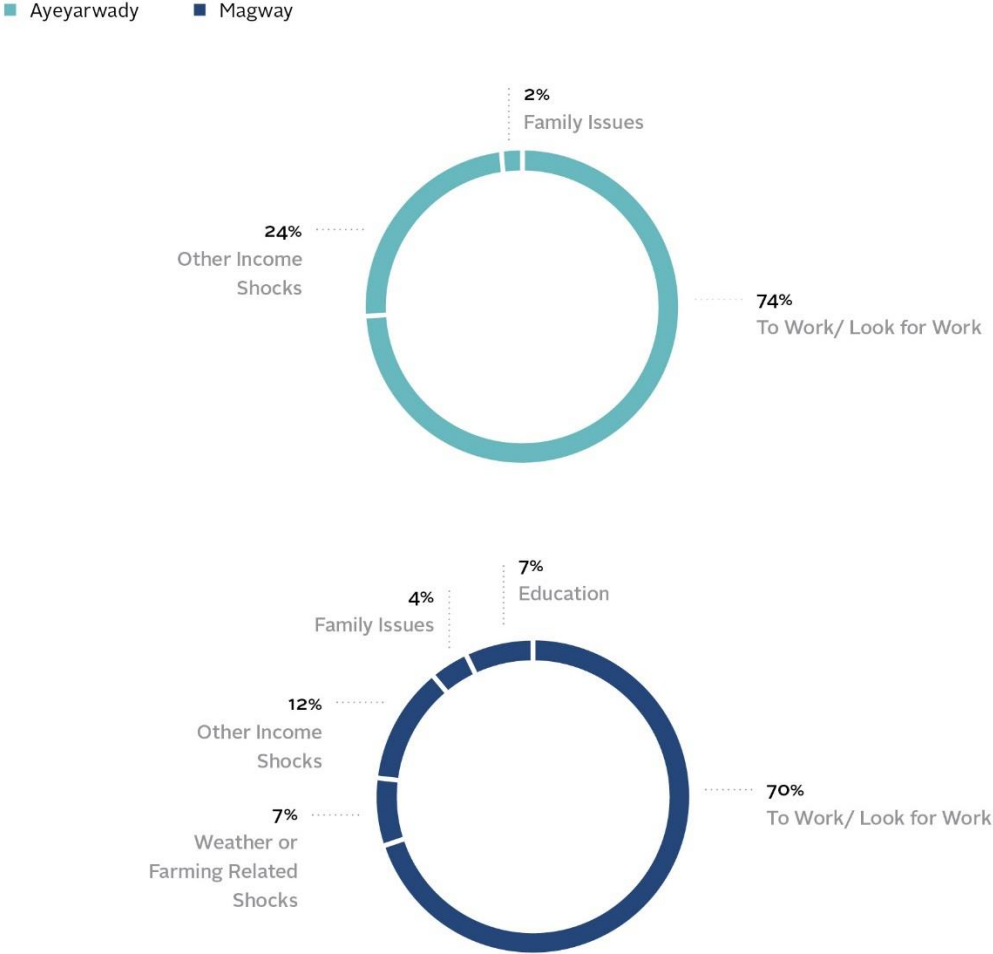
Earning Differentials

The prevailing notion in migration literature is that the difference in expected earnings is one of the major drivers for labor movement. The higher the earning differentials between areas, the higher the pressure becomes for individuals to migrate. At this time, there are no reliable large-scale systematic data on destination wages in Myanmar. However, qualitative data on wages in source and destination locations, which was collected in the off-season when field work was being conducted, suggests little difference in casual-labor wages between areas of migration origin and destination. Assuming that information on wages in the destination areas is available—and combined with our findings that people migrate primarily for work—this suggests that migration may be motivated by objectives other than earning higher wages, especially for risk management types. For these households, which are operating within subsistence constraints, this could include attempting to diversify their assets in order to manage the risk of failing to meet subsistence requirements—in this case, allocating household labor across rural, farm employment and urban, non-farm employment.

Job Availability in Sending Areas

In rural sending areas, casual laborers reported difficulty in securing sufficient labor in off-peak seasons, creating insufficient incomes for poor households despite higher wages in peak-harvest and planting seasons due to labor shortages. As the 2012 LIFT baseline survey documented, the average days of work a farm laborer could expect were: 49 days for men and 42 for women in the monsoon season, and respectively, 12 days and 16 days in the offseason.[31] Similarly, the fourth round of QSEM reported: "The lack of consistent work resulted in casual laborers looking at other alternatives to sustain their livelihoods."[32] As one male casual laborer from a village in Labutta Township reported: "Jobs are scarce for casual laborers. Land owners hire laborers from other villages, and also hire those who borrow money from them during the lean season in exchange for cheaper labor during peak season."

This driver is expected to be most influential for those seeking to manage risk and respond to shock through migration: limited job availability during the offseason potentially puts households with limited assets at risk, and it is these households that lack the ability to cope with shock by non-migration means.

Households with access to land, non-agricultural labor or financial resources are in a better position to weather income-stream variations; households without such assets attempt to diversify income streams via migration. For upwardly mobile types, who are more likely to have education levels above lower secondary, the availability of desirable jobs can also influence the decision to migrate. This most commonly occurs when source villages are unable to provide employment options commensurate with skills attained.

Gaps in Working Conditions and Lifestyle

Migration is also motivated by lifestyle preferences. Young people, especially, often express a desire to escape on-farm labor, which is perceived as physically demanding. Urban work is seen as easier: "Work is not always available in the village and my daughters did not want to do farming in the sun," reported the father of a current migrant in a village in Magway Township. Beyond economic considerations, there is an attraction, especially among young people, to urban amenities and culture. As described by a 21-year-old

casual laborer from a village in Pakokku Township now in Mandalay: "I envied those who migrated to Mandalay. I knew that I would not have to work in the sun and would not be as tired as in my village if I work there. And the wage earned by herding cattle was about the same amount as washing dishes at food shops." According to focus group discussions with village elders in Magway and Ayeyarwaddy the spread of perceptions relating to urban lifestyles in rural areas appears to be driven in part by an increase in the availability of mobile phones and TVs.

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[31] Note that this varies significantly between and even within regions.
[32] World Bank. 2014 "Qualitative Social and Economic Monitoring Round 4." Word Bank: Yangon, Myanmar.

3. Constraints to Migration

While the drivers for migration create pressure for individuals to find work outside their native regions, the ability to migrate is also constrained by a variety of factors. The most prominent constraints include: financial and social costs; the capacity of the household to compensate for lost labor; gender norms; and safety concerns. There is very little regional variation in the relative importance of the various constraints. Language ability and official documentation were not identified as constraints, in part because the areas under study are largely ethnically homogenous.

Financial Cost

Respondents perceived financial costs to be the primary constraint on migration for men. Most of the financial costs of migration are borne at the outset; they include transportation from the village to the destination, initial accommodation, and the initial job search requirements. The study finds that these upfront costs associated with migrating are quite low. Over half of households with migrants estimated the total costs related to sending a family member away to be less than K40,000. This increases to over two-thirds of surveyed households when only domestic migration is considered. In general the costs associated with migration are similar for both Magway and Ayeyarwaddy, with the exception of a greater proportion of households spending over K100,000 in Magway. This reflects the significantly higher number of international migrants from Magway.

With such low costs, a majority of migrants in both regions either financed their migration episodes themselves through savings (43% in Ayeyarwaddy and 33% in Magway) or by calling on family or relatives (28% and 19%). The study finds that financial constraints are also largely mitigated by the strategy of identifying, if not securing, a job and accommodation prior to migrating. As is discussed in the following section, a reliance on social networks to identify job opportunities prior to departure reduces the potential financial costs required on arrival.

Figure 3.7 Perceptions of Primary Constraints to Migrating as Reported by Sending Households

For men, perceived constraints for most involve money. For women, perceived risks are more oriented towards their family and safety

■ Ayeyarwady   ■ Magway
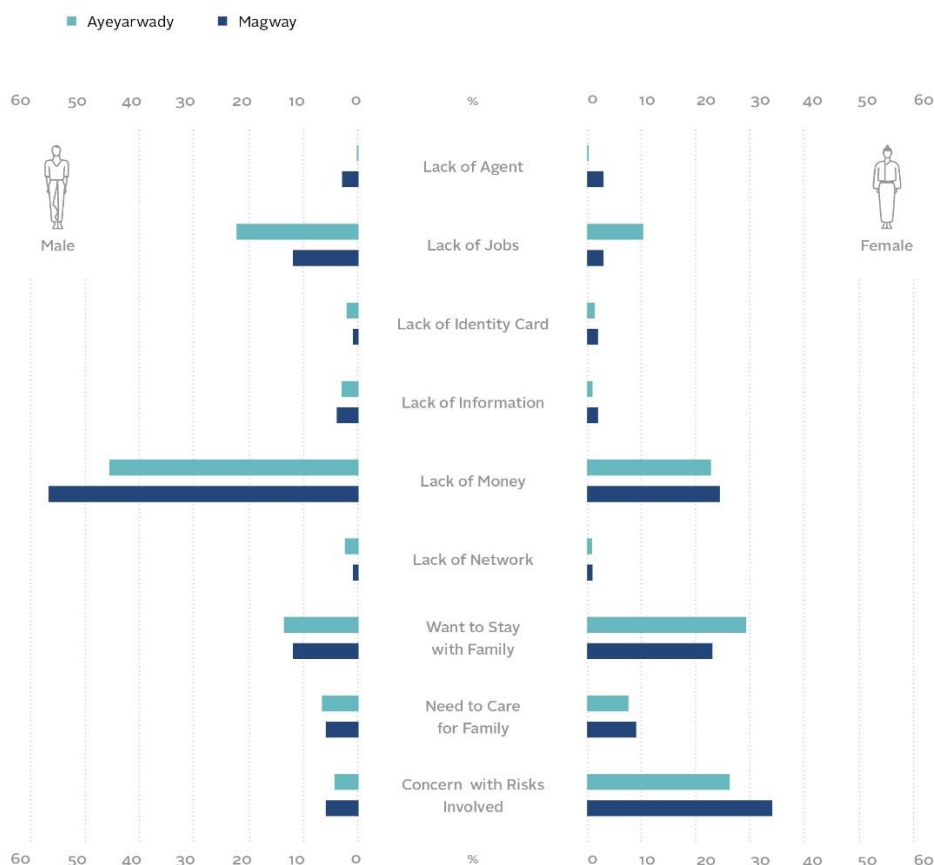
Safety

Safety and social norms are the primary constraints on migration for women. Non-migrant respondents in sending villages frequently asserted that the migration of young women and girls was at best, inappropriate and at worst, dangerous.

Sometimes generalizations about migration patterns were made that were at odds with the data, such as the assertion in a village in Kyaunggon Township in Ayeyarwaddy that, "Parents do not send their single daughters to work in the cities because they worry about their safety." These collective normative biases, in turn, served as constraints on young women who had desires to migrate. As one young woman from a village in Labutta Township, Ayeyarwaddy, reported: "I want to migrate but my parents do not allow me to do so."

An explanation offered in the same village outlined the issue: "Parents do not allow daughters under the age of 18 to migrate because of their concerns for the safety of their young girls. The parents believe that younger girls are not old enough to take care of themselves and to protect themselves from harassment." The concern was summarized as follows by one respondent in

Magway: "Women are less likely to be allowed to migrate compared with men. Parents usually feel worried about their daughters being cheated or sexually harassed.

Social Costs

Costs are not only calculated in financial terms: migration entails, in many cases, psychological strain as migrants leave behind family and friends. A desire to remain close to family remains a considerable constraint to migration, about 17 percent of women and over 12 percent of men identified familial ties as a barrier to migration. Families are the locus of a series of social obligations that are differentially applied across age and gender, and impose different constraints on these groups. These connections can influence migration in numerous ways; for example, families with aging parents or young children who would be left behind if their son or daughter migrate. Family labor also plays an important role in household economies and, by extension, is a key factor in migration decisions. Small and medium landholding households rely on, and allocate family labor to, agricultural production. In this sense, the endowment of human labor that a household has plays an important role and, where insufficient, is a critical constraint. As one respondent explained: "I don't want to migrate because we don't have extra labor in the family to work on our family farm."

4. Enabling Factors

Enabling factors act to lower the constraints described in the previous section. A number of variables that facilitate migration were identified, including social networks, access to transportation, and communication technology. These factors lower both the financial and social costs of migrating. The most important factor the study identified is access to information about jobs and, to a lesser extent, accommodation, through social networks. The central importance of social networks in accessing this information reflects the informal nature of the majority of the migration patterns examined. These networks enable potential migrants to seek potential earning differentials or the availability of jobs in destination areas. Access to social networks varies, however, across individuals and villages—some are able to find jobs through their social network, while others are able only to learn that jobs exist. Similarly, some villages have stronger connections to job markets than others. This section explores the different uses of social networks, including how they change over the course of the migration experience. This section also examines how transportation and communication technology enable migration.

Social Networks

More than any other factor, access to social networks that can help identify and secure jobs facilitates the migration process. Social networks are a critical means for overcoming information asymmetries and managing risk. A significant body of global evidence has demonstrated that contacts in specific destination areas have a positive impact on migration and a migrant is "more likely to be employed and to hold a higher-paying, nonagricultural job" when their social network is larger; in other words, networks not only facilitate jobs, they facilitate better-paying jobs (Munshi 2003). In Myanmar, social networks play a critical role in both finding a job and managing risk: a female respondent from Magway summarized the dynamic: "There should be someone you know

in the receiving community; only then you can get a job easily and you're more likely to succeed in your migration attempt."

The importance of social networks for managing risk along the migration experience is tied to the highly informal nature of migration outlined above, as most migrants are moving from rural to urban areas to provide non-agricultural casual labor. These jobs generally come without contracts and formal recruitment processes. In labor-market terms, these markets are characterized by significant information asymmetries; both employers and potential employees have limited sources of information on which to rely when learning about general job availability, rates and regularity of pay, and work activities that a given job may entail. Employers and migrants across both regions described a scenario in which employers rely on the social networks of migrants currently under their employ to recruit as typical.

Reliance on social networks to address information asymmetries plays an especially important role in Myanmar because of the strong risk aversion of potential migrants that results from subsistence constraints. When considering and practicing migration, households in the study exercise extreme caution to avoid the poverty-inducing consequences of unsuccessful migration outcomes, namely unsuccessful or even prolonged job searches. Against this background the presence of relatives or someone they trust at their destination also helps to manage the significant risk that migration can entail for many households. These contacts serve to identify, and even secure, jobs. They also provide initial accommodation, often for the first several months or longer, until migrants find their own housing.

Given the important role played by social networks it is unsurprising that the vast majority of migrants in the study moved to places in which they had family or friends; those people were facilitating their job search. Of 75 current migrants interviewed in Yangon, Mandalay, and the city of Magway, 67 migrants reported that they had existing friends or family in that location. Of these, 52 cited these networks as the primary reason for selecting their destination when they first chose to migrate. Survey responses, relating to the question on the primary source of information leading to a job in the most recent migration attempt, confirm the central role played by social networks in identifying job information: family and friends are the only significant information resource that migrants in Magway and Ayeyarwaddy rely on.

Interestingly, while virtually all migrants had job information that they accessed through social networks before they left their village, there is a significant difference between those who simply knew of jobs and those who had secured a job. The vast majority, over 80 percent in both regions, migrate only once they have obtained information about a job situation. This suggests that general job information is fairly accessible and inclusive in sending villages; that is, most potential migrants are able to access information about jobs in destinations like Yangon.

However, this information also indicates a critical difference between identifying job opportunities and securing employment before departure. The distinction between potential job opportunities and guaranteed work is related to the narrow margin of risk associated with a prolonged job search held by many migrants in the sample. For 58 percent of migrants in Ayeyarwaddy and

one-third in Magway, actual work was agreed upon prior to departure. This was usually through either a family member working in the city or relatives, seen as the most reliable source of information for prospective migrants. In contrast, information about possible job opportunities was obtained from fellow villagers. In Magway more migrants were willing to leave only with information about a job prospect (43%) than in Ayeyarwaddy (22%).

Figure 3.8 Primary Source of Job Information as Reported by Sending Households

Existing social networks are the primary source of job information.

■ Ayeyarwady   ■ Magway

From Village

17% (Ayeyarwady)
12% (Magway)
Friends

26% (Ayeyarwady)
21% (Magway)
Family

0% (Ayeyarwady)
3% (Magway)
Neighbours

From Destination Site

25% (Ayeyarwady)
18% (Magway)
Friends

29% (Ayeyarwady)
36% (Magway)
Family

Other

0% (Ayeyarwady)
7% (Magway)
Personal Experience

1% (Ayeyarwady)
2% (Magway)
Broker

2% (Ayeyarwady)
1% (Magway)
Do Not Know

0% (Ayeyarwady)
0% (Magway)
Internet
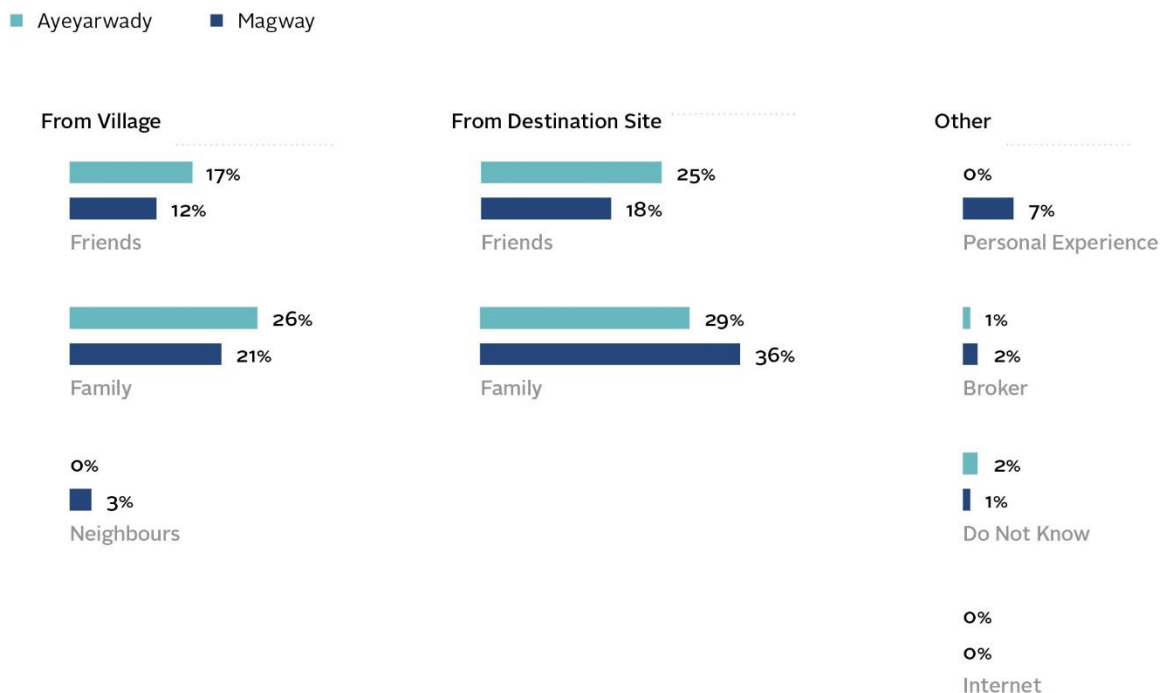
Social networks are, in particular, a key variable factor for migrants under the risk management type. Since the main reason for migration under this type is to provide co-insurance between the migrant and their household, this group is even more averse than others to the risk of not finding a job. As a 29-year-old female migrant from a village in Labutta Township, Ayeyarwaddy, now working at a restaurant in Yangon described: "If I hadn't had a friend who secured a job for me and was willing to let me live with her, my family wouldn't have let me go to Yangon, even if we didn't really have any other option."

In contrast, people migrating in response to shock had limited access to social networks—and by extension, job information—in destination sites, in part because their planning period was often short and lacking key resources: several key informant interviews described making decisions under heavy duress; without the time or means to consult widely or exploit a broader social network. While use of brokers was rare in this category, those who did use it generally tended to be migrants from landless households.

The other livelihood group that reported relying on brokers (again, rarely) was the non-poor households (that is, those from the top wealth quintile but without large land holdings). These households are characterized by the upwardly mobile migration type, which tend to exhibit strong social networks and sufficient planning opportunity. This seeming paradox in fact illustrates the nature of migration motivated by upward social and economic mobility; migrants of this type seek to move beyond their existing social networks. This, combined with the capacity to take on more risk than other migration types, explains why upwardly mobile migrants are less likely to rely on their existing social networks for job information.

The imperative of having good social networks is more pronounced for women, and this phenomenon cuts across different groups. Across regions and migration types, researchers observed virtually no households that allowed their female members to move out of the village without a secure job, a definite place to live, and a relative or trusted friend to look after them.

The composition and use of social networks also change over time. Immediately after migrants arrive, they tend to live with relatives or family members already working in the city. Often these people are the same people who informed them about the job, but this is not always the case. However, networks grow and evolve, and are used to further identify better jobs and accommodation. One woman in Yangon explained how she initially found work cleaning dishes for a tea shop but discovered through other migrants helping to prepare food in a restaurant. By navigating the growing network of migrants she met she was able to identify vacancies and increasingly better paying jobs at a series of different restaurants over the course of her seven year stay in Yangon.

In addition to a variation in the strength of social networks across individuals within a village, there is also significant variation across villages. Since current and previous migrants are the primary source of information, and since migration occurs primarily through social networks, as demonstrated above, areas of previous migration are significantly more likely to have more migrants. For both regions, the chance of a household having a migrant increases with the number of current migrants in the village. For villages with between one and five individuals currently migrating, the chance of having a migrant is 15 percent in Ayeyarwaddy and 17 percent in Magway. For villages with over five current migrants, the chance of a household having a migrant increases to 35 percent and 39 percent, respectively. As is noted in the following section, the presence of other migrants in a village, particularly in Magway, significantly increases the likelihood of migration.

Transportation
Theoretically, differential access to urban destination areas can be expected to play a large role in constraining or facilitating migration. In villages with limited or very costly transport to the nearest provincial market, which often also functions also as the most proximate transportation hub for movement onward to major migration destinations, the barriers to migration were expected to be higher. However, given the low costs of transportation, generally, the study found a lack of significant correlation between the costs of transportation—measured by distance to township center from the village—and migration rates. Rather, the major variable associated with current

migration rates in any given village was found to be the number of previous migrants from that village, further confirming the importance of social networks for facilitating migration.

Communication Technology

Access to mobile phones has eased information constraints by allowing people in villages to investigate job opportunities, housing, and safety conditions without having to leave their homes. They also temper constraints that are linked to social costs and safety by allowing households to monitor the well-being of their migrating members. The study was conducted at a time of unprecedented expansion of mobile phone services across the country, from about 10 percent in 2012 to 50 percent by mid-2015 (World Bank 2014), with prices of SIM cards falling from US$250 in 2012 to US$1.5 by early 2015 (World Bank 2015).

Correspondingly, migrants and migrant-sending families cited greater access to mobile-phone technology as increasing the frequency of communication between them during migration episodes. For example, a mother of two young children in a village in Labutta Township, Ayeyarwaddy, explained that weekly communication by mobile phone enabled her to discuss household decisions with her husband, currently in Yangon where he has worked in construction for the past three years. She explained that now he is able to save more money because he does not need to visit as often. As he intends to eventually return to the village, she hopes that this will enable him to do so sooner. In a focus group discussion with village elders in a village in Pakokku Township, parents discussed the effect of mobile phones on lowering the social costs of migration, including reducing the psychological burdens associated with leaving behind loved ones; one father explained that now, with the ability to stay in closer contact, he would feel closer to his daughter if she moved to Mandalay or Yangon, as well as more comfortable that she was safe.

5. Significant Factors Driving Migration in Magwe & Ayeyarwaddy

In addressing the question of why people choose to migrate, the study also examines the relative significance of these factors using a model which tests via multivariate regression analysis the likelihood of households having a migrant along with a set of control variables reflecting the assets—land, labor, education, and capital—available to households. The model confirms that migrant households seeking to manage risk choose to migrate in order to create a diverse and potentially more reliable income stream, assuming availability of labor and an information network. Regression analysis also demonstrates the decision to migrate is inversely correlated with the availability of alternative income sources—households without access to such income streams are more likely to migrate—thus confirming the idea that for many households migration is a coping mechanism to respond to the lack of regular income streams. In Ayeyarwaddy, household with greater diversity of income sources are less likely to migrate, indicating that they do not need to use migration as a risk management tool. In Magway, smallholder households migrate at a lower rate than the landless, likely due to the fact that they have two income streams: own agriculture or business along with the potential for employee or casual labor.

In Magway, the availability of labor and social networks are the significant factors, in contrast to household assets (land, education, wealth) which are not significantly correlated with increased migration:

- **Availability of labor is the key enabling factor.** The number of working age adults has the largest effect on migration decisions, suggesting that migration is a means to add an additional type of income stream when labor is not fully employed in local activities (own agriculture, small business, employee labor). The lack of significance of the diversity of livelihood strategies indicates that migration is an important diversification strategy when labor resources are available.
- **Migration response to shocks varies based on the type of event.** Households facing food insecurity episodes are less likely to migrate, potentially due to the larger rate of land ownership in Magway where some form of agricultural activities are always viable. In contrast, households in debt are more likely to migrate, suggesting that small landholdings are not sufficient to address debt-service needs and that migration is a potential mitigating factor.
- **Social networks lead to greater migration.** The number of migrants in the village is a key enabling factor, reflecting the social networks that reduce information gaps.
- **Assets are not key drivers.** Migration rates are similar across different wealth, education and land-ownership categories.

In Ayeyarwaddy, household assets and the potential to generate alternative income streams play a complementary role alongside labor availability and access to information:

- **Low levels of education and land assets lead to greater migration.** Households with less access to land and fewer years of education are more likely to migrate. However, higher levels of wealth/income are not associated with greater migration rates.
- **Even accounting for low levels of household assets, food security events are significant.** Migration rates are increased for those experiencing a food insecurity episode, likely due to the fact that the percentage of landless households is much higher in Ayeyarwaddy. Landless households lack access to resources that could work as buffers against shock, creating more impetus for migration to address food scarcity.
- **Households with access to a greater diversity of income streams are less likely to migrate.** Households who are able to earn income from different sources—own agriculture or small business, along with casual labor for others—are less likely to migrate.
- **Availability of labor and access to information are key factors.** Similar to Magway, having household members of working age available beyond the labor employed in the source village, along with information from other migrant experiences in the village, increases migration rates.

Evaluating the Migration Decision for Livelihoods Groups

The results above demonstrate that household asset factors (land, education, wealth) are not always key drivers of migration decisions. For Ayeyarwaddy, those with land and education are less likely to migrate but this is not the case for Magway. For both regions, measures of household welfare (in this case, consumption) are not significant. This is not surprising given the variation of migration rates by different asset-based sub-groups: households with different levels and types

of assets employ migration strategies for different reasons. This entails poor households responding to negative shocks and a lack of sustainable livelihood (shock response); casual laborers looking to diversify away from agriculture in the off-season (risk management); or college-or-high-school educated young adults seeking out lifestyle changes or career opportunities in urban areas (upwardly mobile).

In this context, in order to identify key factors motivating migration decisions it is necessary to assess whether groups of households with similar asset characteristics and, thus, similar livelihood options demonstrate differences across these factors. To do so, households are placed into four groups based on the degree to which they hold assets that allow them to diversify livelihood strategies, starting from a base of landless households engaging in casual labor only. Given the relatively flat consumption distribution found in rural areas in Myanmar, the primary differences from an economic welfare standpoint center around the management of income-flow risk via a diversity of income streams, rather than an overall measure of wealth, except at the very top of the distribution.[33] As noted above, the qualitative research demonstrates that although actual unemployment is rare, the variability of work in the off-season introduces significant income-stream risk for those without access to multiple livelihood strategies. Livelihood strategies depend primarily on three factors:

- **Land ownership:** Households with access to land are able to mix labor for their own farm with casual labor for others; as land ownership increases, households are less likely to depend on employment as agricultural labor to supplement other income streams.
- **Education**: Households with members who have high-school or tertiary degrees have access to employment where wages are higher than standard wage levels for agricultural or unskilled non-agricultural labor.
- **High consumption:** Households in the top 10 percent of the consumption distribution show much larger variation in relation to the flat, bottom 90 percent and are presumably able to manage a variability of income streams due to existing wealth.

Households are thus placed into four livelihood categories:
• Landless
• Small landholding: <5 acres
• Medium landholding: 5–12 acres
• Non-poor: households with >12 acres, a household member with a tertiary degree and/or households in the top 10 percent of the consumption distribution by region

Significant Factors Driving Migration across Livelihood Groups
The different levels of assets held by different livelihood groups is a stronger driver in Ayeyarwaddy than in Magway. Migration decreases across livelihood groups as household assets increase: the land, education and wealth assets owned by small landholding, medium landholding and non-poor livelihood groups in contrast to the landless, lead to less frequent migration. In Magway, only households with small landholdings are less likely to migrate than landless

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[33] 80 percent of the distribution reports less than K70,000 per person per month.

households. Those with larger land ownership or the non-poor (with access to education or wealth) migrate at similar rates. Although small landholders are probably not able to provide enough income solely from their own agricultural activities, the ability to diversify income streams using casual labor in addition to agriculture probably reduces overall risk, making migration less attractive.

In Ayeyarwaddy, available labor, especially male labor, is more important for small and medium landholders. These households are more likely to require extra household members or males, indicating households do need labor at home and only release members for migration when they already have sufficient working-age members to work on their own land or engage in other household activities. For landless households and non-poor households, members are more likely to migrate regardless of their number of working age members or males in the household. In Ayeyarwaddy, households suffering food insecurity episodes are more likely to migrate if they are landless. Other livelihood groups, in particular small and medium landholders migrate less during food insecurity episodes, indicating that they are more able to manage such shocks. Landless households are more likely to respond to shock with migration than other groups.

Overall, findings from the study confirm that while patterns and motivations of migration in Myanmar are consistent with other internationally comparable cases, there are several points of note that are relevant for migration and development interactions. First, although qualitative research finds that earning differentials between sending and destination locations are not substantial, the certainty and regularity of urban jobs is a significant incentive drawing people to migrate, especially for migrants seeking to manage risk. Second, social networks play a pre-eminent role in influencing decisions about migration, especially for risk management. The strength of social networks also varies significantly between villages and explains the substantial differences in migration levels from village to village. Third, households exercise a high degree of caution in exploring migration opportunities. This is particularly true for smallholder households seeking to manage risk. Finally, financial costs associated with migration are for most groups low, enabling people deciding to migrate to predominantly self-finance or move with financial support of family.

6. Experiences of Families in Sending Villages

Despite the reasonably high rates of migration, there are yet to be significant observable economic impacts on sending households. This reflects the nature of the most prominent form of migration, with movement towards cities in predominantly low-skilled employment. Earning differentials are not significant and, as a result, any remittances are used primarily to supplement food expenses with only a minority of households able to allocate funds towards productive assets. In terms of social impacts migration appears to be impacting roles within sending households as those left behind are required to take on more responsibilities: for a third of households with migrants, responsibilities at the household level increase for household members after the departure of the migrant. At the household level, family members of migrants use remittances to smooth income and reduce debt.

Economic Effects on Sending Households

Remittances from domestic migration can provide a more stable and reliable income source, an important resource in the context of rural Myanmar. In upwardly mobile cases, migration can also contribute to poverty reduction by providing higher incomes than work in the agriculture sector, and offer opportunities to climb the income ladder (IMF/World Bank 2013). These effects are well documented across the world: a 71-country study concluded that remittances "reduce the level, depth, and severity of poverty" of receivers and their communities (Adams Jr, Cuecuecha et al. 2008).

The majority of migrants in Ayeyarwaddy and Magway, 69 percent and 55percent respectively, remit; mostly only once or twice per year. The amount that migrants remit depends on the type of migration, which is related, as demonstrated above, to the type of migrant. The median amount of remittances over a 12-month period is K250,000; however, the mean is closer to twice that amount, K415,800. This is driven by a small number of cases of international migrants remitting very significant sums (over K1.5 million).

Many migrants avoid regular banking services when sending money back to their families. Instead, they rely on relatives and friends to carry cash back; to a lesser extent they carry it back themselves. The method of sending remittances is closely correlated with the type of migration and destination: international migrants overwhelmingly use the formal banking system; the closer the migration destination is to the source village the more likely it is for the remittance method to be informal, with seasonal migrants within the region most likely to remit personally.

Remittances also serve to smooth income: rural households engaged in agriculture in Myanmar face uncertain incomes related to volatility in rice and other agricultural markets, not to mention weather-related shocks. More stable income from remittances allows migrant households to smooth their variable income, enabling them to better align income with spending needs and, critically, obviating borrowing during off-peak seasons when casual labor is scarce. This is especially important for casual-labor households who lack the collateral required to borrow from formal credit sources, and thus turn to private money lenders, often at high interest rates. Using remittances to smooth income is especially characteristic of risk management migration, where migration is used as a strategy to diversify income. "It's a lot better now because [with remittances] we can repay our debts and buy food," explained the parents of two current migrants in a village in Magway Township, Magway, who characterize the risk management type.

While remittances are primarily used for basic consumption needs they may also play an important poverty-reduction role. Survey results on secondary uses of remittances suggest that, once basic subsistence needs are addressed, migrant households in these regions begin to invest in health, education, home improvements, or income-generating activities like agricultural inputs.

Figure 3.9 Primary and Secondary Use of Remittances

Primary remittance are mainly used for basic needs, especially food expenses. Once basic needs are met remittances are primarily used for education, savings, and homes.

■ Ayeyarwady ■ Magway
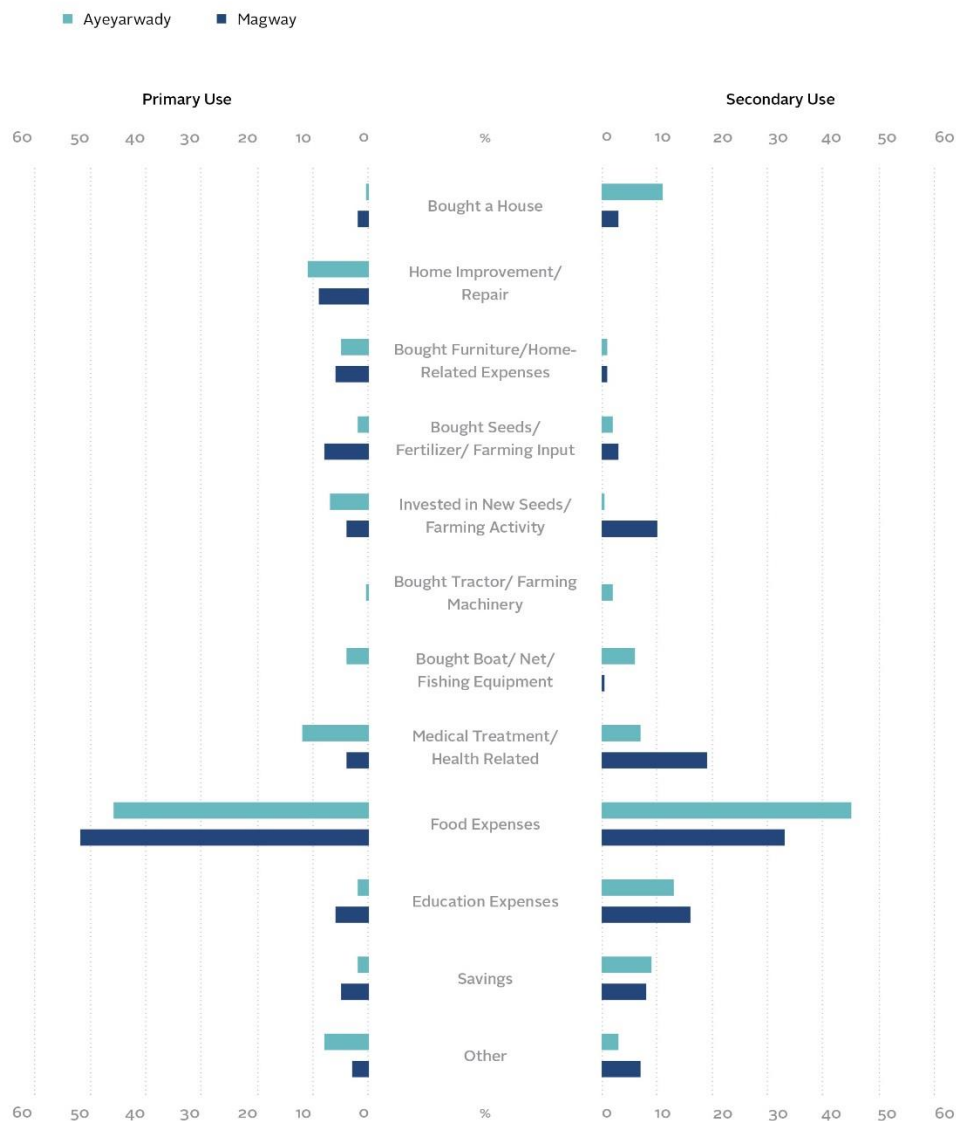
Social Effects on Sending Households

Survey results indicate that when a member of the household migrates those left behind take on more responsibilities. These include daily spending decisions, as well as decisions about education for children and health expenditures. Where household labor is lost through migration, remaining family members must also compensate, sometimes by hiring external labor.

Survey results indicate that when a member of the household migrates those left behind take on more responsibilities. These include daily spending decisions, as well as decisions about education for children and health expenditures. Where household labor is lost through migration, remaining family members must also compensate, sometimes by hiring external labor.

Survey results also demonstrate that in Ayeyarwaddy there is a perception that female migrants create more responsibilities for family members left behind than male migrants; however, there is no significant difference between male and female migrants in terms of their perceptions on the work for those left behind.

Figure 3.10. Perceptions of Changes in Household Responsibilities as Reported by Sending Households

■ Ayeyarwady   ■ Magway

Since the migrants in your household moved away, how would you rate the changes in responsibilities in your household?

Less	Same	More
20%	45%	35%
11%		32%
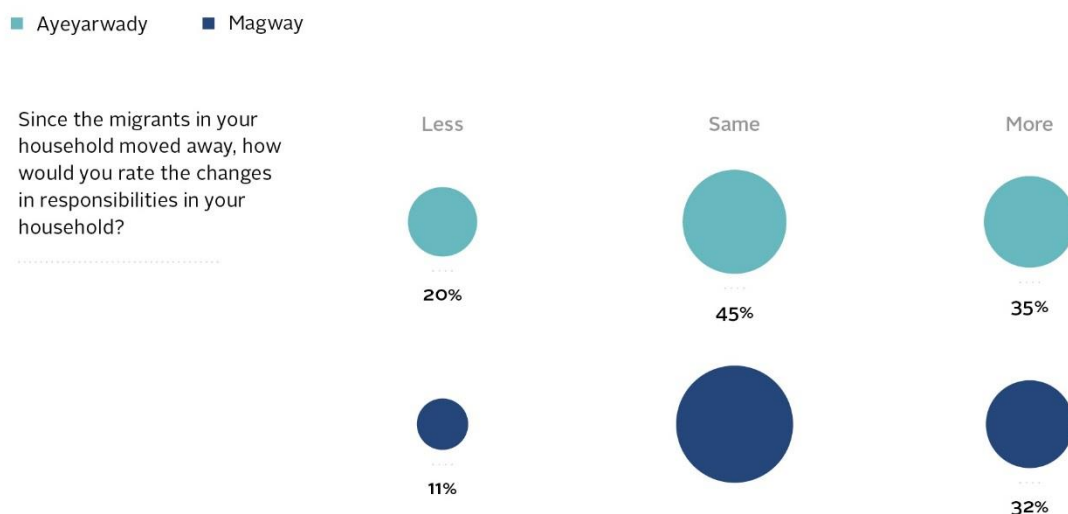
Changes in division of these responsibilities depends on the frequency and effectiveness of the communication between the migrant and the family left behind. Increased access to mobile phones has improved communications. The vast majority of migrants communicate at least monthly, with approximately 29 percent in Ayeyarwaddy and 40 percent in Magway communicating either weekly or daily. However, the qualitative research indicated that in villages with low connectivity, decision making transferred to women household members who were left behind. In one village in Ayeyarwaddy, for example, there were several women interviewed who made decisions independently regarding sending other household members, including children, outside the village for work.

While changes in household decision making tend toward greater responsibilities in both regions, a slight inverse was observed in relation to responsibilities for income generation. Whereas between 15 and 20 percent of households claimed their responsibilities had increased as a result of a migration episode, the difference was much smaller when asked about the responsibility for generating income; for example, in Ayeyarwaddy 5 percent more households claimed a decrease in responsibility for income generation, indicating the benefits of receiving remittances.

7. Experiences of Communities in Sending Villages

Similarly, it is still early to definitively identify collective impacts on sending villages, but some initial findings warrant further observation**.** First, migration is perceived as having a more positive impact on village dynamics in Magway than it does in Ayeyarwaddy. This reflects the differing nature of migration, where in Magway there is a prevalence of both shock response migration and international migration associated with upward mobility, resulting in either perceptions of migration facilitating the resolution of financial difficulties or international remittances being invested into communities, respectively. Second, although difficult to measure, migration is perceived to have implications on the local labor market, with villages with higher migration rates reporting greater challenges in finding casual labor.

Economic Effects on Sending Communities

There is a common perception, especially amongst land owners, that migration is causing a shortage of labor during farming season. Farmers in both regions reported difficulty identifying and hiring sufficient labor during peak times. Over 50 percent of respondents in both regions perceived that it was more difficult to access labor as a result of migration. The perception was particularly prevalent in villages with higher rates of out-migration, especially in Magway. Qualitative research identified negative implications for crop production. These included poor yields and even, in some cases, wastage when crops could not be harvested in time.

Figure 3.11 Perceptions of the Effects of Migration on the Ability to Find Casual Labor in Sending Areas

- Ayeyarwady   ■ Magway

When migrants in your village move away, are there changes in the ability to find casual laborers?

Much Less	Less	Same	More	Much More	No Answer
10%	54%	20%	14%	2%	0%
6%	55%	32%	6%	1%	1%
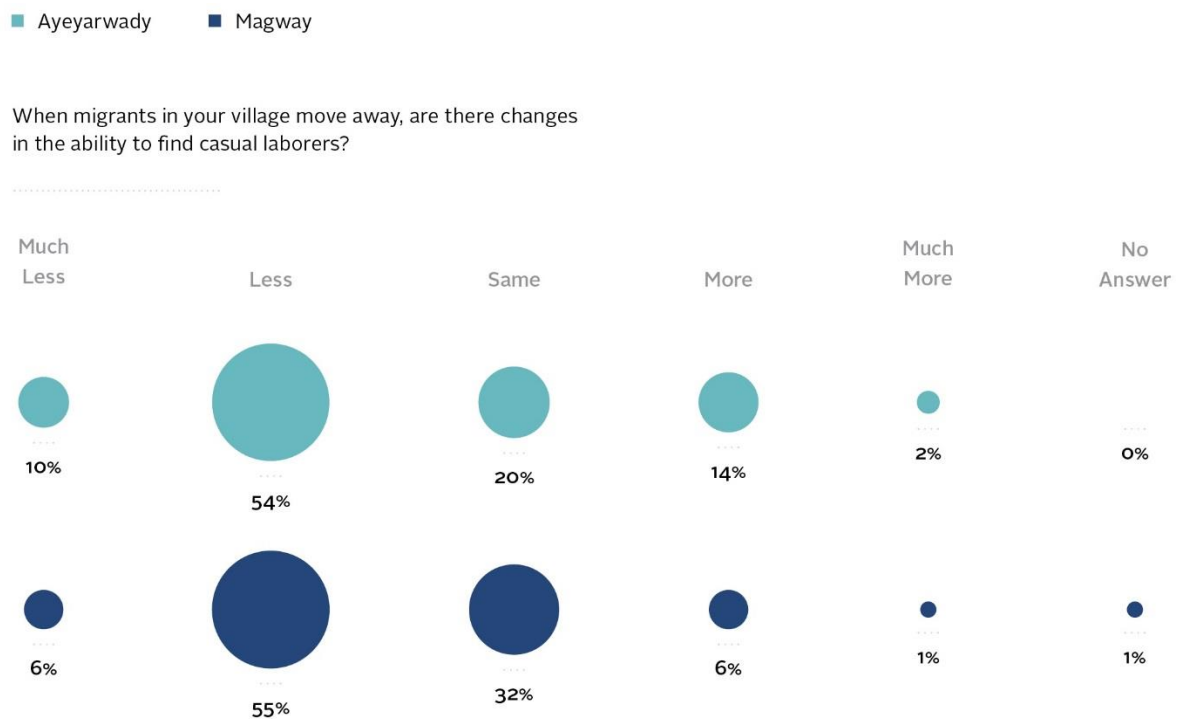
A focus group of farmers in Magway explained that: "Because of labor shortage, different steps of farming work cannot be done in time. The result is that yields are poor. This is a difficult situation for the farmers. Migrant workers may be doing well but remaining members of the community are having a hard time." This narrative is complemented by the shortage of casual labor opportunities in off-peak seasons, which for staple crops like rice extend over a significant portion of the year. Since, in many cases, the part-time casual labor is reportedly insufficient to meet the subsistence needs of casual laborers they combine agricultural work with other incomes sources, including those found through migration.

Perceptions that work opportunities in sending areas are changing as a result of migration varied between the regions. In Magway, migration is perceived to have had little effect on work opportunities, whereas nearly twice the proportion of respondents in Ayeyarwaddy think that migration has created more work opportunities in their village. This reflects in part the differences in relative access to land in these regions. With larger landless populations, it may be inferred that more migrants from Ayeyarwaddy are migrating from casual-labor backgrounds, therefore freeing up those opportunities for others. In contrast, households in Magway tend to engage in casual labor to supplement income from small landholdings, thus explaining why migration has had less of an impact on local labor markets. In relation to this, several respondents mentioned that migration, and the resulting labor shortages perceived, provided casual laborers with more collective negotiating power to discuss wages and terms of payment for labor.

A focus group of casual laborers in Magway was clear on the subject: "There are not many farmers who can afford to hire labor. They don't have enough money to hire labor for a long time. A laborer can't work for a farmer if he isn't paid. He has to make his own living."

Social Effects on Sending Communities

The relatively recent nature of rural-urban migration in Magway and Ayeyarwaddy means that it is premature to definitively identify collective social impacts on sending villages; however, some initial findings warrant further observation.

In general, findings from perception surveys across several issues ranging from the contributions of migrants to community and religious activities to the role of returned migrants in the community, indicate a more positive impact on village social dynamics in Magway than in Ayeyarwaddy. This is, at least in part, a consequence of the regional differences in the patterns of migration; in Magway there is a prevalence of both shock response migration and international migration associated with upward mobility, resulting in, respectively: perceptions of migration facilitating the resolution of difficulties; and international remittances being invested into communities.

There is little evidence at this stage to suggest that migration is resulting in a change in how migrant households relate to other households in the village. Here, survey results show that some three-quarters of the respondents for households with a current migrant do not feel that the absence of one of their members has changed the way they participate in village activities. There is, however, some significant regional variation: almost one-fifth of households in Magway report less participation, while respondents in Ayeyarwaddy were twice as likely to claim that they have been more involved in village activities.

Qualitative research showed that most village authorities welcomed and even encouraged migration because of the possibility of a better and regular income. However, they also acknowledged that migration causes labor shortages during farming season and consequently increases wages. They also lamented the erosion of community organization and the social fabric of the village. On these topics, village elders and respected persons cited a lack of young people for youth associations, which amongst other activities, provide volunteer labor for community-development activities. Interestingly, some villagers cited the same phenomenon as a cause of increased social cohesion, though this view was less common: "As there are fewer people in the village people become more united in organizing social events and funeral cases because one needs the other's help."[34]

There is also a perception that returning migrants bring new skills and knowledge, as well as tastes, perceptions, and attitudes. Migrants in the sample reported returning more confident, worldly, and better able to engage with others in a social and professional sense. Meanwhile, villagers who have not migrated tend to see migration as having a positive impact in individual migrants when they return. In several focus groups discussions, villagers argue that when migrants return to the villages they are more polite, knowledgeable, and have better social and communication skills. One returned male migrant in Magway explained: "Migrants seem more knowledgeable because of their work experiences, more sociable; talk to people nicely."

Migrants also remit funds for religious and social activities in their communities, further serving to raise their esteem in the eyes of non-migrants. A non-migrant from Magway stated during a focus group discussion with village authorities in Magway that: "Migration is good for the community because migrants can contribute money to social events and community festivals."

Yet, returned migrants reported ambiguous experiences as they reengage with their communities. On one hand, they can be respected as more worldly and experienced, and some return wealthier. Many devote a portion of their remittances to social and religious ends, and this can improve their community standing. On the other hand, there are isolated instances in the qualitative research of migrants absorbing bad habits related to drugs and alcohol, and there is a concern that they may introduce them to the village. Moreover, there is at least one reported instance of an older migrant being discriminated against in his bid for village office because others in the community assumed he would migrate again, abandoning his office to do so. This may be an important development to monitor, since—in a community in which individuals rely on social institutions to respond to shock and hardship—the emergence of stratified socioeconomic groups may potentially recalibrate expectations between individuals in those groups, although it is too early to draw conclusions.

There is limited evidence from the research that tensions are emerging between migrant and non-migrant households or that remittances are impacting on inter-household social relations, as it has in other national contexts or in areas of international migration, where remittances tend to be

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[34] Focus group discussion with village authorities in Ayeyarwady.

larger. This is related to the relatively recent nature of migration in many areas, as well as the relatively small volume of remittances, especially when compared with international migration. However, potential horizontal inequalities in sending areas as a result of remittances will be an important phenomenon to monitor in the coming years.

Conclusion

Overall, the report identifies a high level of migration from both Magway and Ayeyarwaddy. In Magway, almost one in four households had at least one family member migrating at the time of research. The figure was slightly lower, but still high, in Ayeyarwaddy, where it was one in five. Moreover, this study confirms that, in Ayeyarwaddy and Magway, migration rates are increasing, especially in recent years, as Myanmar undertakes a wide-ranging economic and political transition.

Migration patterns across both regions have some important similarities. In both regions, landless households are more likely to have family members migrating than the rest of the population. This reflects a lack of year-round income generating opportunities locally. It also indicates a dependence of small- and medium-landholding households on labor provided by family members. Men are significantly more likely to migrate than women across both regions, with double the number of men migrating in Magway than women, and 60 percent of migrants from Ayeyarwaddy being men. Women comprise at least one-third of all migrants in both regions.

There are also significant differences between the two regions. Migration in Ayeyarwaddy follows a more uniform geographic pattern: with 58 percent of migrants moving to Yangon, it is, by far, the primary location of choice. Although Yangon is also the most popular destination from Magway, with just under a quarter of all migrants moving there, the range of destinations to which people migrate from Magway are much more varied: there was no other single location that attracted more than 10 percent of migrants. Related to this point, international migration is significantly higher in Magway, with 22 percent of all migrants moving overseas. The vast majority of international migrants are men and this is a particularly popular option among small landholders, with 40 percent of international migrants from Magway coming from small landholding households. There are regional differences also in the profile of migrants: migrants from Ayeyarwaddy are generally younger when they leave their households and are more likely to have only primary- or lower-secondary-level education compared with migrants from Magway. Finally, there are regional differences in the way people migrate: people are less likely to migrate from Ayeyarwaddy unless they have guarantees of employment prior to departure. These guarantees usually occur through either a family member working in the city or relatives, as these networks are seen as more reliable sources of information for prospective migrants.

Within and across regions, the study identifies significant variation in motivations and strategies for migration for different households according to their livelihood options, based on the land, education and wealth assets they hold. Combining qualitative field research and multivariate

regression analysis, this study constructs three illustrative migration types—risk management, shock response, and upwardly mobile—that provide insight into the question of why rural households in Ayeyarwaddy and Magway choose to migrate.

Through this analysis four key factors relating to migration decisions across rural Ayeyarwaddy and Magwe emerged:

Firstly, although qualitative research finds that earning differentials between locations are not substantial, the certainty and regularity of urban jobs is a significant incentive drawing people to migrate, especially for migrants seeking to manage risk.

Secondly, social networks play a pre-eminent role in influencing migration decisions, again, especially regarding risk management. Across both regions, people overwhelmingly make decisions on whether or not to migrate based on information they receive from family or friends either in their village or already in destination sites. There are significant variations both within and between villages on the strength of these social networks. Within villages, potential migrants rely on extended networks to receive generic information about living conditions in destination sites. However, more specific information, including actual job guarantees, is transacted among tighter social networks made up of family or close friends.

The strength of social networks also varies significantly between villages and explains the substantial differences in migration levels from village to village. As migration levels continue to increase, so too do the breadth of social networks. The variations in migration levels between villages, however, highlight significant information asymmetries; some villages are better placed than others to benefit from opportunities arising from migration.

Thirdly, households exercise a high degree of caution in exploring migration opportunities. This is particularly true for small landholding households seeking to manage risk. Villagers also expressed safety concerns, in particular in relation to female migration. The very low levels of use of agents or brokers in facilitating migration shows a reluctance to place confidence in people beyond close social networks and, in part, explains the extensive reliance on those networks. Risk aversion is more pronounced in Ayeyarwaddy where well over half of migrants moved only subsequent to receiving guarantees of employment in the destination area.

Finally, the financial costs associated with migration are low for most groups and the cost of migrating domestically does not represent a barrier, although men were likely to cite it as a concern. The overwhelming majority of migrants fund their journeys through their own savings or assistance and loans from friends or family. The research found that the low costs enabled migration decisions to be made reasonably quickly upon receipt of reliable information about job opportunities.

Despite the reasonably high rates of migration, there are yet to be significant observable economic impacts on sending households. This reflects the nature of the most prominent form of migration, with movement toward cities to take up predominantly low-skilled employment. Earning

differentials are not significant and, as a result, any remittances are used primarily to supplement food expenses; only a minority of households are able to allocate funds toward productive assets. In terms of social impacts, migration appears to be affecting roles within sending households as those left behind are required to take on more responsibilities: for one-third of the households with migrants, responsibilities at the household level increase for those left behind. However, with the recent expansion of telecommunications services in Myanmar, some of these changes are already mitigated by an improved frequency in communication.

Similarly, it is still early to definitively identify collective impacts on sending villages, but some initial findings warrant further observation. Migration is perceived as having a more positive impact on village dynamics in Magway than it does in Ayeyarwaddy. This reflects the differing nature of migration; in Magway there is a prevalence of both shock response migration and international migration associated with upward mobility, resulting in, respectively, perceptions of migration as something that facilitates the resolution of financial difficulties, and international remittances being invested into communities. While difficult to measure, migration is also perceived as having implications on the local labor market; villages with higher migration rates report greater challenges in finding casual labor.

Chapter 4: Formal sector internal migration in Myanmar

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Abstract

Nearly half of all formal sector[35] workers have undertaken significant internal migration for work. A major migration dynamic is the net import of migrant labour, particularly young male migrants, from Ayeyarwaddy Region to Yangon Region. Migration in the formal sector in Central Myanmar tends to be from one Region in Central Myanmar to another, although there is still a net export of migrant labour from the Central Myanmar to Yangon. The majority of migrants send back remittances, confirming the role that remittances have on household economies.

- Over one-third (38.9%) of formal sector workers in sample had migrated for work from one State/Region to another for work
- Nearly half (48.7%) of formal sector workers in the sample had either migrated from one State/Region to another, or had migrated from one part of their native State/region to another for work, with over half of all formal sector workers in Yangon being migrants
- Nearly three quarters (71%) of all migrants to the formal sector are from four regions: Ayeyarwaddy, Yangon, Mandalay and Bago.
- The majority of migrants in formal sector labour in Yangon are from Ayeyarwaddy Region, whereas migrants in the Central Myanmar tend to be from other States/Regions within the Central Myanmar.
- Ayeyarwaddy Region and Central Myanmar are net exporters of migrant labour to the formal sector, whilst Yangon is a net importer. The majority of the migrants from Ayeyarwaddy are young men, whereas of the small but significant number of migrants into t Ayearwaddy Region, the majority were younger women. Yangon Region imports younger men, but exports older men. Migrants into Central Myanmar tended to be older men, and again, those migrants from Central Myanmar were more likely to be younger women.
- Those migrating to Yangon or the Delta were less likely to migrate with their families than migrants to Central Myanmar. Migrants from Central Myanmar were also more likely to migrate with families. This suggests a difference in pattern of migration to the formal sector, whereby workers in Central Myanmar are more likely to be male, married, and migrate within Central Myanmar with their families.
- Overall, 78% of all formal sector migrants sent back remittances. Rates of remittance sending were highest amongst migrants from Ayeyarwaddy Region, and amongst

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[35] Here, formal sector refers to workers who have employment status which is eligible for them to be considered eligible for social security scheme membership as an employee. This includes factory workers, government workers, and workers in companies, offices and organizations, but does not include self-employed persons, day labourers, or workers whose employment has no contractual basis

workers working in Central Myanmar. Remittance rates for migrants working in Ayeyarwaddy Region was significantly lower. Younger men were more likely to send back remittances than older men, unmarried women were more likely to send back remittances than married women, and overall, remittance rates were highest for younger, unmarried migrants.

Introduction and methodological note

Globally, the estimates of the population of internal and international migrant populations are between 750 million and one billion (Skeldon 2014), with continued growth in numbers in the 21st century. The inter-relatedness of migrant labour and certain national or regional economies means that on one hand, certain economies rely heavily on low-cost migrant labour to maintain competitiveness, whilst at the same time, remittances form a major contribution to GDP in numerous countries which supply migrant labour (Taylor 1999). Recent studies of the Myanmar migrant labour force in Thailand highlight the dependence of certain sectors of the Thai economy on Myanmar migrant labour, where an estimated 3.5 million migrants in either regular or irregular status are in Thailand; roughly 3 million of these migrants are in the labour market. In Thailand, 76 per cent of the total migrant workforce (Huguet and Chamratrithirong 2011) is from Myanmar, meaning that Myanmar migrants constitute approximately 7 per cent of Thailand's total working population (IOM 2013). Smaller studies of migration in 6 state/Regions as part of the LIFT/World Bank Qualitative Socio-Economic Monitoring (QSEM) revealed that migration is a common coping strategy, with 26-30% of all households having a family member migrating, and overall village population migration levels ranging from less than 2% in Shan State to over 10% in Mandalay Region. International, non-seasonal migration was highest in States bordering neighbouring countries, whilst in the central and delta areas, the migration was predominantly internal and seasonal (LIFT/World Bank 2014). Studies from Central Myanmar (Griffiths 2014) show that remittances make up over 10% of all household income, and in 6% of all households was the main source of income. Remittances made up 15% of all income for the poorest households, compared with 5% of income for the richest households.[36] Thus, research evidence underscores the significant role of remittances in household income, both from internal and international migration.

Whilst numerous studies have explored wider patterns of cross-border migration of Myanmar migrants (Chantavanich, Ito et al. 2008, IOM and ARCM 2013, LIFT/QSEM 2016) migration from rural areas in Myanmar to somewhere (Helvetas 2015, LIFT/QSEM 2016) and the role of migrant labour in the rural economy (LIFT/World Bank 2014), less is known of the specific rural-urban migration within Myanmar. Whilst Myanmar's economy remains predominantly agriculture based (Larkin 2012, World Bank 2015), a growing industrial and service sector, recently aided by sanctions lifting, the rate of urbanization is increasing more rapidly (Department of Population 2015, Findlay, Park et al. 2015, Lar 2015). The policy of industrial zones (both SEZ's and more conventional industrial zones) in major urban centres or in close proximity to land or sea access routes create potential hubs for inward migration (Robertson and Taung 2015, Tang and Kelly

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[36] Poorest were in the lowest quintile for asset value; richest were in the highest quintile for asset value

2015) but also exposes workers to the wider effects of globalization (e.g. impacts of sanctions on garment industry in the early 2000's) (Myint, Rasiah et al. 2015). Rural-urban migration is complex, with multiple enabling and constraining factors (Porpora and Lim 1987, Skeldon 1997, Rigg 1998), and whilst the majority of migrants go to cities to engage in 'formal sector' employment, the realities are frequently more precarious working conditions (Rigg 2015) and whilst potentially higher wages are available, living conditions and costs may create a new 'poverty' (Meng 2001, Rigg 2015). Little is known of the scale and patterns of internal migration in the formal sector. Although statistics estimate the formal sector workforce to be around 650,000[37] (around 2% of the total labour force), this figure is likely to be higher. Given the likely expansion in the formal sector workforce in Myanmar due to the emphasis on industrialization and technology-based industry in the proposed economic reforms, knowledge of current internal migration patterns in the formal sector is vital in order to anticipate future trends.

This paper draws on three data sources for analysis: briefly, on the 2014 census data where enumeration included migration-related data; briefly again on data from surveys conducted by the Social Policy and Poverty Research Group (SPPRG) and the Department of Rural Development (Griffiths 2016, Griffiths 2016) whose methodologies are described elsewhere; and finally, in more detail at data collected by SPPRG in 2014 in collaboration with the Social Security Board of the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security. For this survey, conducted between December 2013 and December 2014, data was collected from a nationally representative sample of employees enrolled into the Social Security Board's Social Security system. Respondents were asked to indicate age and sex, and then whether they had migrated from another State/Region in order to work here, and if so, from what State/Region. If they had not migrated from another State/region, they were further asked whether they had migrated from a different area within their native State/Region to work. They were asked if they had migrated with their family, whether they sent back remittances, and, if female, a series of questions on workplace practice. Response was voluntary and anonymized, so that no employees were forced, coerced or incentivized to participate. From a total formal sector workforce of 650,000 workers, a final completed sample of 15,765 was analyzed, representing 2.5% of the total registered workforce. The sample was comprised of 55% male and 45% female respondents, with 49% under 25 and 51% over 25, with females sampled were more likely to be over 25 (52.6%) than males (43.5%). The methodology is described in more detail in an earlier, published version (Griffiths 2014). The sample did not include formal sector workers whose employers had not registered with the Social Security Board (thus potentially excluding a sub-section of waged, but semi-formalized labour) and for this analysis, did not include government workers.

1. What is the scale of internal migration in the formal sector?

Looking at census data, several patterns emerge: firstly, 10% of the population are recorded as living in a place other than their birthplace, and 8% are recorded as living in place other than

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[37] This is based on records from the Social Security Board. However, it is assumed that not all formal sector workers are registered with the SSB. Likewise, the recent verification process identified a significant proportion of workers who were enrolled, but who were no longer working in the sector.

their usual residence (Department of Population 2015). This is determined by comparing the data which records current place of residence (State/Region) with their State/region or origin, or their current place of residence (State/Region) with their usual place of residence (State/region). One in five people living in Yangon region were not born there, with the majority of incoming residents from Ayeyarwaddy, Bago and Magwe regions. Whilst the census records that 34% of these moved for reasons of seeking employment, another 40% "followed family" which may be linked to seeking employment by another family member.

Table 4.1 Net in/out migration for States/regions (adapted from census data (Department of Population, 2015)

	% born in that State/Region but living in a different State/Region	% living in that State/region who do not originate from that State/Region	Net out-migration	Net in-migration	Net gain/loss
Kachin	8.1%	15.0%	100,311	238,463	138,152
Kayah	8.7%	12.2%	21,999	38,810	16,811
Kayin	5.0%	12.1%	65,324	203,742	138,418
Chin	16.8%	2.6%	92,044	13,002	-79,042
Sagaing	8.6%	4.2%	454,628	236,153	-218,475
Tanintharyi	4.7%	6.9%	60,575	114,156	53,581
Bago	13.1%	4.8%	681,071	241,142	-439,929
Magway	13.3%	2.5%	564,239	104,498	-459,741
Mandalay	9.9%	8.6%	578,217	605,111	26,894
Mon	13.9%	6.8%	286,950	168,178	-118,772
Rakhine	9.2%	1.8%	200,889	42,472	-158,417
Yangon	6.7%	20.2%	349,546	2,054,532	1,704,986
Shan	4.7%	6.3%	247,410	412,315	164,905
Ayeyarwaddy	14.6%	1.9%	1,018,720	126,647	-892,073
Nay Pyi Taw	8.1%	18.2%	74,359	226,005	151,646

Analysis of rural data from household surveys conducted by SPPRG and DRD, described in more detail in chapter 6, reveal that one in five rural households reported at least one household member who had moved to find work, and that 10% of households had at least one household member who had moved to a city in another State or region to work. Of those how had moved to another city in another State/Region, 39.5% were reported as working in waged skilled employment, factory employment, as staff or as waged employees in the service sector (Griffiths 2016). These tended to be slightly older than migrants who were engaged in other sectors, and more likely to be male.

Looking at the data from the SPPRG/SSB survey, 38.9% of workers sampled reported that they had moved from another State or Region to work (Table 4.2)

Table 4.2: percentages of formal sector workers who reported migration from one State/Region to another) by gender and age range

	Male	Female	Total
Under 25	52.7%	38.3%	46.8%
Over 25	38.2%	21.3%	29.8%
Total	46.2%	29.6%	38.9%

However, when migration within a State/region was included, this figure rose to nearly 50% who reported as having moved either from another State/Region to work, or from the countryside to the city to work. (Table 4.3). Percentages of people migrating analyzed by gender showed statistically significant differences in the levels of migration by gender and age group, with the highest percentages of reported migration amongst men aged under 25, and the lowest levels were amongst females over 25.

Table 4.3 percentages of formal sector workers who reported migrating (including those who indicated migrating within their native State/Region)

	Male	Female	Total
Under 25	56.2%	52.2%	55.1%
Over 25	48.7%	35.1%	42.1%
Total	52.8%	43.5%	48.7%

Based on this data, we can also see that, although places like Central Myanmar (which includes Mandalay, Magwe, Bago and Sagaing regions) and Ayeyarwaddy region are overall net exporters of migrant labour, we also see that nearly one third of formal sector workers in Central Myanmar and nearly half of formal sector workers in Ayeyarwaddy Region have migrated there to work. The balance, however, is tilted towards more people moving from Central Myanmar and Ayeyarwaddy Region than are moving into those places. However, it should be noted that Yangon accounts for over half of all the recorded formal sector workers, with Central Myanmar, particularly Mandalay and Nay Pyi Taw accounting for the next largest population. Although Central Myanmar as a whole is a net exporter, some areas (such as Mandalay city) are key hubs for formal sector labour drawn from both within, and beyond, Mandalay Region and Central Myanmar.

Table 4.4: percentages of formal sector workers who reported migrating from one State/Region to another, showing by current work location

	Male	Female	Total
Ayeyarwaddy	24.3%	51.3%	45.0%
Central Myanmar	34.3%	27.8%	30.3%
Yangon	50.5%	56.4%	53.0%

When analyzing the origins of formal sector workers in Yangon region, nearly half of the formal sector workers in Yangon Region come from Ayeyarwaddy Region, and over 10% from Bago region. These two Regions are also the largest suppliers of any type of migrant labour to

Yangon, which can give indications of possible labour sources as industrialization creates more formal sector opportunities in Yangon.

Table 4.5: Proportion of formal sector workers in Yangon from different States and Regions

State/Region	State/region of origin of formal sector workers in Yangon Region whose State/Region of origin is not Yangon Region	State/region of origin of adults living in Yangon Region whose State/Region of origin is not Yangon Region
Kachin	1.1%	1.05%
Kayah	1.1%	0.19%
Kayin	3.4%	0.95%
Chin	4.4%	0.66%
Sagaing	2.7%	3.46%
Tanintharyi	1.9%	1.78%
Bago	11.9%	18.16%
Magwe	6.9%	9.74%
Mandalay	4.4%	9.68%
Mon	1.8%	6.51%
Rakhine	7.9%	6.28%
Shan	1.3%	3.22%
Ayeyarwaddy	50.9%	38.31%

2. Where do formal sector migrants come from, and where are they now working?

When analyzing the place of origin for migration, and the destination (place of work) we can estimate which areas are net importers and which areas are net exporters of migrant labour, and also determine whether there are age and gender differences in the trends. Moreover, by looking at the percentage of workers who send remittance, we can also estimate the extent to which areas which export migrant labour will benefit from remittance income. Table 4.6 shows the origins of formal sector workers as sampled in all regions, and showing the percentage of the entire migrant formal sector workforce. Firstly, by looking at the total migrant population in the sample, we can see that the majority are from Ayeyarwaddy Region, Yangon Region, Bago Region and Mandalay Region. However, there are interesting variations by age and sex, with Mandalay region providing the largest proportion of over-25 males. (Table 4.6).

Table 4.6: percentages of formal sector workers who reported migrating from one State/region to another as % of all migrants in that category

Migrant source as % of all migrants	Male <25	Male>25	Male Total	Female <25	Female>25	Female Total	Total
State/Region							
Kachin	0.20%	1.10%	0.60%	1.40%	2.50%	1.80%	1.00%
Kayah	1.00%	1.50%	1.20%	1.10%	0.80%	1.00%	1.10%
Kayin	1.20%	3.20%	1.90%	3.80%	8.10%	5.30%	3.10%
Chin	1.50%	9.60%	4.50%	2.40%	4.20%	3.00%	4.00%
Sagaing	0.90%	10.70%	4.50%	3.00%	2.20%	2.70%	3.90%
Tanintharyi	0.80%	2.80%	1.50%	1.60%	2.20%	1.80%	1.60%
Bago	6.50%	6.10%	6.30%	19.20%	11.70%	16.50%	9.80%
Magwe	2.70%	4.80%	3.50%	9.90%	10.60%	10.20%	5.70%
Mandalay	2.10%	24.10%	10.30%	5.50%	5.60%	5.50%	8.70%
Mon	0.60%	1.90%	1.10%	1.70%	3.90%	2.50%	1.60%
Rakhine	2.10%	6.20%	3.60%	13.20%	8.10%	11.40%	6.20%
Yangon	1.70%	21.00%	8.90%	10.20%	12.30%	11.00%	9.60%
Shan	0.70%	1.10%	0.90%	0.80%	1.40%	1.00%	0.90%
Ayeyarwaddy	77.90%	5.90%	51.20%	26.10%	26.50%	26.30%	42.80%

When looking at percentages of those migrating according to origin in Table 4.7 (which measure the proportion of migrants as a percentage of the entire sampled population) a more complex picture emerges, with rates highest amongst those originating from Ayeyarwaddy, but again showing that the majority of migrants, both male and female, from Ayeyarwaddy, were younger. Analyzing migrant profiles from places like Sagaing, Mandalay and Magwe, male migrants tended to be older whereas female migrants tended to be younger.

Table 4.7: percentages of formal sector workers who reported migrating, by origin, disaggregated by age and sex

Migrant source as % of all formal sector workforce	Male <25	Male>25	Male Total	Female <25	Female>25	Female Total	Total
Kachin	0.10%	0.40%	0.30%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.40%
Kayah	0.50%	0.60%	0.50%	0.40%	0.20%	0.30%	0.40%
Kayin	0.60%	1.20%	0.90%	1.50%	1.70%	1.60%	1.20%
Chin	0.80%	3.70%	2.10%	0.90%	0.90%	0.90%	1.60%
Sagaing	0.50%	4.10%	2.10%	1.20%	0.50%	0.80%	1.50%
Tanintharyi	0.40%	1.00%	0.70%	0.60%	0.50%	0.50%	0.60%
Bago	3.40%	2.30%	2.90%	7.40%	2.40%	4.90%	3.80%
Magwe	1.40%	1.80%	1.60%	3.80%	2.20%	3.00%	2.20%
Mandalay	1.10%	9.10%	4.70%	2.10%	1.20%	1.60%	3.40%
Mon	0.30%	0.70%	0.50%	0.70%	0.80%	0.70%	0.60%
Rakhine	1.10%	2.40%	1.70%	5.10%	1.70%	3.40%	2.40%
Yangon	0.90%	8.00%	4.10%	3.90%	2.60%	3.20%	3.70%
Shan	0.40%	0.40%	0.40%	0.30%	0.30%	0.30%	0.40%
Ayeyarwaddy	41.10%	2.20%	23.60%	10.10%	5.50%	7.80%	16.60%

In order to look at trends and patterns of migration, and determine the net 'importers and exporters of migrants, we analyze the sample according to the place of work and place of origin (Table 4.8).

Table 4.8: percentages of formal sector workers who reported migrating by origin, according to region of employment

State of origin of formal sector migrants	% of Formal sector workers in Ayeyarwaddy Region from that State/Region	% of Formal sector workers in Yangon Region from that State/Region	% of Formal sector workers in Central Myanmar from that State/Region
Kachin	5.3%	1.1%	
Kayah	9.6%	1.1%	
Kayin	8.5%	3.4%	
Chin	10.6%	4.4%	1.7%
Sagaing	11.70%	2.67%	
Tanintharyi	4.3%	1.9%	
Bago	10.6%	11.9%	
Magwe	12.8%	6.9%	
Mandalay	7.4%	4.4%	
Mon	1.1%	1.8%	6.8%
Rakhine	3.2%	7.9%	
Yangon	12.8%		88.1%
Shan	2.1%	1.3%	
Ayeyarwaddy		50.9%	

Looking at migration INTO the Delta and Yangon, we see that migrants into those two areas are from all across the country, but with the highest proportion in Ayeyarwaddy (after intra-Region migration from one part of Ayeyarwaddy to another) are from Yangon Region, Magwe, Sagaing, Bago and Chin. In Yangon Region, almost half the migrant labour is from Ayeyarwaddy Region, with the next biggest provider being Bago Region. However, migrants INTO Central Myanmar (Sagaing, Mandalay, Magwe and Bago Regions) tended to be predominantly from within Central Myanmar itself, particularly Sagaing and Mandalay, with migrants from Yangon being the largest non-Central Myanmar provider.

Analysis of disaggregated data as shown in Table 4.1 demonstrates a more complex picture of the net import/export of migrant labour, whereby the major movement of labour is by males under 25 from the Delta and Central Myanmar to Yangon. Although the ratios of inbound: outbound women migrants to and from Central Myanmar are very high, suggesting a significant exodus, the actual numbers are small. In fact, in the entire sample there were no recorded female migrants to Central Myanmar from other States/Regions outside Central Myanmar.

3. Who is migrating?

Just over one quarter of all migrants reported migrating with their families. However, this was more likely amongst migrants who had migrated to Central Myanmar, especially older male migrants. Female migrants working in Yangon were also more likely to report having migrated with their families.

Table 4.9: proportion of migrants who migrated with family by current location

	Ayeyarwaddy	Central Myanmar	Yangon	All areas
Male <25	0.0%	0.3%	6.2%	
Male>25	11.1%	57.9%	13.0%	
Male total	11.1%	58.2%	19.3%	
Female<25	1.2%	1.2%	16.4%	
Female>25	6.0%	0.0%	17.3%	
Female total	7.1%	1.2%	33.7%	
TOTAL	8.3%	40.1%	25.3%	26.8%

When analyzing by point of origin, migrants from Mandalay and Sagaing were more likely to migrate with their families, and again, proportions were higher amongst older male migrants. A large cohort of young male migrants from Ayeyarwaddy Region migrated without their families, and this group forms a large segment of the overall migrant population in the formal sector. This points to a possible difference in the demographics and dynamics of migration both to and from Central Myanmar, as compared to Ayeyarwaddy Region.

Table 4.10: proportion of migrants who migrated with family according to origin, as percentage of migrants in the category who reported migrating with their families

% migrating with families, by origin	Male <25	Male>25	Male Total	Female <25	Female>25	Female Total	Total
Kachin	0.00%	75.00%	54.50%	0.00%	33.30%	17.60%	32.10%
Kayah	33.30%	27.30%	30.40%	14.30%	50.00%	22.20%	28.10%
Kayin	38.50%	31.80%	34.30%	36.40%	50.00%	43.50%	39.50%
Chin	43.80%	11.80%	17.90%	15.40%	35.70%	25.90%	19.80%
Sagaing	36.40%	82.10%	76.40%	15.80%	75.00%	33.30%	66.40%
Tanintharyi	60.00%	40.00%	46.70%	11.10%	62.50%	35.30%	42.60%
Bago	5.20%	43.90%	18.60%	12.10%	31.00%	17.10%	17.80%
Magwe	25.00%	39.40%	32.30%	16.90%	30.60%	22.10%	26.30%
Mandalay	42.30%	92.50%	86.00%	27.30%	42.10%	32.70%	75.00%
Mon	57.10%	57.10%	57.10%	60.00%	69.20%	65.20%	61.40%
Rakhine	38.50%	86.40%	68.60%	25.90%	42.30%	29.90%	45.20%
Yangon	38.10%	17.10%	19.80%	41.00%	63.40%	50.00%	31.20%
Shan	55.60%	50.00%	52.90%	50.00%	20.00%	33.30%	46.20%
Ayeyarwaddy	1.10%	40.50%	2.80%	23.00%	42.40%	30.00%	8.30%

4. Where's the money going to?

Finally, we examined the extent to which migrant workers in the formal sector reported sending money back to families, as an indication of potential remittance flow from cities to rural areas. Overall, the majority of migrants do send remittance back to families, particularly those in Central Myanmar and Yangon. When analyzed in terms of place of origin of the migrant worker (and hence, probable destination of the remittance, again we can see that in most areas, the majority of migrants send remittances back to families, with the highest rate being in Ayeyarwaddy Region, and lower rates for migrants from States like Chin and Kayah, as well as Bago and Sagaing Regions.

Table 4.11 Proportion of migrants sending back remittances, by origin

% who send back remittances, by origin	Male <25	Male>25	Male Total	Female <25	Female>25	Female Total
Kachin	0.00%	75.00%	54.50%	0.00%	33.30%	17.60%
Kayah	33.30%	27.30%	30.40%	14.30%	50.00%	22.20%
Kayin	38.50%	31.80%	34.30%	36.40%	50.00%	43.50%
Chin	43.80%	11.80%	17.90%	15.40%	35.70%	25.90%
Sagaing	50.00%	52.60%	51.70%	55.60%	85.70%	64.00%
Tanintharyi	71.40%	73.30%	72.70%	66.70%	62.50%	64.70%
Bago	15.60%	60.50%	30.40%	93.00%	73.00%	88.20%
Magwe	53.10%	71.40%	61.70%	86.40%	81.10%	84.40%
Mandalay	64.00%	72.00%	68.00%	72.40%	73.30%	72.70%
Mon	100.00%	60.00%	71.40%	90.00%	92.30%	91.30%
Rakhine	66.70%	100.00%	80.50%	92.20%	83.30%	90.10%
Yangon	55.60%	85.90%	82.50%	89.50%	73.30%	83.90%
Shan	50.00%	62.50%	56.30%	75.00%	75.00%	75.00%
Ayeyarwaddy	98.80%	72.20%	97.90%	82.50%	72.30%	78.90%

There was very strong correlation between age under 25 and sending remittances for men, but the correlation was less strong for women. Unmarried women were more likely to send back remittances than married women. Overall, male migrants were more likely to be married than female migrants, and not surprisingly, married migrants were more likely to report having migrated with their families. Although remittance rates were higher for younger, unmarried migrants, overall rates were high, except for male migrants over 25.

Discussion and conclusions:

This study identifies a significant feature of internal migration, illustrating that almost half of the formal sector workers sample had migrated for work, with a substantial trend to workers moving to Yangon for work. Although the formal labour sector is substantially smaller than the non-formal (or informal sector), given that a quarter of these moved with their families, this represents a significant movement of labour and people within the country. Also, given than the majority are sending remittances back to family, this also represents a significant source of household income for migrant source areas. Three factors, however, make it difficult to extrapolate the findings to predict likely future scale of migration for formal sector work in the case of increased industrialization. Firstly, a major factor would be the locations of such industrial expansion, which would necessarily influence the labour flow. If, for example, major industrial development took place in Ayeyarwaddy Region that could result in more localized migration. Secondly, another factor is the type of industrialization, influencing the labour skill requirements. Thirdly, at some point the labour 'pull' from the formal sector will significantly

compete with labour 'pull' from both non-formal sectors within the country, and also formal and non-formal sectors in other countries which typically attract Myanmar migrant labour. To what extent is the labour pool, or sections of it, are limited in terms of skills, mobility and willingness to migrate for work? However, by combining the findings from this study with data and projections from industry, we can develop different projections for internal formal sector based on a range of scenarios.

Three findings of interest from this study also merit further discussion. Firstly, there is the trend of younger age migrants from Ayeyarwaddy Region going to work in Yangon, whereas migrants going from other places to Central Myanmar tended to be older. There are two possible explanations for this trend. The nature of the formal sector into which migrants are moving may be different, with different skill requirements. At present, the data does not allow for analysis according to industrial sector. Secondly, it is possible that workers from the Delta migrating to Yangon may well represent newer, younger migrants moving into newly created industrial jobs in Yangon, whereas migrants to Central Myanmar may represent more qualified workers, or workers who migrated several years ago. Again, where a significant number of recorded migrants in Central Myanmar were those who moved from one Region to another in Central Myanmar (e.g. from Sagaing to Mandalay), these also were almost all men over 25 years of age. This is the second interesting observation, whereby migration in Central Myanmar was more localized, and tended to be older, married men moving with their families-with almost no female migrants in Central Myanmar. Again, industrial sector analysis could help, as well as recording of the time of migration. However, statistical analysis demonstrates that this represents a significant difference. Although Central Myanmar represents a net exporter of migrant labour, it also appears to have a different pattern of migration than other parts of the country. The final observation of interest Overall, though, it appears that the pattern of formal sector migration is different in different parts of the country. This may reflect differing labour market demands, or may reflect particular trends in broader labour force movement. The final point of note is the differences in remittance rates, with workers in Ayeyarwaddy Region, despite being less likely to have migrated with their families, being far less likely than migrants in other areas to send remittances back to families. This could reflect differences in remuneration of workers, or possibly increased difficulties in sending remittances back as compared to those working in larger metropolitan areas like Yangon or Mandalay.

Chapter 5: Myanmar Migrant Workers in Thailand – their characteristics, migration experiences and aspirations on return

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Introduction and methodological note

This paper was written using the dataset collected by a study "Assessing the Potential Changes in the Migration Patterns of Myanmar Migrants and their Impacts on Thailand" conducted by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Country Mission in Thailand and Asian Research Center for Migration (ARCM), Chulalongkorn University in 2013. This study collected migration data from over 5,000 Myanmar migrants in Thailand.

The study was conducted based on the following understanding of the reality of labour migration of Myanmar nationals to Thailand: 1) the migrant workforce, the majority of whom are from Myanmar, plays a crucial role in Thailand's economy; 2) changes in the migration patterns of Myanmar migrants are to be expected as a result of unprecedented economic and political change in Myanmar; 3) Thailand's economy and society will inevitably be impacted by such changes, and it is for the benefit of Thailand to proactively understand, forecast and prepare for these changes. The study was supported by the Royal Thai Government (RTG) and it requested the internal resource of IOM, IOM Development Fund, to finance this study. Due to the context in which this study was commissioned and undertaken, the findings and analyses in the report were presented specifically for Thai audiences. The study nonetheless collected comprehensive data which are just as informative to Myanmar audiences. This paper is an attempt to draw out salient findings which can inform Myanmar stakeholders and increase their understanding on the patterns and implication of the migration of Myanmar nationals to Thailand. It also seeks to inform strategies to increase developmental role of migration for migrants, migrant-sending households and communities, and Myanmar as a whole.

*   *   *

Over the past decades, migrant workers in Thailand, the majority of whom are from Myanmar, have made significant contributions to Thailand's economic growth. In 2014, an estimated 4 million migrant workers from neighbouring countries of Myanmar, Cambodia and Lao PDR were in Thailand, of whom 3 million were from Myanmar.[38] Thailand is the primary destination of Myanmar international migrants; Myanmar migrants in Thailand account for 70% of Myanmar nationals living abroad (Department of Population, 2015).

These migrant workers mainly engaged in low-skilled, labour intensive occupations. Overdependence of some industrial sectors on migrant workers are evident. For example, 75% of the workforce in fisheries are migrants, making it one of the most migrant-dependent sectors in Thailand. The chairman of the Fishery Association of Samut Sakhon clearly reflected the realities of fisheries and related industries relying on the availability of Myanmar migrant labourers by saying that "if Myanmar workers are gone, Mahachai's industry will be over" (IOM and ARCM, 2013). Similarly, 80 % of the workforce in the construction sector of Thailand is said to be migrant workers (ibid). Considering that Myanmar migrant workers are working in diverse sectors – domestic work, manufacturing, food processing, hospitality, services, and agriculture to name a few – taking up the jobs that the locals are not willing to do for the price they get, there is an obvious reason as to why Thailand is interested to know whether the availability of labour from Myanmar will remain a status quo or otherwise in the context of changing political and economic dynamics in Myanmar.

There is good reason for Myanmar to be equally interested in having an evidence-based, comprehensive understanding of migration dynamics in Myanmar. As migration of Myanmar nationals to Thailand is the largest international migratory stream, a lot is at stake in the migration patterns and impacts on both sides of the border. This paper, based on the dataset gained from the IOM-ARCM study in 2013, generated the following understanding of the migration patterns of Myanmar nationals to Thailand, as well as their return prospects. Each statement is further elaborated in the following sections.

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[38] Estimating the number of regular and irregular migrants in a country is always a challenge. IOM's 2014 estimate is based on the number of migrants who were recorded in different stages of regularlization exercises in Thailand, as well as on the latest estimate of the Department of Population on the number of Myanmar nationals living abroad.

Key findings

The 2013 study found that:

1. Migration of Myanmar nationals to Thailand is predominantly about migration from Eastern Myanmar.

2. Migration to Thailand is much about migration of youth.

3. Migrants go to Thailand mainly for economic reasons, but some migrants, especially from Shan State, fled from conflict and insecurity.

4. The living conditions of migrants before they migrated were reported to be not too bad.

5. Migrants going to Thailand are increasingly depending on informal brokerage system to facilitate their move. These systems are becoming more advanced and widespread over time.

6. Migrants from Eastern Myanmar tend to migrate to the inner provinces of Thailand and receive higher wages than migrants from other parts of Myanmar – with the exception of migrants from Shan and Kayah States.

7. There is a strong positive correlation between the level of income in Thailand and the amount of remittances migrants can send back home.

8. Migrant-sending households in Eastern Myanmar thus enjoy higher rates of return by migrants through remittances than households in other parts of Myanmar – with the exception of Shan State.

9. Estimated 2.17 billion US Dollars was sent back from Thailand in Myanmar in 2012 - 2013, majority of which were sent to Eastern Myanmar.

10. Many migrants gain work-related skills and experiences while working in Thailand.

11. Majority of migrants don't consider staying in Thailand for life; they want to return to Myanmar when the time is right for them.

12. At the same time, the majority want to go back to where they came from and to their families, rather than where there are jobs.

13. Naturally, their choices of jobs upon return were more related to the jobs that are likely to be available in their hometowns/villages than the jobs they performed during their migration in Thailand.

1. Migration of Myanmar nationals to Thailand is predominantly about migration from Eastern Myanmar[39].

The study found that 76% of respondents reported to have come from Mon, Kayin Shan States as well as Tanintharyi Region, all of which border Thailand. Among those who had recently migrated (respondents who reported to have been in Thailand for 5 years or less), the percentage of those who had come from these bordering areas were lower (72%, compared to 80% among migrants who had been in Thailand for 6 years or more). Nonetheless, the figures clearly demonstrate that when we talk about Myanmar migrants in Thailand, we are in fact talking predominantly about those who are from Eastern Myanmar. Eastern Myanmar is therefore the region which have the highest stake in the implication of migration to Thailand, including return.

Map *: Respondents' states and regions of origin in Myanmar

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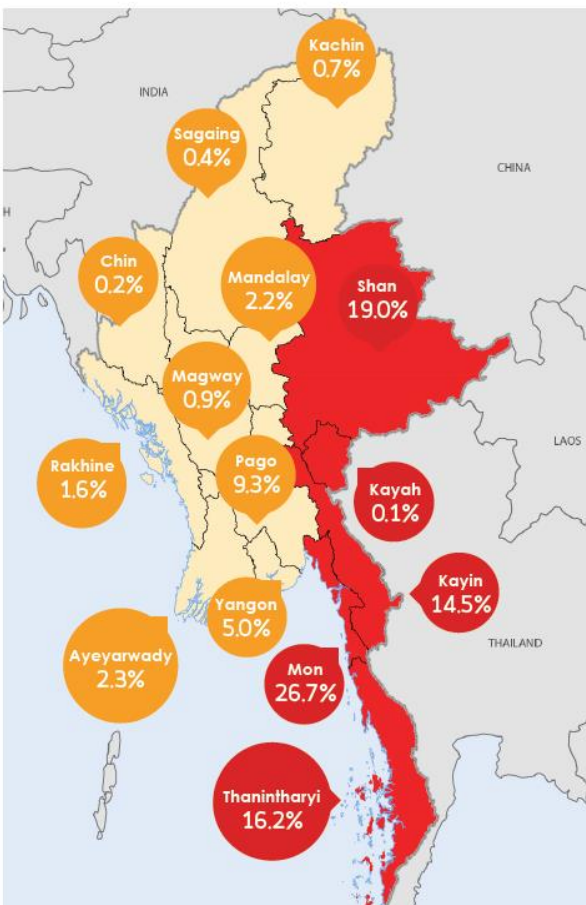
[39] This paper defines Eastern Myanmar as states and regions bordering Thailand, including Shan, Kayah, Kayin, Mon States and Thanintharyi Region.

2. Migration to Thailand is much about migration of youth.

70% of respondents reported having migrated to Thailand at the age of 25 or younger. 23% of respondents migrated as children (younger than 18 years old). The percentage of female child migration was slightly higher (24% of female migrant respondents) than male (22%). This finding reflects the reality that Thai industries are in need of young and able workers who can work long hours, sometimes in physically demanding conditions. What this means for Myanmar is that there is a large absence of youth in source communities, especially in Eastern Myanmar.

3. Migrants go to Thailand mainly for economic reasons, but some migrants, especially from Shan State, fled from conflict and insecurity.

While the majority of respondents reported that the primary reason for migrating to Thailand was economic, a group of migrants said that they had fled to Thailand as a result of conflict and insecurity. The percentage of respondents who claimed to have been displaced was relatively higher among migrants from Shan (23% of respondents from Shan State) and Kayin (7%) States. The principal difference between displaced Shans and Kayins was that Kayins were able to seek refuge in refugee camps established along the Western border of Thailand, while no such camps existed along the northern border of Thailand to accommodate Shans. As a result, displaced Kayins either entered refugee camps (some of whom subsequently resettled in third countries) or lived and worked outside of refugee camps, whereas the majority of Shans became a part of the migrant population. Respondents who reported conflict as a main reason to migrate to Thailand were particularly high among those from Mongnai Township (32%), Mong Kaung (29%), and Laikha Township (23%) all of which are in Southern Shan State. It is also worth noting that more than half of migrants from Shan State reported conflict and insecurity as one of the three main motivating factors which led them to migrate.

4. The living conditions of migrants before they migrated were reported to be not too bad.

76% of respondents reported that their living conditions were adequate (60%), good (15%) or very good (1%). This contradicts a widely held view that migrant from Myanmar desperately see to escape poverty. Respondents who were land owners and farmed their own land reported having had better living conditions (78% reported that their conditions were adequate or good/very good) than landless farmers (65%), or migrants who migrated to Thailand due to conflict/insecurity (62%).

5. Migrants going to Thailand are increasingly depending on informal brokerage system to facilitate their move. These systems are becoming more advanced and widespread over time.

The study found the advancement of informal labour migration brokerage system for labour deployment from Myanmar to Thailand. The percentage of migrants who migrated to Thailand with the help of informal agents increased from 24% among migrants who have been in Thailand for 11 years or more to 43% among recent migrants who have migrated to Thailand in the last 5 years. This informal brokerage arrangement is becoming increasingly common in Mon, Kayin and Tanintharyi; 53% of respondents who migrated from these states and region in the last five years reported that they had used informal brokers. This contrasts with respondents from Shan State, only 12% of whom had used them. 36% of respondents used informal brokers from other parts of Myanmar. The role of informal brokers to facilitate migrants accessing better paid jobs is worth noting, a topic which is expanded upon below.

6. Migrants from Eastern Myanmar tend to migrate to inner provinces of Thailand and receive higher wages than migrants from other parts of Myanmar – with the exception of migrants from Shan and Kayah States**.**

The study found that 76% of migrants from border states and region of Mon, Kayin and Tanintharyi live in inner provinces of Thailand. This contrasts with 28% of respondents from Shan, and 46% from other states and regions of Myanmar. Perhaps the biggest implication of this is the differences in their income levels. The study found that migrants working in inner provinces of Thailand earn on average 48% more than migrants who work in border provinces. While the average daily wage of migrants working in inner provinces of Thailand was 347 Baht (9.9 USD)[40], migrants working in border provinces earned 235 Baht (6.7 USD) per day which is lower than Thailand's minimum daily wage of 300 Baht (8.6 USD). While females in inner provinces and border provinces receive less wages than their male counterparts, females in inner provinces receive more wages than the males in border provinces. Moreover, migrants who worked in inner provinces reported to have had better living and working conditions compared with those in border provinces. Migrants in inner provinces were more satisfied with their living and working conditions than those in border provinces, with 82% of the former saying these conditions were either good or very good, compared with 54% of the latter.

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[40] Exchange rate used in this paper is 1USD = 35 THB.

7. There is a strong positive correlation between the level of income in Thailand and the amount of remittances migrants can send back home.

The study found that 85% of migrants who received a daily salary of at least 300 Baht sent remittances back to Myanmar, at an average of 35,835 Baht (1,023.86 USD) per year. These figures sharply contrast with migrants who receive daily wages of less than 300 Baht, only 61% of whom sent remittances at an average of 17,115 Baht (489 USD) per year. Many migrants from the border States of Mon, Kayin and Tanintharyi Region migrated to Thailand's inner provinces and received higher wages than those who migrated from other parts of Myanmar.

8. Migrant-sending households in Eastern Myanmar thus enjoy higher rates of return by migrants through remittances than households in other parts of Myanmar – with the exception of Shan State.

Given that migrants earning over 300 Baht a day were more likely to remit money and that salaries in the inner provinces were often above this threshold, Bordering states and region of Mon, Kayin and Tanintharyi enjoy higher returns from migrants through remittances than other parts of Myanmar. For instance, Mon State, the state of origin of 27% of respondents, receives 33% of the total remittances sent back to Myanmar. This can be attributed to those from Mon State earning relatively high salaries which results in them remitting more than migrants from other parts of Myanmar. This is similar for migrants from Kayin State which was the state of origin of 15% of respondents but it receives 19% of the total remittances sent back to Myanmar. The situation is reversed in case of Shan State, the origin state of 19% of respondents which receives 11% of the total remittances send back to Myanmar. This is reflected by the fact that migrants from Shan State tend to migrate to border provinces of Thailand, receive less wages and remit less.

9. Estimated 2.17 billion US Dollars was sent back from Thailand in Myanmar in 2012 - 2013, majority of which were sent to Eastern Myanmar.

Based on the data collected on remittances, and using the estimate of 3 million migrant workers in Thailand, this paper estimates that the annual remittances flow from Thailand in Myanmar in 2012 - 2013 was 2.165 billion US Dollars. This almost equals to the foreign direct investment of 2.696 billion US Dollars in 2012/13 and are more than half of programmable official development assistance of 3.8 billion US Dollars in 2013. What is notable is that 78% of the remittances sent from Thailand to Myanmar were sent back to private households in Mon, Kayin, Tanintharyi and Shan. The study also found that migrants prefer to send remittances through informal channels. 82% of respondents reported that that they remitted money through informal channels (67% through informal agents or Hundi, 15% through other channels including through friends and

families) and only 18% said they used formal remittance services offered by banks and remittances service providers. Due to largely informal nature of remittances transfer, it is difficult for Myanmar government to understand the volumes and directions of the remittances flow to Myanmar.

10. Many migrants gain work-related skills and experiences while working in Thailand.

73% of respondents reported that they had gained work-related skills from their employment in Thailand, particularly amongst those working in sectors such as garment production and sales (85%)), agriculture (84%) and domestic work (78%). Fewer respondents working in fisheries related (61%) and fisheries (62%) reported work-related skills development. Other than work-related skills, respondents reported to have gained self-confidence (58%) and adapted to multi-cultural working environments (44%) as well as to have learnt to work efficiently under pressure (41%). There were no significant differences between females and males on the exposure or the extent to which skills were gained, though males were more likely to gain mechanical skills and management skills, while females were more likely to gain language and business skills.

11. Majority of migrants don't consider staying in Thailand for life; they want to return to Myanmar when the time is right for them.

80% of respondents expressed their wish to return to Myanmar one day. This was strong across migrants from all states and regions, irrespective of gender or the sector they were working in. In addition, the study found that there was a lower level of interest among migrants who have lived in Thailand for many years and/or those who had an option to gain permanent residency in Thailand. Respondents who reported to have fled from conflict and insecurity were slightly less likely to consider returning one day (75% of them wanted to return).

12. At the same time, the majority want to go back to where they came from and to their families, rather than where there are jobs.

Of respondents who were considering returning to Myanmar, 78% said they wanted to return to their places of origin, 13% said they wanted to resettle where their families were as they were no longer in the place of origin and 11% were motivated to move to places where there were attractive job opportunities.

13. Naturally, their choices of jobs upon return were more related to the jobs that are likely to be available in their hometowns/villages than the jobs they performed during their migration in Thailand.

The respondents' most preferred job upon return was farming their own land, which was the case among 37% of males and 28% of females. Their second was opening their own business (19% of males and 23% of females), followed by opening food and beverage shops (14% of males and 25% of females) and trade (13% of males and 16% of females). This finding reflects the entrepreneurial spirits of migrants who wish to return, especially among females 64% of whom have expressed their willingness to run business of their own.

*   *   *

These findings prompt us think of areas where the developmental role of migration can be enhanced to benefit migrants, their families, the communities they live in and Myanmar as a whole. It is clear that the Myanmar migrants in Thailand have significant contributions to make to their families, communities and country by means of remittances, skills and knowledge gains.

First of all, the findings have demonstrated a pattern of migration choices which increases the likelihood of "successful" migration experiences with a combination of factors such as increased income, better working and living conditions, increased remittances, and better acquisition of skills and experiences. It also identified migration choices which are less likely to yield positive return. These information can be used to inform aspirant migrants to help them achieve positive migration outcome. Efforts should be made to target population who have traits of having less successful migration experiences – such as people in Shan State and non-Eastern Myanmar states and regions, people who are less likely to have good networks and information, landless, and people fleeing from conflict. Furthermore, the study suggested a role of informal brokers to be able to introduce migrants to better paying jobs in inner provinces. Job facilitation is one useful service for migrants to access higher paying jobs, and such services – especially by licensed recruitment agencies – should be further promoted with simpler and more migrant-friendly processes, less processing period, and more affordable costs.

Second, the study provided information on where development efforts should focus and how. For instance, in areas where there are significant inflow of remittances, effort can focus on supporting the initiatives of the remittances recipient households to diversify their income portfolio using available cash, improve their financial planning and management, promote their financial inclusion by making financial systems more inclusive and responsive to the needs of remittance-receiving households. At the same time, in areas highly affected by out-migration, support should take into consideration on skewed demographic conditions in areas such as livelihood and employment, promoting the ways in which migrants participate in the household and community affairs from distance, protection and alternative care for children and elderly, and disaster risk reduction and management taking into consideration the absence of young, able members of the communities.

Migrants reported to have learnt skills and gained experiences while in Thailand and that they want to return to Myanmar one day and contribute to its development. Nonetheless, many

returning migrants may not end up applying work-related skills they acquired and improved while working in Thailand due to lack of available relevant work opportunities in their desired places of return. It is clear from the findings that they want to go back to their home and not to be migrants again (this time as internal migrants). Instead, migrants are inspired to run businesses in their home communities upon return, probably using savings from migration as their investment capital. It is important for the policy makers and practitioners develop strategies and support on return migrants taking into consideration of aspirations of prospective return migrants, to increase the role of return migrants in development and to support their endeavours upon return.

This study also highlighted areas which need further investigation. Financial contributions migrant workers make to Myanmar in the form of remittances is enormous, particularly for Eastern Myanmar. Remittances allows recipient households to pay for basic needs, withstand risks, such as unemployment, disability, accidents and illness, and resilience to external events such as climate change. Remittances have an impact on the social standing and prestige of recipient families, whose improved access to material resources allows them to celebrate social/family events, strengthen social networks, and partly redress social disadvantages. Large inflow of remittances at the macro level increase national income and stimulate consumption and demand for local goods and services. Remittances can also potentially increase the amount of local capital available for reinvestment in business.

At the same time, remittances could also create unforeseen adverse impact on migrants and recipients. Remittances can foster dependency between recipients and senders, and reduce the level of interests among recipients to maintain or seek other sources of income. This is especially the case if the recipient households lack working-age family members to undertake income-generating activities. Increased dependency on remittances also puts pressure on senders to continue migrating and remitting, even in the events of worsened living conditions in the places of destination. At the community level, remittances can exacerbate social tension in communities as the gap between those receiving and not receiving remittances widens. Remittances can also aggravate regional income differences. Short-term and long-term impacts of remittances on the recipient households, communities and regions need further investigation to fully understand the developmental impact of remittances from Thailand back to Myanmar and cases in which remittances are positively or negatively contributing to development.

Another feature highlighted by the study is the high levels of youth out-migration from Eastern Myanmar in particular. This can change family dynamics, intra-family responsibilities (for example care for children and the elderly) and the migrant-sending household's ability to cope with disasters, safety and security challenges. At the community level, a lack of young people can result in a lack of able-bodied workers to provide workforce, support community development and religious activities, and take part in village leadership. Generation-skipping households (households consisting of grandparents and grandchildren without middle generation family members) is also a common feature in these communities. How the absence of the working age generation from households and communities impacts on the how remittances are managed in productive and innovative ways is something that needs further investigation.

Overall, the findings in the study show that migrants already contribute significantly to Myanmar's development through gaining skills and working in Thailand. What deserves more focus is measuring the impact migration has on migrant-sending households and communities more generally, beyond financial gain. This is necessary to create a clearer picture of the size and shape of the challenges which need to be addressed to strengthen the link between migration and development at the local level.

Chapter 6: Remittance Economy in Rural Myanmar

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Abstract

According to data from national rural development surveys conducted in 2015 and 2016 in all States and Regions in Myanmar, over one in five rural households in Myanmar has at least one working age adult who has migrated either internally or internationally. Remittance income plays a significant role in the rural economy of Myanmar, forming over 4% of all reported income, and being the main source of income in over 2% of all rural households. However, remittance income is not consistently associated with improvements in the socio-economic conditions of remittance receiving households; in some households, particularly where remittance income constitutes the main income source, remittance income primarily enables survival, whereas in households where remittance income acts as a supplement, levels of investment in livelihoods are higher, and use of high-risk loans for consumption are lower. Over half of households which receive remittances would be unable to cover core expenditure (food, housing, health and debt repayments) if remittance incomes ceased, compared with less than one-fifth of households which do not receive remittances who are unable to cover core expenditure. However, communities which had higher proportions of households which were remittance dependent were also more likely to have active community social organizations, suggesting an association with social remittances linked to migration.

Introduction and methodological note

The role of remittance income in reducing poverty is both significant and complex (Adams and Page 2005, Chimhowu, Piesse et al. 2005), where the contribution of remittance income to the economy of the recipient households and communities is viewed against a backdrop of the economic circumstances which may have acted as trigger for migration in the first place, the precarious nature of the migrant's own economy, and the socio-economic effects of the absence of working aged adults in the household. Whilst migration and remittance income has been demonstrated to have positive impact on reducing poverty and income inequality, mainly through increasing per-capita income (Acosta, Calderon et al. 2008). A considerable amount of research demonstrates the economic and social benefits to households and communities in receipt of remittances (Russell 1986, Adams and Page 2005, Ruiz-Arranz and Giuliano 2005) where remittances have been shown to be associated with long-term savings and investment in recipient households, as well as overall reductions in poverty rates (Adams and Page 2005, Ratha 2006). Remittance income may be linked to poverty alleviation by a number of 'first

round' and 'second round' effects (Turnell, Vicary et al. 2008) including supplementation of essential income and income smoothing, enabling more expenditure on housing, healthcare, education and social expenditure, reducing reliance on high-interest, high-risk creditors and enabling surplus income to be spent on consumer goods and investment in livelihoods. (Turnell, Vicary et al. 2008).

However, the impact of remittance income on household, community and the wider economy is conditional:

> First, given their compensatory nature, it is quite probable that remittances will be received by households with a high marginal propensity to consume, and therefore, simply may not be directed in significant quantities toward investment. Second, if remittances are perceived to be permanent, they may tend to stimulate additional consumption rather than investment, even in the presence of credit constraints. This would imply positive effects on household welfare, but not necessarily on aggregate economic growth. Finally, the more highly integrated an economy is with world financial markets, and the more highly developed the domestic financial system, the less likely it is that remittance receipts will stimulate investment by relaxing credit constraints.(Barajas, Chami et al. 2009)

Furthermore, constraints may exist which reduce the impact of remittance income on longer-term growth:

> structural obstacles [..] that have caused entrepreneurial activities of the recipients of these capital inflows to be relatively limited in scope, so much so that often little or nothing has been made of an unprecedented opportunity to lay down more adequate foundations around which more sustainable patterns of economic development might be constructed. Indeed, in the worst-case scenario, in which the arrival of large volumes of migrant remittances leads to a local withdrawal from productive activities in favor of short-term opportunities available in an almost entirely remittance-driven service sector, a downward spiral of local "de-development" -powered by ever-greater levels of emigration to urban areas (Ballard 2003)

Survey data indicates that the majority of remittance income sent by migrants in Thailand is spent on survival (Turnell, Vicary et al. 2008). Gendered differences were noted in this (albeit small) survey, whereby, although the median remittance amounts were similar, female migrants in Thailand spent a larger proportion of their income as remittances, and were more likely to use banks.

Moreover, much of the focus of recent migration studies has been on "the factors driving migrant flows at the individual, national and global levels, the making of immigration policy and the determinants of immigrant outcomes" (Paret and Gleeson 2016) and the 'tendency to couch discussions of remittances in benefit-cost terms" (Russell 1986). This approach

> often fails to delineate clearly the complex set of relationships which mediate between determinants and effects..the use of an economic framework for analysis of remittances has also helped to discourage identification and investigation of the *non-economic* effects of remittances. (Russell 1986)

This recognizes the need to consider non-monetary impacts of both migration and remittances, such as social transfers (Levitt 1998) and the impact of demographic changes on migrant sending communities. The role of migration and resilience in building 'social resilience' (Adger, Kelly et al. 2002)is also key, whereby remittance income spent on building social capital is not necessarily captured through standard indicators(Platteau 1991). When considering migration in relation to resilience, a range of factors, including social capital, environmental sustainability and generational dynamics are significant (Adger, Kelly et al. 2002)

Data from the 2014 census records over 2 million Myanmar registered migrants (Department of Population 2015), and the number of unregistered migrants estimated to be at least as many again Remittance income to Myanmar is estimated to be between \$3.5billion (World Bank 2015)and \$8 billion (Myanmar Times 2015) per annum, depending on the methods used. A further 9 million persons were registered as having migrated from a different part of the country- a staggering 18% of the entire population, although these numbers may be reflective of irregularities in household registration. Migration is a common coping strategy, with small-scale studies indicating that 26-30% of all households having a family member migrating, and overall village population migration levels ranging from less than 2% in Shan State to over 10% in Mandalay Region. (LIFT/World Bank 2014) International, non-seasonal migration was highest in States bordering neighbouring countries, whilst in the central and delta areas, the migration was predominantly internal and seasonal. Myanmar is considered the most significant migrant-sending country in the Mekong sub-region (IOM 2015), and recent studies indicate an acceleration in both internal and cross-border migration (LIFT 2016, LIFT/QSEM 2016)

The heterogenicity of migration cannot be overstated: different populations migrate to different places, and behave in different ways, and the migrant population in one location (for example, Thailand) may comprise contrasting sub-sets of migrants. This makes comparison of remittance amounts difficult, as the populations sampled may differ significantly (Chantavanich and Vungsiriphisal 2012) in a study of migrants in Thailand, Turnell et all found that remittance amounts decreased with increasing duration of stay in Thailand (Turnell, Vicary et al. 2008); Ni Lin (Lin and Charoenloet 2009) found an opposite association for Mon migrants working in Malaysia. Amongst this group working in Malaysia, spending on non-essentials was higher (46% approx.) than for the migrants in Thailand sampled by Turnell et al (over 90% on 'essentials'). The non-linear nature of the association between increased income, and remittance income, and spending patterns, such as share of food expenses (Lar, Calkins et al. 2011), is perhaps best represented by the 'u-shaped' association described by Hassan et al (Hassan and Bhuyan 2013). Overall, this makes the study of the association between remittance income and economic benefit, including poverty reduction and increased resilience, both complex and challenging.

To date, also, much of the analysis of remittances, in terms of amounts sent, expenditure and effects, has focused either on data from the sending end (migrants), on large-scale, aggregated remittance data, or on smaller, regionalized studies. Whilst this can provide useful insights, this paper will draw on nationally distributed samples of household data, which includes households

which do and do not receive remittances, to explore both the scale and impact of remittance income.

This paper will consider three questions, the second two in more detail. Firstly, what are the scale and pattern of migration from rural communities; secondly, what are the scale and patterns of remittances sent by migrants; thirdly, what are the economic effects of remittance income on receiving households, and what factors appear to influence the type and degree of effect. Finally, this paper will describe new findings which examine the potential non-economic effects of remittances, in particular the concept of 'social remittances', which describes the effects of transfer of ideas, skills and social capital by migrants to their communities of origin. The main evidence cited in this paper is derived from secondary analysis conducted on data collected in two large rural surveys, both undertaken by the Department of Rural Development. The first, undertaken in 2015 rural household survey, comprised 22,000 households sampled from all 14 States and Regions of Myanmar, which included a wide range of indicators on household socio-economic, demographic and social participation factors (as part of the 'Umbrella Model'). The second, conducted in late 2015 and early 2016, was a sample of 10,000 households again sampled from all 14 States ane Regions as part of a baseline survey for the DRD, again with sampling designed to reflect a proportionally weighted sample reflecting the rural population of each State and Region. Although neither of these studies was undertaken with a specific focus on migration, data collection included mumerous indicators relevant to migration, remittances and socio-economic dimensions of household and community life. Here, migration status was collected as part of household enumeration, where respondents provided details of household members who were not currently living in the household, but were living away from the household for work reasons. This did not include those who were away for short-term (less than one month) periods.

1. What is the scale and nature of migration in and from rural communities?

Other research papers, including those presented in this volume, report different numbers and prevalence of migration. These are not conflicting figures; rather, they represent different methodologies, population samples and definitions of migration. From a sample of 10,000 households with over 34,000 adults, 21% of households reported having at least one adult member who worked away from the household. The migrant population was 10.2% of the adult population; of these migrants, 25.8% worked in nearby villages or towns ("local"), 45% worked away in larger cities such as Yangon, Mandalay or larger border towns ("large city"), and 29% worked overseas. The mean number of migrants per household of those who had migrants was 1.7. Of these, 40.4% were female, with significantly higher proportions of migrants in local areas or larger cities being female. The average age of migrants was 25.7 years, and there were no significant differences in age or sex ratios amongst local, internal and cross-border migrants. However, education rates (percentage of adults who achieved higher than middle school) was higher amongst migrants than amongst non-migrants, although age-matching reduced this difference considerably. Further analysis demonstrated that the average duration of migration (measured by how long they have been away) was 19.7 months, with the highest rates found

the further away from the household. A quarter of migrants who migrated locally had been away more than 3 years, compared to nearly half of overseas migrants. The duration of migration varied a little by sex.

Table 6.1: demographics of migrant population (from rural households)

	Any	Local/nearby	Migration to large city (within Myanmar)	Cross-border
Proportion		25.8%	45%	29.2%
% of adults migrants	10.2%	2.6%	4.6%	3.0%
% households with at least one migrant	21.1%	6.1%	10.5%	6.7%
% households with more than one migrant	8.5%	1.8%	3.6%	2.2%
Sex (% of migrants who are female)	40.4%	48.4%	41.0%	32.4%
Age of migrants (average)	25.7	25.7	25.0	26.7
Age of female migrants (average)	24.9	25.1	24.5	25.5
Education (% with high school or above)	34.0%	48.1%	42.5%	24.4%
Female education (% with high school or above)	37.9%	45.5%	40.2%	23.2%
Duration of migration (current)	19.7	16.3	19.3	23.5
Duration >3 years	35.4%	25.9%	32.2%	48.6%
Duration <6 months	11.5%	11.2%	14.2%	7.5%
Female duration of migration	19.7	16.5	20.0	23.5
Female duration>3 years	34.8%	27.0%	33.3%	48.0%
Female duration<6 months	9.7%	10.4%	9.5%	9.2%

Here, the profiles of migrants shows a tendency of cross-border migrants to be slightly older, more likely to be male, have lower final educational attainment and longer duration of migration than migrants who remained within Myanmar. However, these trends demonstrate local variation: mean and median ages for migrants from Central Myanmar, Western Uplands (Chin/Rakhine) and Coastal and Delta regions showed a trend for older cross-border migrants, compared to more local migration, but in the Southeast, cross-border migrants tended to be younger. Migration patterns recorded here are similar to other studies, with higher proportions of households reporting migrants in Mon, Rakhine, Tanintharyi and Northern Shan. Overseas migrants are linked to border proximity, with States closest to borders (particularly proximate to the border with Thailand) such as Mon, Tanintharyi, Rakhine and Northern Shan also having higher levels of overseas migration.

Table 6.2: migration type by State/Region (households reporting at least one migrant)

	Local	Large city	Cross-border	Mixed[41]	None
All	4.8%	8.8%	5.4%	2.1%	79.0%
NPT	6.7%	7.5%	5.8%	5.0%	75.0%
Kachin	5.6%	7.0%	1.7%	1.7%	84.1%
Kayah	0.0%	1.6%	1.6%	0.0%	96.7%
Kayin	6.1%	4.1%	3.1%	2.0%	84.6%
Chin	0.6%	1.7%	6.7%	0.0%	91.1%
Sagaing	9.6%	10.0%	2.8%	2.1%	75.5%
Tanintharyi	0.6%	3.3%	36.7%	2.8%	56.7%
Bago	5.7%	7.5%	5.3%	1.2%	80.3%
Magwe	4.9%	15.1%	4.2%	2.7%	73.1%
Mandalay	4.5%	10.9%	4.9%	2.9%	76.8%
Mon	1.4%	5.8%	26.8%	2.2%	63.8%
Rakhine	2.8%	7.0%	15.0%	6.1%	69.1%
Yangon	0.5%	3.1%	1.0%	0.5%	94.8%
Shan South	3.8%	3.0%	1.4%	0.3%	91.6%
Shan North	7.6%	11.4%	9.1%	3.4%	68.5%
Shan East	2.8%	3.3%	2.5%	1.3%	90.2%
Ayeyarwaddy	3.8%	12.5%	1.4%	1.2%	81.2%

Table 6.3: Ratio of male: female migrants by geographical area

	Male: female ratio	% households with female migrant	% households with any migrant
Dry Zone (Sagaing, Mandalay, Magwe, Bago, Nay Pyi Taw)	1.06	12.0%	23.0%
Eastern Uplands (Kachin, Kayah, Shan)	1.13	10.0%	27.0%
Southeast (Kayin, Mon, Tanintharyi)	1.37	9.0%	18.0%
Western Uplands (Chin, Rakhine)	0.64	16.0%	28.0%
Coastal/Delta (Yangon, Ayeyarwaddy)	0.93	8.0%	16.0%
Union	1.01	10.0%	21.0%

Of those migrating to larger cities or State/Regional capitals, the majority had reported migration to Mandalay (61%) with Yangon (23%) and other capitals (16%) being second and third. In terms of destination for overseas migrants, migration rates overseas were 20 per 1,000 working aged females, and 44 per 1,000 working aged males, with over half recorded had gone to work in Thailand, with Malaysia and China being the second and third most frequent recorded destination.

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[41] 'Mixed' denotes more than one migrant in the household, and those migrants are in different categories of destination. Nearly 60% of all households with more than one type of migrant had at least one who was working in another country. Hence, the 'mixed' population is comprised

Table 6.4: Cross-border migration by destination (% of recorded cross-border migrants)

Place	% of overseas migrants	% of male overseas	% of female overseas
Thailand	61.4%	58.8%	66.9%
Malaysia	18.0%	21.9%	9.9%
China	12.3%	11.6%	13.6%
Other	8.3%	7.7%	9.6%

Interestingly, education rates were higher amongst local and internal migrants when compared to overseas migrants, possible reflecting higher rates of migration overseas in border areas where education rates may be lower. Further analysis demonstrated that the differences in educational attainment between migrants and non-migrants was most marked in internal migration, and least marked (but still significant) amongst overseas migrants. However, the correlation between background educational levels and the difference in education levels between migrants and non-migrants was strongest amongst overseas migrants, meaning that the higher the background educational level in that State and Region, the higher the degree of difference between migrants and non-migrants.

Table 6.5: difference in percentage of adults achieving high school or above as final educational attainment

	Difference between migrant and non-migrant	Correlation between overall education rate and degree of difference
Local	9.9%	0.2754
Large city	13.8%	0.2099
Cross-border	8.4%	0.7989
Mixed	9.6%	0.0236

2. Remittances in the rural Economy

The extent to which remittances contribute to the local economy is measured by analysis of reported annual income by source, and again data from the two studies mentioned earlier have been analyzed for this research. Whilst 20% of rural households have at least one migrant, just under 10% of all households received remittance income

Significantly, not all migrants send remittances; rates are highest for cross-border migration, and lowest for local migration. However, the lower rates for local migration may reflect that the income is not sent as a remittance, but rather is simply brought back and considered more 'local' income. The amounts varied, again with income from overseas migration being significantly higher than for other forms, and that income also forms a much larger proportion of the household income of receiving households.

Table 6.6: Remittances by migration type

Type of Migration	Median[42] Household income	Received remittances	Median amount of remittances received annually	% of income from remittances	Median income without remittance in remittance receiving households)	% remittance dependent[43]
Local	2,240,000	10.3%	820,000	3.8%	1,520,000	3.2%
Large city	2,400,000	36.2%	750,000	14.4%	1,700,000	12.1%
Cross-border	2,320,000	55.5%	1,200,000	35.8%	2,000,000	36.0%
Mixed	2,340,000	50.7%	1,000,000	24.6%	1,700,000	23.2%
None	2,000,000	-	-	0%	2,000,000	0%
All	2,000,000	9.9%	1,000,000	4.6%	1,700,000	4.2%

Households with cross-border migrants tended to have higher median amounts of remittance income, and that income represents a greater proportion of their overall household income, with the result that a higher proportion derive the majority of their income from remittances. Although the overall proportion of households whose main income is from remittances is relatively low, analysis of expenditure figures shows that over half of households which receive remittances would be unable to cover core expenditure (food, housing, health and debt repayments) if remittance incomes ceased. This compares to less than one-fifth of households which do not receive remittances who are unable to cover core expenditure. This will be considered further in the next section, looking at the potential economic impact of remittance income on households. Remittance amounts differ by both origin of the migrant and destination of the migrant: amongst households with overseas migrants, the median amount of remittances returned was highest for

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[42] Median represents the middle value where all the values are displayed in rank order, from lowest to highest.
[43] Remittance dependent denotes a household whose main income source is remittance income

migrants from Central Myanmar and the Southeast, compared with migrants from Uplands or Coastal/Delta regions.

The average amount of remittance from overseas migration also varies with place, with highest rates from 'Other' (which is mostly comprised of Middle Eastern destinations) and Malaysia.

Table 6.7: Average annual remittance amounts from cross-border migration by place

Place	Average amount of remittance (annual)
Thailand	945,661
Malaysia	1,323,551
China	668,889
Other	1,713,571

Median income (overall and from remittances) differ significantly, with incomes in households where the household member who has migrated is female significantly higher than in households which have male migrants, despite the median remittance amount being lower in female migrant households. This suggests, potentially, that when compared to households where the migrant is male, households with female migrants have a stronger base income derived from sources other than remittances, and are less remittance dependent. This may suggest that the economic circumstances which may have influenced a decision to migrate may be different if the person migrating is female.

Table 6.8: average remittance income from male and female migrants[44] (overseas Migrants)

	Median Household income	Received remittances	Median amount of remittances received annually	% of income from remittances	Median income without remittance in remittance receiving households)	% remittance dependent
Male migrant	2,163,000	55.5%	1,200,000	36%	1,800,000	34%
Female migrant	2,575,000	56%	1,000,000	27%	2,000,000	29%

When looking at the overall contribution of remittance income to the rural economy, remittances accounted for over 4% of all reported household income in the rural areas sampled, with significant differences between States and Regions.

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[44] Note that values and percentages do not include 'mixed' households which have both male and female migrants.

Table 6.9: Remittances as part of overall household income (all households)

Location of migrant household (any migrant)	Median income (all households)	Received remittances (% of all households)	Median income (remittance receiving households)	Median amount of remittances received annually (of remittance receiving	% of income from remittances (in remittance receiving households)	Median income without remittance (in remittance receiving households)	% remittance dependent (of all households)
Dry Zone (Sagaing, Mandalay, Magwe, Bago, Nay Pyi Taw)	2,260,500	10.3%	2,723,750	1,000,000	44.1%	2,000,000	4%
Eastern Uplands (Kachin, Kayah, Shan)	1,900,000	5.7%	2,340,000	740,000	40.5%	1,300,000	1%
Southeast (Kayin, Mon, Tanintharyi)	2,000,000	18.9%	2,450,000	1,200,000	61.2%	2,297,500	11%
Western Uplands (Chin, Rakhine)	1,500,000	19.5%	1,800,000	800,000	52.9%	1,475,000	10%
Coastal/Delta (Yangon, Ayeyarwaddy)	2,250,000	8.0%	2,825,000	1,000,000	45.0%	2,200,000	4%
Union	2,000,000	10.0%	2,500,000	1,000,000	47.2%	1,800,000	4%

One in ten rural households receives remittance income, with nearly one in five households in the Southeast and Western Uplands receiving remittance income. Whilst median incomes were general higher in remittance receiving households, remittance amounts, the degree of dependency on remittances, and the median value of remittance income are highest in the Southeast, with remittance income making up over a third of household income amongst migrant households. The level of remittance dependency-the proportion of households in which remittance income is the main income source-is highest in the Southeast. Whilst typical remittance amounts were lower in Chin and Rakhine, dependence levels were high, both as the degree to which remittance receiving households depend on remittances as their primary income, and the proportion of households for which remittances represent the main income. For 64% of remittance receiving households in in the West and Southeast, removal of remittance income would result in an income deficit compared to expenditure on essentials, such as food, housing and healthcare, compared with less than half of remittance receiving households in other regions. Overall, the proportion of non-remittance receiving households whose expenditure exceeded recorded income was 17%.

To what extent, then, do remittances contribute to the household economy in migrant households?

3. Economic impact of remittances

The potential economic impact of remittance income can analyzed for three effects: increasing essential income; income smoothing, enabling more expenditure on housing, healthcare, education and social expenditure, enabling surplus income to be spent on consumer goods and investment in livelihoods; and reducing reliance on high-interest, high-risk creditors.

Income and income smoothing

In single 'snapshot' studies such as these, the impact of remittance income on household income is difficult to reliably capture; longitudinal studies with built-in control populations are required to demonstrate both effect and causality. However, a number of observations may be made by comparing households with recent migrants (where remittances are less likely to have started to flow, or have effect) with households with migrants who have been away for more than 6 months. From Table 6.6 we can see, firstly, that the likely impact on income is linked to migration type, with both remittance amounts and degree of reliance on remittances being highest amongst households with cross-border migrants.

Overall, median income levels are similar for households with no migrants, and for those with migrants who have recently migrated (within the previous 6 months), whilst median income levels for households with established migrants are significantly higher, and whilst a quarter of households with recent migrants do receive remittances, the median annual amount is relatively small. This demonstrates, firstly, that we can reasonably make comparisons between households with recent and established migrants to look at the potential economic impact of remittance income on the household economy.

Table 6.10: Incomes of households with recent and established migrants

Location of migrant household (any migrant)	Median income (all households)	Received remittances (% of all households)	Median amount of remittances received annually (of remittance receiving households)
Recent migrant	2,015,000	25%	30,000
Established Migrant (> 6 months duration)	2,375,000	43.5%	1,500,000
No Migrant	2,000,000	-	

From this data, representing only a single-time snapshot, it is harder to estimate the extent to which remittance income may contribute to income smoothing. However, two variables may be examined which may provide at least some hints: the degree to which income is regular, and the extent to which households with or without remittance income resort to the use of high-risk loans for consumption (a marker of income insufficiency).

Table 6.11 shows, firstly, that the overall, the proportion of income reported as 'regular' by rural households is low, reflecting the largely seasonal trend in rural incomes. Apart from households with 'mixed' migration statues, households with migrants tended to have lower proportions of

income reported as regular, possibly reflecting a less favourable baseline economic status. However, when remittance incomes are then removed, this percentage falls even lower, indicating, firstly, the extent to which remittance incomes do appear to provide a degree of regularity to household incomes in those which do receive remittances.

Table 6.11: Remittances and regular household income

Migration Type	Remittance (yes/no)	% of income received as 'regular'	% of income received as regular excluding remittance income
No Migrant		10.1%	10.1%
Local		8.1%	7.3%
	No remittance	7.7%	7.7%
	Remittance	10.9%	4.0%
Large City		9.8%	8.1%
	No remittance	10.5%	10.5%
	Remittance	8.5%	4.0%
Cross-border		7.9%	4.7%
	No remittance	7.2%	7.2%
	Remittance	8.3%	3.2%
Mixed		11.5%	8.1%
	No remittance	11.6%	11.6%
	Remittance	11.5%	4.7%
Grand Total		10.0%	9.5%

Table 6,12 shows firstly that the percentage of households receiving their remittances regularly, as opposed to sporadically, is less than one third. And the mean amounts of remittance sent regularly are significantly higher than non-regular amounts. Median annual household incomes for households receiving remittances regularly were K2,795,000, compared to K2,090,000 for households who received their remittances irregularly. Hence, the potential smoothing effects may be due to amounts as well as regularity.

Table 6.12: Remittances and regular household income (2)

	Median income (migrant but no remittance)	Median income (migrant and remittance)	% receiving regular remittances (of those receiving remittances)	Mean amount of remittance received regularly	Mean amount of non-regular remittance income
Local/nearby	2,045,000	2,300,000	30.5%	1,589,444	1,051,707
Large city	1,825,000	2,700,000	35.0%	1,172,435	906,498
Cross-border	2,125,500	2,490,000	33.1%	2,528,980	1,892,677
Mixed	1,850,000	2,600,000	29.1%	1,616,630	1,283,571
Total			30.1%	1,545,142	1,166,372

Consumptive loans, or loans taken out to cover short-term income insufficiencies, are a common coping mechanism, and in this sample, 13% of households reported at least one loan for consumption taken out in the previous year. This excludes loans for healthcare and education, and includes loans specifically for food or urgent survival needs.

From Table 6.13, we can see that where remittances are made regularly by migrants who are in country, the rates of consumptive loan usage appear lower, whereas there is little difference in rates amongst cross-border or mixed migrant households based on regularity, or indeed presence of remittances.

Table 6.13: Rates of consumptive loan and regularity of remittances

Type of Migration	Receipt of remittances	Consumptive loan (any)
Local	None	11.5%
	Irregular	12.2%
	Regular	5.6%
City	None	19.3%
	Irregular	19.2%
	Regular	8.7%
Cross-border	None	13.1%
	Irregular	15.2%
	Regular	16.3%
Mixed	None	14.3%
	Irregular	16.1%
	Regular	17.4%
Grand Total		13.3%

This potentially may reflect the underlying precarity of the household economy from which the migrant has left, but taken overall, the rates of consumptive loans are lower amongst households which receive their remittances regularly, as compared to those which receive it sporadically. Consumptive loans represented a lower proportion of overall debt (11.3%) amongst households which received remittance income regularly, when compared with those which received remittance income more sporadically (14.1%)

The degree of dependence on remittance income also plays a part: 23% households for which remittance income formed over 50% of their overall income took consumption loans in the previous year, compared to 15% of households for whom remittance were between 1% and 49% of their income.
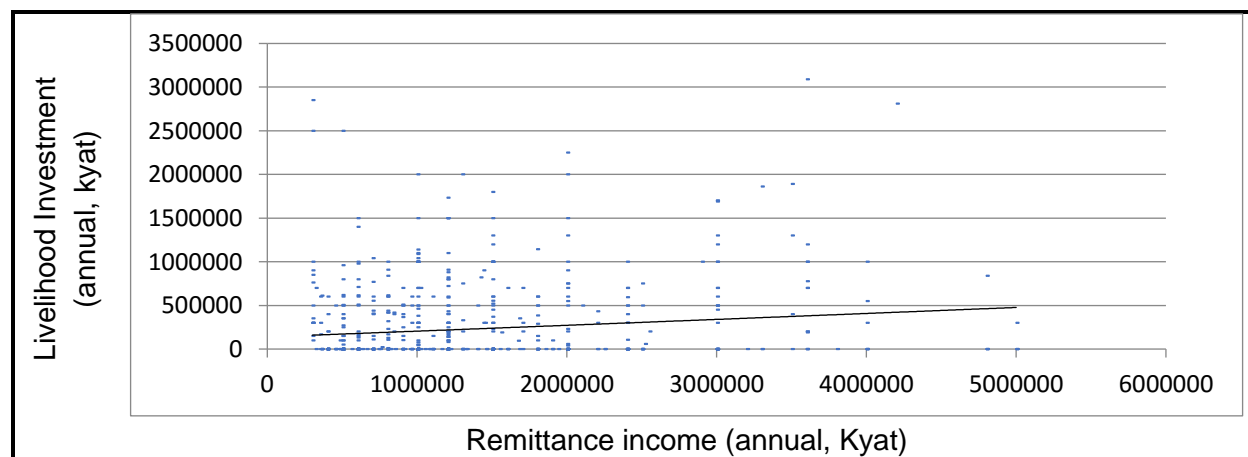
Expenditure (including livelihood investment)

As shown in table 16.14, households with longer-term migrants have significantly higher median household incomes. However, does this increased income result in greater surplus income-possibly manifest by increased spending on personal and household items, or livelihood investment? Firstly, median surplus income levels (income remaining after expenditure on core costs such as food, housing and health) are significantly higher in households with established migrants (K900,000 per year) compared with households with no migrants (K720,000 per year) and households with recent migrants (K446,600 per year), with households with recent migrants having higher core expenditure levels. The amount of expenditure on livelihoods is strongly correlated with the overall amount of remittance income and income surplus (figure 6.15)

Table 6.14: Expenditure profiles of remittance dependent, remittance receiving and other households

	Median core expenditure (annual)	Median income surplus	Personal and welfare expenditure (all)	Personal and welfare expenditure (of those with surplus)	Percentage of expenditure on livelihood investment (all)	Percentage of expenditure on livelihood investment (of those with surplus)
Recent migrants	1,347,000	446,600	8.6%	9.15%	16.7%	19.4%
Established migrants	1,310,600	900,000	9.6%	10.1%	16.9%	19.13%
No Migrant	1,184,000	720,000	10.7%	11.5%	16.9%	18.8%

Whilst there is strong evidence that surplus income is associated with higher rates of livelihood investment, there was no significant difference in expenditure patterns in terms of percentages between households with migrants and non-migrants. However, the actual amount varies, with households with established migrants spending an average of K60,000 per year more on personal spending, and K75,000 more on livelihood investments than households with early migrants and income surpluses.

Figure 6.15 :Correlation between remittance income and livelihood expenditure (kyat)

However, the most significant factor in determining the extent of livelihood expenditure is the degree to which the household is dependent on remittances; annual livelihood investment amounts are 300,000 kyat per year higher in households which receive, but are not dependent on, remittance income. Remittance dependent households, as compared to those who receive, but are less dependent on remittance income, have higher proportions of 'essential' expenditure such as food and health, and lower proportions of expenditure on livelihood and savings. There was strong correlation between the percentage of expenditure on food and housing and the degree to which remittances made up household income; the higher the proportion of income derived from remittances, the higher the percentage spent on food and housing. The correlation was much stronger for male migrants than female migrants.

There is an opposite correlation when comparing the degree of dependence on remittances and spending on livelihoods: the higher the degree of dependence, the lower the percentage of overall spending allocated to livelihoods. When considering livelihood spending in terms of actual amount, rather than as a percentage of income, there is a negative correlation between the degree of dependence on remittance income and the amount spent on livelihoods amongst households with male migrants, but no such correlation amongst households with female migrants.

Clearly, a number of factors influence the degree to which remittance income is used for investment-related purposes. Overall, the investment benefit of remittance income only occurs beyond a certain threshold; and where remittance incomes are both higher AND form a smaller proportion of the overall household income.

Figure 6.16: mean income and expenditure profiles (annual, kyat) of migrant and non-migrant households

	Non-migrant households	Migrant households
Income	2,641,561	2,878,522
Core expenditure	1,517,364	1,629,225
Health	135,806	179,717
Education	166,098	271,888
Personal consumption	94,140	86,297
Livelihood investment	733,430	632,397

Debt and use of high-risk loan instruments

There is evidence that, despite the similar proportions of households with and without migrants who have debt (85% vs 82%) and similar amount of indebtedness (485,600 vs. 523,835) migrant households had a slightly higher of their debt owed to higher-risk creditors, such as local moneylenders and companies.

Figure 6.17: debt profiles of migrant and non-migrant households

	Non-migrant households	Migrant households
Debt payments	189,733	196,067
Debt burden	523,835	485,600
% of debt classified as high risk	58%	61%

Looking more closely, households which received remittances more regularly had a higher proportion of their debt owed to high-risk creditors (91%) than households which received remittances less regularly (42%), although the total amount owed to those creditors was slightly lower in households which received remittances regularly. This may well be due to a lower rate of use of livelihood loan instruments by remittance receiving households, which is indeed the case: only 68% of households receiving regular remittances had a livelihood loan, compared with 74% of households receiving irregular remittances, and 77% of those receiving no remittances.

These findings do not confirm whether remittances are associated with a reduction in use of higher-risk debt instruments, or an overall reduction in debt risk, and again, the data reflects both the original economic conditions of the migrant household as well as, to some degree, the wider economic situation of the region in which the household lives.

Overall, remittances play a significant role in both household and community economy in rural Myanmar, although the precise effects and pathways are less clear. Whilst there are identifiable associations with remittances and household income, these are highly contingent upon the type of migration and the scale and regularity of remittances. Remittance income is primarily used to meet survival needs, and the proportions of income spent on personal/consumer goods remain lower amongst remittance receiving households than amongst other, non-migrant households. Rates of livelihood investment are linked to the degree to which remittance income provides a surplus income. Regular remittances appear to be linked to lower livelihood investment rates, and lower rates of use of livelihood loan instruments, but also lower rates of consumptive loans, suggesting some effects on income smoothing.

4. Social Remittances

The concept of social remittances refers to non-financial transfers which occur as a result of migration; these can include knowledge, skills and social capital. Whilst migration can and does result in a loss of 'capital' in terms of working aged adults, where migrants engage with households and communities in ways which enable transfer of non-financial assets, there can be gains in terms of development of other household and community resources.

Analyzing the two data sets mentioned in the introduction, we can note first that when looking at communities where remittances are a significant economic factor, the first finding of note is the lack of significant difference in demographic profiles. Where one might expect such communities to have higher rates of female headed households, and perhaps smaller household sizes, in fact no significant differences in household profiles can be demonstrated

(see table 6). Likewise, communities where remittances are a significant economic factor do not show significant differences in rates of asset poverty or vulnerability, suggesting that the household findings are evened out at community level. However, communities where remittances are a significant economic factor had higher rates of male & female unemployment, landlessness, and slightly higher levels of wealth equality.

Table 6.18: characteristics of communities where remittances are economically significant and others

Factor	Remittance dependent households >10% of households	Low/no (10 % or fewer households remittance dependent	Difference	Significance
Proportion of villages	20.95%	79.05%		
Average number of household members	4.88	4.80	0.08	Ns
Average of FHH	17%	16%	1%	Ns
Average of Employment male	80%	84%	-4%	<0.001
Average of Employment female	77%	80%	-3%	<0.1
Landless	55%	50%	5%	<0.01
% of village population under 16	35%	32%	3%	<0.1
Asset poor	17%	18%	-1%	Ns
Asset rich	21%	21%	0%	Ns
Vulnerable households	24%	23%	1%	Ns
Wealth equality (standard deviation)	13.14	13.51	-0.37	<0.1
Social Capital (score)	13.81	13.66	0.15	Ns
Participation by household head (score)	5.31	4.81	0.50	<0.001
Average of participation by women (score)	2.91	2.57	0.34	<0.01
Percentage reporting receiving government assistance (village)	69%	46%	23%	<0.01
Percentage of communities reporting social organization (village)	86%	59.6%	26.4%	<0.001

There were no differences in reported social capital related activities such as participation in village festivals, but significant differences in participation rates in village administrative and decision making both by the household head (higher scores for remittance-receiving communities vs. others, p<0.001) and women (higher scores for remittance-receiving communities vs. others, p<0.01). Rates of poverty and vulnerability were not significantly different at community level. However, the most significant difference reported was related to the prevalence of community social organizations. Such organizations were reported in 86% of the 'remittance' communities, whereas in only 60% of the communities where remittances were not a significant economic factor (p<0.001). It should be noted also that a positive correlation was found between the rates of reporting government assistance, rates of migration and reported social organizations. Multiple regression analysis confirms that both factors are significantly associated with prevalence of social organizations at community level ($r^2 = 0.39$). We note further that the difference in reporting of government assistance between communities with and without community organizations is greater in communities where remittances play a significant part in rural economy.

Table 6.19: reported rates of receiving government assistance in communities with and without social organizations, and which are and are not remittance-dependent

Type of community	Reported community social organization	percentage	% reporting government assistance
Remittance dependent >10% of Households	With organization	86.0%	40.8%
	Without	14.0%	8.8%
Non-remittance 10% or fewer of households	With organization	59.8%	34.4%
	without	40.2%	13.2%

There are three possible explanations for these findings: firstly, that the occurrence of need drives help-seeking behaviour both towards government assistance AND the formation of community organizations. This is possible but unlikely, and the data does not indicate the frequency, amount or sufficiency of assistance from either source. Secondly, that remittance-dependent communities have stronger social networks, enabling them to access ideas, capital and other types of assistance. This can be as a consequence of migration and 'social transfer' of ideas, or it could be that such communities are better able to access the information and networks to facilitate migration. Thirdly, there are potentially other confounding variables: noting the geographical correlations, and potential correlations with religious organizations and higher prevalence of migration (such as in Chin and Kachin State), these also can be associated with higher rates of formation of organizations in areas of high focus for border development.

Overall, these findings suggest that there is a strong positive correlation between migration and the existence of social organizations in rural communities. However, it should be noted that this

finding is not independent of other potential confounding variables such as religion, ethnicity and availability of government services, which could also influence the findings.

Conclusions

Remittances play a significant role in the rural economy, but the impact of remittances are linked to regularity and the proportion to which remittance income represents core income to the household. The ability of remittance income to enable longer-term stability and the establishment of a sustainable household economy is most likely dependent on the initial household economic condition: where migration has taken place from a household with a reasonably diverse and established economy, and where remittance income is regular, but a relatively small proportion of the household income, overall rates of ongoing livelihood investment are higher, and rates higher risk loans and consumptive loans are lower. Where remittance incomes are a large proportion of household income, perhaps indicating a less sustainable household economy, livelihood investments are lower and rates of consumptive loans higher. Thus, the longer-term effects of migration on sustainable growth may well be contingent on the extent to which migration represents a choice to 'step out' from a reasonably strong rural livelihood, rather than a more desperate measure taken in the face of a failing rural economy. Despite the loss of working aged adults to migration, the effect of social remittances appears favourable, with the suggestion that new forms of belonging, in form of new or renewed community social organizations, are developing at least in part due to social remittances from migrants.

Chapter 7: Gendered Precarity and Migration in Rural Myanmar

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Abstract

The decision to migrate as a livelihood option takes place in a variety of economic conditions, but higher rates of new migration are found in communities with of existing high rates of migration, lower household income, higher proportion of income from non-farming activities, and higher rates of youth unemployment. Migrants are more likely to come from conditions of food insecurity and higher background rates of poverty. However, equally, a significant proportion of migrants come from conditions which are less unfavourable, illustrating a potential heterogenicity of migrant sending households, with some for whom migration and remittance income represents an essential lifeline and where remittance income enables survival but little more; for another subset, migration and subsequent remittance income contributes to surplus household income, enabling asset purchase, livelihood investment and savings. It is likely that this heterogenicity is present prior to embarking on migration, such that the precarity which triggers migration in some households persists afterwards, despite the receiving of remittance income. It appears likely that the conditions which lead to a decision to migrate may differ as to whether the migrant is male or female, with female migrants, on average, more likely to come from contexts of higher household incomes, lower rates of youth unemployment, lower rates of food insecurity and lower rates of poverty than households where the recent migrant was male. The economic benefits of migration are also gendered: remittance levels are surprisingly higher from female migrants, and the degree to which households receiving remittances from female migrants are dependent on that income for their economy is lower than for households with male migrants. This suggests the possibility that migration by females may take place against less precarious economic conditions than by males, with the resulting income being more likely to be a supplement, rather than a staple of the household economy.

Introduction and methodological note

Precarity

Since 2009, the notion of precarity has been increasingly used to describe the life-context of migrant workers (Anderson 2010, Paret and Gleeson 2016), although some have criticized the 'Eurocentric' nature of the concept, particularly when applied to describe the 'precariat; in terms of an emerging class (Standing 2011, Munck 2013). Precarity, derived 'from the Latin root prex

or precis, meaning "to pray, to plead"'(Casas-Cortés 2014) is commonly applied to imply risky or uncertain situations. In her study of the development of the term as used by activist networks in Europe, Maribel Casas-Cortés describes four 'distinct although interrelated conceptual developments that redefine precarity: (1) labor after the rollback of welfare state provisions; (2) the new paradigm of intermittent and immaterial labor; (3) the unceasing mobility of labor; (4) the feminization of labor and life." (Casas-Cortés 2014). Precarity, when applied in the context of labour and livelihoods, describes workers whose lives are increasingly affected by uncertainty due to

> Insecure and uncertain waged work ..The decline or elimination of social safety nets and entitlements.. rising consumer prices because of inflation, and the gradual elimination of subsistence agriculture' (Arnold 2013).

This is noted also to have effects beyond labour markets and employment, with economic liberalization at times undermining traditional and state support structures (Barchiesi 2011). Although originally used to describe "the social divide separating permanent workers from contingent or casual workers" (Bourdieu, Darbel et al. 1963, Waite 2009) the term has also been used more widely "beyond the world of work to encompass other aspects of intersubjective life, including housing, debt, and the ability to build affective social relations."(Neilson and Rossiter 2005) The notion of precarity has been increasingly employed to try to explain the phenomenon of the 'growing gap between wealth and well-being in the fast-growing economics of Southeast Asia" (Rigg 2015), where the relative lack of wealth-commensurate well-being is explained as "not the level of money wages or income earned…but the lack of community support in times of need, lack of assured enterprise or state benefits, and lack of private benefits to supplement money earnings" (Standing 2013).

The concept of precarity is "especially relevant to migrant populations, which frequently experience multiple forms of vulnerability" (Paret and Gleeson 2016), often being engaged in unregulated sectors of the economy and having little or no access to social protection (Paret 2014) However, the bulk of studies typically examine the precarity of the migrants themselves, with less attention paid to the state of precariousness in the places from which they have come, and which may have triggered their initial migration. The balance between the perceived precarity of the sending and receiving country may well be significant in determining initial, ongoing or return from migration (Chantavanich, Ito et al. 2008) Thus, notions of precariousness may be useful in analyzing the complex nature of the 'push and pull' factors which result in migration, which are seldom easily reduced to simplistic descriptions of economic hardship, political repression or voluntary choice. (Massey 1990, Eberle and Holliday 2011, Saskia 2014).

More recently migration from and within Myanmar has been attributed to a multiplicity of causes, including political oppression (Eberle and Holliday 2011) displacement (South 2008, Huguet and Chamratrithirong 2011) economic pressures, at times linked to economic instability and climate change (Chantavanich, Ito et al. 2008, IOM and ARCM 2013) and, most frequently, a multiplicity of causes (LIFT 2016). Perceptions of relative (comparative) precarity also appear to be significant in influencing the willingness of Myanmar migrants in Thailand to return: whilst a

significant number expressed a desire to return should the conditions be favourable, the willingness to return was influenced by length of stay in Thailand and documentation status, both linked to the likelihood of increased access to more secure residence and access to increasing degrees of legal protection and benefits. (IOM and ARCM 2013)

Gender, precarity, migration
The intersection of gender and precarity, and precarity, gender and migration have been the subject of recent studies in Vietnam (Bélanger and giang Linh 2013) Bangladesh (Bélanger and Rahman 2013) and Indonesia (Devasahayam 2014), which have mainly looked at the precarity of migrants already in the process of migration, or in-situ migrants. In some contexts such as Bangladesh, Nepal and India, despite policies supportive of male migration, female migration is constructed more negatively, and hence "significant barriers for aspiring migrants and for returnees are created. In such context, women who migrate internationally have to overcome numerous structural, cultural, religious and political barriers."(Bélanger and Rahman 2013). Where migrant labour is viewed as a 'two-tiered' regime (Piper 2005) female migrants are known to be at higher risk of exploitative practice, including inequalities in networking and access to information, networks and support (Thieme and Siegmann 2010)trafficking and abuse (Bélanger 2014) risky work contexts (Bélanger and giang Linh 2013) and lower returns from equivalent work (Bélanger 2014). The gendered nature of the precarity which precedes migration (i.e. the precarity which acts as a pressure or trigger for migration) is superficially explored by Belanger and Rahman, noting that "gender discriminatory practices and attitudes in Bangladesh, resulting in a lack of employment opportunities and low wages in the local job market for women, frequently intersected with economic needs" (Bélanger and Rahman 2013). Likewise, gendered dimensions of the 'remaining precarity' in societies where high levels of female migration have resulted in changes to family and community dynamics (Tolstokorova 2013)

In the light of political changes and potentially rapid economic growth in Myanmar, the notion or precarity, and its linkages to migration may be especially useful as "in a period of rapid commercialization of the economy of a developing country, the new groups, many going towards the precariat, find that they lose traditional community benefits and do not gain enterprise or state benefits."(Standing 2013) Research into the social impacts of migration typically focus on the welfare of migrants (Pripotjanart 2015) or on the challenges of integration of migrants into the host community (Spoonley, Peace et al. 2005). However, research on the social impact of out-migration on sending communities is less well documented. Negative impacts include the consequences on child development of parental migration (Lahaie, Hayes et al. 2009) and increased rates of transmission of diseases such as HIV in families of migrants (Lurie, Williams et al. 2003). Positive impacts can be in the form of 'social remittances' " ideas, behaviors, identities, and social capital that flow from receiving- to sending-country communities"(Levitt 1998), importing of new skills and capital with returning migrants (Griffin 1976) and establishing social development organizations, often with remittance funds (Kubat 1984).

Perceptions of relative (comparative) precarity also appear to be significant in influencing the willingness of Myanmar migrants in Thailand to return: whilst a significant number expressed a desire to return should the conditions be favourable, the willingness to return was influenced by length of stay in Thailand and documentation status, both linked to the likelihood of increased access to more secure residence and access to increasing degrees of legal protection and benefits. (IOM and ARCM 2013)

In reviewing current evidence on migration in rural Myanmar, two questions will be considered:

- In what way is the 'precarity' of migrant households gendered-by this we mean, how do the conditions from which migrants migrate differ between male and female migrants?
- In what ways is the type and nature of migration gendered? By this we mean, how do the differences in destination and duration of migration differ between male and female migrants?
- In what ways are the 'benefits' of migration gendered-the way in which migration, whilst resulting in increased precariousness for the migrant, may (or may not) reduce the precarity of the migrant-sending household. How does this differ between male and female migrants?

The main evidence considered here is derived from secondary analysis conducted on data collected in two large rural surveys, both undertaken by the Department of Rural Development. The first, undertaken in 2015 rural household survey, comprised 22,000 households sampled from all 14 States and Regions of Myanmar, which included a wide range of indicators on household socio-economic, demographic and social participation factors (as part of the 'Umbrella Model'). The second, conducted in late 2015 and early 2016, was a sample of 10,000 households again sampled from all 14 States ane Regions as part of a baseline survey for the DRD. Although neither of these studies was undertaken with a specific focus on migration, data collection included mumerous indicators relavant to migration, remittances and socio-economic dimensions of household and community life. The detailed methodology, sampling frames and reports can be accessed in http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5348e.pdf .

1. Precarity -Triggers and Nudges for migration

Previous studies have highlighted the critical role of remittances in rural economies, (Russell 1986, De Haas 2005)and the links between resilience and migration, which is in itself complex. More recently, scholarship on migration has urged for more nuanced analysis, moving away from simple cost-benefit frameworks to more holistic analysis which allows for the complexity of migration as a phenomenon ((Russell 1986, Massey 1990) As described above, migration is itself both a response to precarity (Standing 2011, Schierup, Munck et al. 2015), and at the same time has multiple effects on the resilience of the household and community, both economic and social. Hence, caution is required when looking at 'snapshots' of migration and resilience: if we find, for example, lower levels of resilience linked to vulnerability, does that suggest that migration occurred in response to the perceived uncertainties and vulnerabilities-or do we deduce that migration itself resulted in reduced resilience? In fact, both may be true, and indeed simultaneously occurring, as we shall see in the analysis presented here-where undoubtedly migration has occurred in response to economic challenges and uncertainties, and

simultaneously introduces elements which contribute positively and negatively to household resilience.

Through analysis of five dimensions of rural economy may help: employment rates and patterns, household income rates, (including agricultural income as a proxy for the contribution of agriculture to the household economy, and non-farm income), livelihood diversity, food insecurity and household poverty (as defined by asset poverty measures) derived from a single snapshot of rural household data we can to a certain degree identify possible precarious states which may act as triggers for migration. For the purposes of this study, households with 'recent' migrants (classified as migrants who have been away for less than 6 months) may be taken as a proxy for households for whom migration has functioned as a recent contingency plan.

Unemployment

Employment was measured as active engagement in income-generating activities, whether formal or non-formal, and employment rates quoted here exclude both current migrants and full-time students from the denominator, thus capturing the percentage of working-aged adults in the household who would normally be expected to contribute to household income generating activities who were actually engaged in such.

Table 7.1: Unemployment rates amongst villages with high levels or recent or established migrants

	Villages with high levels of recent migration[45]	Villages with high levels of long-term migration[46]	Villages with low levels of any migration
Working aged adult unemployment rates	17.23%	16.33%	16.35%
Youth unemployment (aged 16-25 with no employment)	35.02%	32.42%	34.89%
% working age adults in casual labour	15.62%	15.68%	12.88%
% youth with secure income	12.74%	12.25%	13.91%

In villages with a higher proportion of recent migrants, unemployment rates for working aged adult rates and youth were higher than for villages with higher proportions of longer-term migration, as well as villages with lower levels of migration. When considering that the survey collected data on current employment rates which would include employment status of non-resident migrants, this shows that despite migrating for work, employment rates in migrant

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[45] Defined as more than 10% of households sampled who had recent migrants
[46] Defined as more than 10% of households sampled who had one or more long-term migrant members

households remained lower, suggesting that it is likely that migration was undertaken in response to lack of livelihood opportunities, particularly for youth.

Income

Analysis of household income was based on survey data which asked for estimates of household income in the previous year from different sources. The expectation would be that income from remittances would not have sufficient time to significantly impact household income in the time period reported, so the estimates of annual household income for households with recent migrants is unlikely to be significantly affected by remittance income at these early stages. Lower average and median household incomes amongst households with a recent migrant suggests that household income insufficiency is a significant driver for migration. At village level showed similar results: in villages with higher levels of recent migration, mean income levels were 13.6% lower than in villages with no migrants, and agricultural income levels were 14.6% lower than in villages with low levels of migration. Overall average income levels were 10% lower and agricultural income levels 38% lower than in comparable than households with no migrants. Again, based on the fact that the data is derived from a survey question asking for estimation of household income from agriculture in the previous year, income from remittances is unlikely to have had sufficient time to impact the 12-month retrospective estimate, and so it seems likely that, given the significant difference in agricultural income levels between nascent migrant households and those without migrants, that lower agricultural incomes in the previous year could be a 'trigger' or 'nudge' to encourage migration as a mitigation response. As with overall household incomes, the differences remain even after correction for overall regional differences in agricultural incomes. Non-farm incomes formed a larger percentage of overall household income in households with recent migrants, and these households typically were more likely to get income from multiple sources. These findings persist despite corrections for regional variations in mean and median income (so, for example, villages with lower rates of migration in regions with overall higher rates of migration-such as Kayin State-still have higher mean and median household incomes than villages in the same region with higher levels of migration).

Food security
Food insecurity, measured as the reporting of 5 or more days of insufficiency of staple in the previous year, was more likely to occur in recent migrant households, was similar amongst households without migrants in States and regions with higher (>5%) and lower (<5%) levels of migration, but significantly different between households with and without early migrants in those areas-again showing that the food security findings are not related to background levels of food insecurity in areas with larger numbers of migrants, but rather reflect the local village and household economy. Although reported rates of food insecurity were overall quite low for the sample (only 4% reported significant shortages), rates were higher in households which had reported a recent (<6 month duration) migrant (5.5% vs. 3.8%) and the rates were higher in households which reported local migration than internal or overseas migration (8.33% vs 6.25% vs 4.65%). Once again, the reporting period of the previous year is unlikely to have been

impacted by remittance income from a recent migrant, and so is likely to be descriptive of the household food security status during a time prior to migration.

Poverty

The assumption that migration is primarily an option for poor households is misguided: overall, asset poverty rates were lower for households with recent migrants (16.6%) compared with 18.7% for households with longer-term migrants, and 18.2% for households with no migrants. However, when compared with households in the same State and Region, households with recent migrants in Sagaing, Bago and Mandalay all coming from households more likely to be classified as poor when compared to households without migrants, whereas households with recent migrants in Ayeyarwaddy, Shan State and Magwe all came from households less likely to be classified as poor than households with no migrants. In fact, migrants were equally likely to come from households in the lowest wealth quintile than from the highest wealth quintile (3.25% vs. 3.3%), again illustrating that it is too simplistic to simply assume that migration is a 'last-resort' option for economically disadvantaged households.

Living in a village with high migration levels

Finally, villages with higher levels of new migrants were also more likely to be villages with higher levels of existing migrants: 90% of all villages with higher levels of new migrants were in villages with high levels of existing migration, suggesting that new migration largely takes place against a backdrop of migration as an established livelihood strategy.

Multivariate analysis of the socio-economic factors described above identified four as most significantly associated with increased rates of new migration: being in a village with high levels of existing migration, lower household income, higher proportion of income from non-farming activities, and higher rates of youth unemployment. A model combining of low agricultural incomes, increased proportion of income from non-farm activity, living in a village with other households which had migrants and high youth unemployment accurately predicted the likelihood of recent migration in 70% of cases. However, consistent with earlier findings, low employment rates, a high % of non-farm income, and higher levels of migration in the village were stronger predictors of migration by male migrants, and less strong predictors of migration by females.

2. Gendering of precarity: how are the background conditions leading to migration different for male and female migrants?

Having considered in general terms the dimensions of the precarity which appears to trigger migration in rural households, we can now further consider how those conditions differ in cases where the migrant is male or female; in other words, are the conditions and thresholds which result in a household deciding to send (release?) a household member to migrate for work different depending on whether the would-be migrant is male or female?

Households sending a female migrant had higher overall income and agricultural income, and lower rates of poverty and reliance on casual labour as a key income source, than households sending male migrants. However, households sending female migrants were more likely to report food insecurity, and were less likely to have multiple income sources than households sending male migrants.

Table 7.2: income and livelihood patterns in household with recent migrants who are male or female, or no migrants

	Average household annual Income	Agricultural income	% of income from non-agricultural activities	Casual labour %	Food insecure	Income sources >2	Household poverty
Male migrant	2,907,952	906,869	62.0%	20.1%	3.0%	35.6%	22%
Female migrant	2,981,041	1,205,184	58.0%	11.3%	6.1%	20.1%	16%
No Migrant	2,814,880	1,380,319	55.5%	17.68%	3.8%	24.31%	18%

When considering the differences in socio-economic context between households with predominantly male, or predominantly female migrants, the differences are most striking when analyzed by type of migration. Households with male migrants were more likely to be classified as poor compared to households with female migrants, but the difference is most evident in cross-border migration. Households with female migrants tended to have higher overall incomes and higher agricultural income, particularly for households where the migration was to a larger city within Myanmar. The rates of casual labour (% of household engaged in casual labour as a primary income source) was higher amongst households with male migrants, especially where that migration was local. Households with a female cross-border migrant had, on average, one more household member than households with a male cross-border migrant; however, households with a female migrant to larger cities were twice as likely to be female-headed as households with a male 'big city' migrant.

Table 7.3: Households with recent migrants who are male or female, by destination

Poverty	Local	City	Cross border
Female	14.0%	16.1%	14.4%
Male	16.6%	22.0%	22.5%
Difference	2.6%	5.9%	8.1%
Significance	NS	<0.001	<0.001
Casual Labour	Local	City	Cross border
Female	12.1%	17.2%	18.3%
Male	17.6%	20.1%	21.3%
Difference	5.5%	2.9%	3.1%
Significance	<0.05	NS	NS
Income (households)	Local	City	Cross border
Female	3,126,505	3,317,759	3,231,874
Male	3,064,173	2,796,314	3,010,057
Difference	-62,333	-521,445	-221,817
Significance	NS	<0.001	NS
Income from Agriculture	Local	City	Cross border
Female	1,406,158	1,341,095	779,545
Male	1,119,467	938,164	740,244
Difference	(286,691)	(402,931)	(39,301)
Significance	NS	<0.001	NS
Household members	Local	city	Cross-border
Female	5.6	5.7	6.3
Male	5.6	5.6	5.1
Difference	0.0	-0.1	-1.2
Significance	NS	NS	<0.001

The decision to migrate, then, may arise in a context of precarious livelihoods, including lack of livelihood opportunities, insufficient incomes, irregular incomes and awareness of migration as a livelihood option. The conditions associated with the decision to migrate appear to be different depending on whether the migrant is male or female, suggesting that difference process may be involved in the decision to migrate by men and women.

How then is the impact of remittance income potentially gendered, based on the gender of the migrant?

3. From Precarity to sustainability: gendered impact of remittance income

The extent to which remittances contribute to the local economy is measured by analysis of reported annual income by source, and again data from the two studies mentioned earlier have been analyzed for this research. Significantly, not all migrants send remittances; rates are highest for cross-border migration, and lowest for local migration. However, the lower rates for local migration may reflect that the income is not sent as a remittance, but rather is simply brought back and considered more 'local' income. The amounts varied, again with income from overseas migration being significantly higher than for other forms, and that income also forms a much larger proportion of the household income of receiving households.

In terms of gender of the migrant, remittances from female migrants re on average higher than from male migrants; households where the migrant is male are more likely to be dependent on remittance income than households where the migrant is female. The mean incomes of households with female migrants is higher than for male migrants, with higher surplus income and a lower likelihood of being unable to cover core costs without remittance income. This is consistent with lower rates of use of loans for consumption (typically a coping mechanisms to short term income insufficiency) in households where the migrant is female. Households where the migrant is female also invest a higher proportion on livelihoods (17%) than where the migrant is male (14%).

Table 7.4: average remittance income from male and female migrants

	Mean annual remittance amount	% of total income made from remittance income	Mean annual income (household)	Surplus income[47]	% of households unable to cover core expenditure without remittance income
Male	672,166	48%	3,103,300	1,405,517	58%
Female	989,013	40%	3,349,700	1,493,073	53%
Both/mixed	710,785	52%	3,179,300	1,413,330	57%

Using a composite index for resilience based on a balance of erosive and investive coping strategies, households with female migrants demonstrate higher levels of resilient behavior compared to households with male migrants. However, where there are more than one gender of migrant, resilience levels are lower than for either male or female migrant households: this suggests that the decision making process for a second, or third household member to migrate may also be different. These findings most likely relate both to the background economic

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[47] Net surplus after deduction of core expenditure for food, health and debt repayment

condition of the migrant household as well as to the impact of migration and remittances on the household economy.

Secondly, the extent to which remittance make up significant proportions of household income varies significantly. Remittances made up 6% of all income for the poorest households[48], compared with 4% of income for the richest households; 7% of all income for female-headed households compared with 4.2% of income for male-headed households; and 9% of income for poor female-headed households compared to 4.4% for poor male-headed households.

Multivariate analysis looking at the factors associated with risk of poverty amongst households with longer term (>6 months' duration) migrants identified six factors strongly associated with risk of poverty: household size (where smaller households had increased risk of being classified as asset poor), degree of dependence on remittances, whether the migrant was female, whether the households was female-headed, the degree of non-farm income and whether the household had one or more persons with disabilities.

Conclusions

The conditions which lead up to a decision to migrate are complex, and this analysis suggests that the conditions influencing a decision to migrate may be different for male and female migrants. Linked to this, the effects of remittances are also different depending on whether the migrant is male or female, but this will need further study using a more longitudinal approach to capture the specific process involved in both the decision to migrate, and the uses of remittance income in the household economy.

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[48] Here, poorest households are those whose net asset value is in the lowest quintile, and the richest households are those whose net asset value is in the highest quintile, based on estimated worth of household, livelihood, transport and valuable assets, as well as house condition (but not land, given the ongoing complexities of establishing land ownership status).

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Michiko has spent the last 15 years providing support to mobile Myanmar populations in Myanmar and in Thailand, including working on labour migration and refugee resettlement at IOM Thailand (2006 – 2013), and as a community development worker in ethnic ceasefire communities in Shan State (1999-2006).

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Previous research work in Myanmar includes being lead researcher on the National Disability Survey 2009-10, a nationwide survey on formal sector migration, and two large-scale surveys looking at profiles of rural poverty in Myanmar.

Forthcoming publications include compilations of disability research in Myanmar, and analysis of the performance of traditional social protection organizations in delivering social assistance. As well as working for SPPRG, Dr. Griffiths is also a PhD candidate for the University of Hull, with current research focused on studying patterns of resilience in rural households and studies of traditional social protection organizations in Myanmar.

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